



GEORGIA
SBDC
NETWORK

Business Outreach Services/Georgia SBDC Network

2001 ANNUAL REPORT

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The public service philosophy at The University of Georgia is to extend and apply university-based knowledge and resources in order to enhance the overall quality of life in our state. This orientation is clearly exemplified by the efforts of Business Outreach Services and the Georgia SBDC Network. The economic well-being of our citizenry is the driving force of action for this distinguished unit of Public Service & Outreach.

Whether through helping a new business open its doors or helping a growing business expand its distribution into international markets, Business Outreach Services and the Georgia SBDC Network have the skills, the tools, and the earnest desire to aide Georgia businesses. The scope of their capabilities can be easily described; however, the depth of their talent and their sincerity of purpose are only fully appreciated through experiences, such as those shared in this report.

I know that Business Outreach Services and the Georgia SBDC Network are making a positive impact in Georgia, and I commend them for this achievement. As you read through this report, I am certain that you too will recognize their dedication as stewards of public service.

Art Dunning
Art Dunning
Vice President for Public Service and Outreach and Associate Provost



In light of the economic slowdown over the past year, the Georgia SBDC Network has been challenged with an increase in the number of people seeking assistance in starting new enterprises across the state. This increase resulted in our helping 1,268 new businesses start in 2001. Other noteworthy accomplishments for the year include Georgia SBDC Network consultants working with over 5,700 individuals seeking business assistance and 934 continuing education programs being conducted with 14,071 Georgians attending.

Evidence of our ability to help entrepreneurs is reflected in the fact that our business clients continue to perform better than the "average business." National studies show that SBDC-assisted businesses grew at over nine times the rate of the average business in the United States. Also, SBDC-assisted businesses created over three times the jobs created by the average U.S. business. Although credit for small businesses has tightened significantly over the past year, the Georgia SBDC network assisted 351 clients in obtaining over \$57 million in debt and equity capital.

Each of the client stories included in this report represents the hundreds of small businesses and communities that we have aided throughout the year. They are a testament to our effectiveness in working with businesses and communities throughout Georgia. The stories also document the range of markets served and some of the

specialized assistance we provide.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our many resources partners. Although there are too many to mention here, a few include The University of Georgia Public Service & Outreach; Georgia State University; Clayton College & State University; Kennesaw State University; Floyd College; Georgia Southern University; Valdosta State University; the State University of West Georgia; the Georgia Departments of Community Affairs and Industry, Trade and Tourism; the Georgia Institute of Technology; chambers of commerce throughout the state; and the U.S. Small Business Administration. With their support, we were able to meet the dynamic needs of Georgia's business community.

Hank Logan
Hank Logan
State Director

In 1998, J. T. McWilliams, owner of Multi-Pak USA, Inc. in Dacula, contacted the Duluth SBDC for a financial check-up and analysis. He never envisioned the end result: a new strategic plan, shutting down his retail operation, instituting a new accounting system, and developing a database to manage contacts with prospects and customers. Nor did he expect the dramatic increase in his profitability. But that's what happened.

Multi-Pak is a supplier of plastic bags for industrial and promotional use. Customers count on them for customized designs, direct shipment, and personal service. They can also supply smaller quantities than many vendors will sell, which gives the company an unusual niche.

Working with Darrel Hulsey of the SBDC helped J.T. realize that his retail operation was draining his profits and his staff time and wasn't nearly as profitable as it appeared to be. So he closed it down to focus all his energies on the custom bag business.

Then came the strategic planning session with J. T. and his staff. "I wasn't really optimistic," J. T. recalls. "I went into it thinking 'this would be lots of talk and not much doing.' I came out with a completely different attitude, because I learned that we needed good information to make good decisions."

"The result was that we moved our accounting to QuickBooks. My assistant undertook the project of setting up a database in ACT; she then found a quotation module that integrates with QuickBooks. We started all this in October, and I can hardly believe the difference!"

For his part, Darrel says, "We were there to assist, but J. T. is driven to succeed. He is determined, willing to listen to advice, and then act on it." That's what it takes to be a successful small business owner.

Even with 2001 as tough as it was, J. T. is optimistic that he'll hit his target of \$2 million in sales for 2002, up from \$1.4 million in 1999. And he'll continue to call on Business Outreach Services/SBDC for help. "Any business owner who is intelligent and experienced will quickly see how they can benefit from these services," he says.

'Any business owner who is intelligent and experienced will quickly see how they can benefit from these services.'



Darrel Hulsey and J. T. McWilliams

CONGRATULATIONS

CONSULTING

After running several stores for a national chicken franchise in Valdosta, Kevin Butenschon decided it was time for him to try his wings in business for himself. He discovered the Wing Zone franchise, decided this was the one he wanted to pursue, and went to a close friend in the same business with his plans. His friend suggested he call Suzanne Barnett at the Valdosta State University SBDC.

“Kevin is extremely knowledgeable about the fast food business, and he had a clear vision of where he wanted to go. He needed some help with the nuts and bolts of finances and business management, so we quickly became a team,” Suzanne recalls. Kevin agrees. “She really helped me put the numbers in perspective. My original projections for insurance, workers compensation, that sort of thing, were off, but she helped us get it straight.”



Suzanne Barnett and Kevin Butenschon

Wing Zone opened in Valdosta on October 16. It's a delivery store with pick-up or take-out and caters mostly to students at Valdosta State University. The store is decorated in bright colors and employs students as well.

On the outside, it may not look simple, but Kevin says “This store is so easy to run! It's a simple concept, all the food is cooked to order.” But he also admits how hard he works—one day off between opening and the end of January. It's a pace that not many people could keep. But Kevin says it's worth it to have his own operation and to enjoy success.

Kevin credits Suzanne and her help in getting his bank loan; Suzanne points out that Kevin's hard work and vision are the keys to success. It's a classic example of the successful teamwork between the SBDC and a small business owner.

“She really helped me put the numbers in perspective. My original projections for insurance, workers compensation, that sort of thing, were off, but she helped us get it straight.”

When we think of small business in Georgia, our mental image may not include the shrimping business. However, most of Georgia's commercial shrimpers are indeed small business people, many of them second and third generation family enterprises. They are small businesses with a large economic impact. Georgia's shrimp catch in 2000 (one of the *worst* years on record) was worth more than \$17 million and accounted for 79 percent of all of Georgia's commercial seafood revenues. In recent years, revenues have been as high as \$30 million.



Morris Butler and David Lewis

A severe cold spell from December 17, 2000, to January 7, 2001, threatened an industry that was already reeling from several difficult years. The federal government declared the Georgia coast a disaster area, and state and federal governments closed all Georgia waters to shrimping until the end of June. Losses in the range of 40 percent of normal annual catch amounts were recorded.

The primary benefit of being declared a disaster area is having access to low interest Small Business Administration (SBA) loans. Some of the shrimpers who submitted applications for SBA Disaster Loans early in the process were denied, largely because the SBA didn't fully understand the nature of the shrimp industry. That's when U.S. Representative Jack Kingston stepped in. He had been instrumental in getting the initial disaster declaration and helped the SBA understand the nature of the shrimp business. He specifically pointed out that the two previous years were not reflective of historical catches. At his urging, the SBA re-evaluated and approved several loan applications it had previously denied.

Additionally, Richard Vendetti of the UGA Marine Extension Service and David Lewis, area director of the Brunswick SBDC, put their heads together to discuss ways to help fishermen take full advantage of this opportunity. They pulled together a special workshop to inform businesses about eligibility, uses of proceeds, rates, terms, and other aspects of SBA disaster loans. More than 40 shrimpers attended the meeting, held March 28, 2001, at the Marine Extension Office. As a follow-up to the meeting, the SBDC offered assistance to any individual fishermen needing help with their application. Of the 20 shrimpers who prepared their loan applications with SBDC assistance, only one was denied. The total amount of these loans was almost \$1 million.

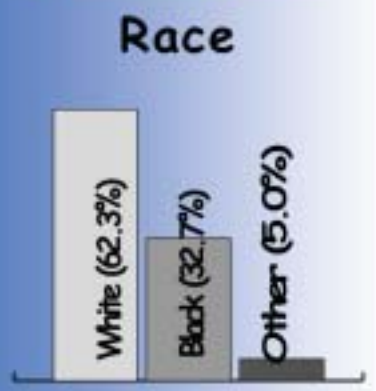
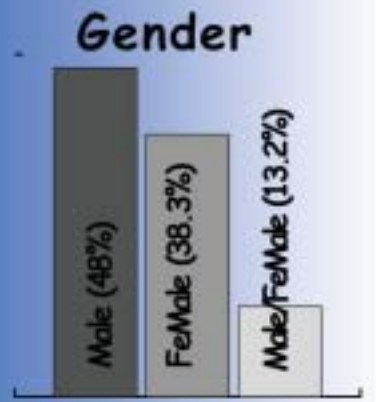
“This is a perfect example of lots of people and groups pulling together to make things happen,” according to David Lewis. “It took all of us—Congressman Kingston, the SBA, Marine Extension Service, and SBDC—working side by side with the individual shrimpers to bring this to fruition.” An added benefit of the process was the additional impetus to develop Georgia Shrimp as a premium brand (see story on page 10). With SBDC help, not only is the Georgia Shrimp industry regaining its stability, this business segment is working to carve out its own special niche in the national and international seafood markets.

Our professional business consultants offer confidential services to companies seeking operational and strategic planning advice. Expertise is available to help clients:

- ◆ Develop and update business plans
- ◆ Identify sources of capital
- ◆ Set up recordkeeping systems and analyze financial records
- ◆ Conduct specialized research geared to the specific needs of the business owner
- ◆ Create marketing strategies and advertising campaigns
- ◆ Explore suitable ways to conform to government regulations
- ◆ Analyze statistical and demographic data from reports and maps developed utilizing *The Georgia 2000 Geographic Information System*
- ◆ Conduct operational and financial diagnostic assessments

In 2001, SBDC consultants handled 5,786 cases throughout Georgia.

SBDC Clients



Capital is critical to business growth. The Georgia SBDC Network helped clients obtain \$57,596,249 in start-up and expansion capital in 2001. Clients used the funding for working capital, for the purchase of buildings and equipment, to refinance existing debt, and to generally expand and improve their existing businesses.

Alleyne Tripp's store, Fancy Stitchin', has been a mainstay in downtown Cordele for 19 years. If it involves sewing, Alleyne knows how to do it. She designs and makes gowns for formal occasions and weddings; she does alterations for law enforcement officers and school ROTC students.

Last year, Alleyne had the opportunity to buy the building she had been renting for six years. In doing so, she would also have the opportunity to expand her operation and open a retail store for bridal, church, and formal clothes and add formal wear rental to her product line.

"She came as soon as we called and helped us get it all put together. She was incredibly helpful and pleasant to work with. And she still drops in from time to time!"

At the suggestion of her bank, Alleyne called Teresa Rayburn of the Albany SBDC office for help in preparing her loan application. "Alleyne knows her business inside out, but she needed some help getting her business plan ready for the bank. She had it all written out and we helped with formatting and were able to have her application ready in only 19 days!" Teresa recalls.

Alleyne praises the help she got from Teresa. "She came as soon as we called and helped us get it all put together. She was incredibly helpful and pleasant to work with. And she still drops in from time to time."



Alleyne Tripp

With her new loan, Alleyne was able to expand and open a retail shop. She is already planning to expand the retail space and working on pre-lease commitments for some of her office spaces upstairs. She already has approval for 15 offices or three apartments. "I'm planning carefully because I want to be sure I'm making good money decisions," Alleyne says. "And I will continue to count on Teresa to help me plan for the growth of my business."

MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

How does a 23-year-old with a passion for animals, a degree in psychology, and a great business idea open her own full-service animal care store? Just ask Amanda Rodriguez, owner of Petropolis in Athens. She'll tell you how she started with a gift from her mom, "Business Plans for Dummies," and quickly realized she needed more information. After attending SBDC consultant Eric Bonaparte's seminar, *Myths and Realities of Minority Business Financing*, Amanda had a real dose of reality, but that didn't dampen her enthusiasm. "I figured I was a woman and Hispanic, so there was bound to be plenty of money out there for me," she laughs. "Boy, was I wrong!"

Then Amanda will tell you that she kept taking SBDC courses—How to Start a Business, QuickBooks and Accounting—and started working with consultant Carol McDonnell to put together her business plan. "Every time I thought I had it all, Carol would put me to work on a different aspect of the plan!"

Carol recalls, "From the beginning it was clear that she had what it takes. She was focused, had done background work, and actually conducted surveys about doggie daycare, boarding, and grooming services. She had a strong commitment to her venture and was determined that pets left in her care would never be shut up in a concrete run. Whenever I gave her another aspect to work

on, she would be back in two days with that part completed, asking what was next! She really worked hard on this and ended up with one of the best business plans we've ever seen."

It all paid off in September when Amanda got her loan approved. She said to Carol then, "OK, can I really get excited now?" The response was, "Yes, NOW you can get excited!" She opened in December and Carol says, "You couldn't even get in the door for her grand opening!" Petropolis is going strong, with happy dogs playing in a dog-friendly area, two do-it-yourself dog wash stations, cats happily



Amanda Rodriguez and Carol McDonnell

ensconced in a "Kitty City" built just for them, and brisk sales of all kinds of animal treats, foods, and accessories. Petropolis also offers boarding and grooming services, obedience training, and special programs to help kids learn to care for their pets.

While it's clear that she loves every animal she meets, Amanda also sings the praises of Business Outreach Services/SBDC. "I took every SBDC course I could and found the classes to be incredibly helpful. And then I met Carol and got such tremendous help from her! This is an amazing service, and I kept wondering what the catch would be. But there isn't one. The consulting is really free, the classes are quite affordable, and any small business owner would be nuts not to take advantage of the opportunity!"

"I took every SBDC course I could and found the classes to be incredibly helpful. And then I met Carol and got such tremendous help"

The Minority Business Development Division held over 17 financing seminars during 2001. The financing initiative resulted in 114 loans and over \$17.5 million in financing. Over 300 contracting solicitations were provided to minority small businesses interested in government procurement. Publications such as the *Small Business Guide to On-line Resources*, the *Women and Minority Procurement Guide*, and the *Georgia Minority Supplier Directory* were all frequently requested resources. The Black Youth and Entrepreneurship program reached its 21st year, a milestone of providing entrepreneurship as a career option to teenagers across Georgia through its network of five other partnering schools.

TRAINING

The old cliché “one good thing leads to another” has certainly been the case for Richard and Paula Steenblik of Alpharetta. They were enjoying some success with Chromotek, their company that manufactures the film for 3-D glasses. They went to Lloyd Atkins at the Georgia State University SBDC for some help with locating capital investors and defining the best way to approach the market. As



a result, they signed up for *FastTrac*, a program designed to help experienced business owners move to the next level of success.

FastTrac participants work on their business plans in a group setting, with guidance from instructors and support and input from other participants. In the course of that program, Paula and Richard realized they needed more help with PocketScope, one of several inventions Richard has come up with. Pocketscope is a remarkable, powerful microscope that is small, lightweight, and inexpensive, making it ideal for field research and medical applications, as well as educational use. They shifted their *FastTrac* focus.

The result was a business plan for Pocketscope. “I had the business and accounting background; Richard is an engineer,” Paula explains. “The *FastTrac* sessions were really helpful for us. Not only were the presentations helpful, the exposure to the others and the realization that we all faced the same problems, just different angles, made a real difference for us.”



Paula and Richard acknowledge the value of the business plan that resulted from *FastTrac*. “We have lots of knowledge now that we didn’t have before and a solid business plan to work from.” In addition, Lloyd continued to

work with them on marketing strategies throughout the *FastTrac* process.

One of the problems of such a unique product, according to Richard, is the tremendous amount of education necessary before people will buy it. “It looks



Paula and Richard Steenblik and Lloyd Atkins

like it wouldn’t work!” he says. But the strategy has been to expose the product to decision-makers at trade shows and science teacher conferences. Once they see the demonstration, they’re sold, but the Steenblisks are constantly working to build that awareness.

There is also tremendous international potential for PocketScope. Lloyd connected them with the International Trade Division of the SBDC, and Paula has worked with Rick Martin of that staff to evaluate company agreements, identify national trading partners, and develop a standard representation agreement. Rick also walked them through the dangers of patent infringement

ments in overseas markets and ways to avoid those problems. At press time, an agreement with a Japanese company was pending.

Consultant Atkins says of the pair, “Richard is a genius who holds several patents. Paula is the business person, and they make a great partnership. We have no doubt that they will be tremendously successful with PocketScope.”

The Steenblisks will continue to work on getting the market to open up for their product. Meanwhile, Richard has developed several adjunct products, including a non-drying gel that teachers can use to prepare slides in the field, and a web cam that will connect to the microscope. “We’re still using our business plan to approach investors,” Richard says. “We would recommend *FastTrac* to any business. It continues to be an excellent investment of our time and money in developing PocketScope.”

A total of 14,071 Georgians attended 934 SBDC-sponsored training programs during 2001.

Classes are offered in specialized subjects for experienced entrepreneurs, as well as in management basics for those considering starting a business. Some of the topics include:

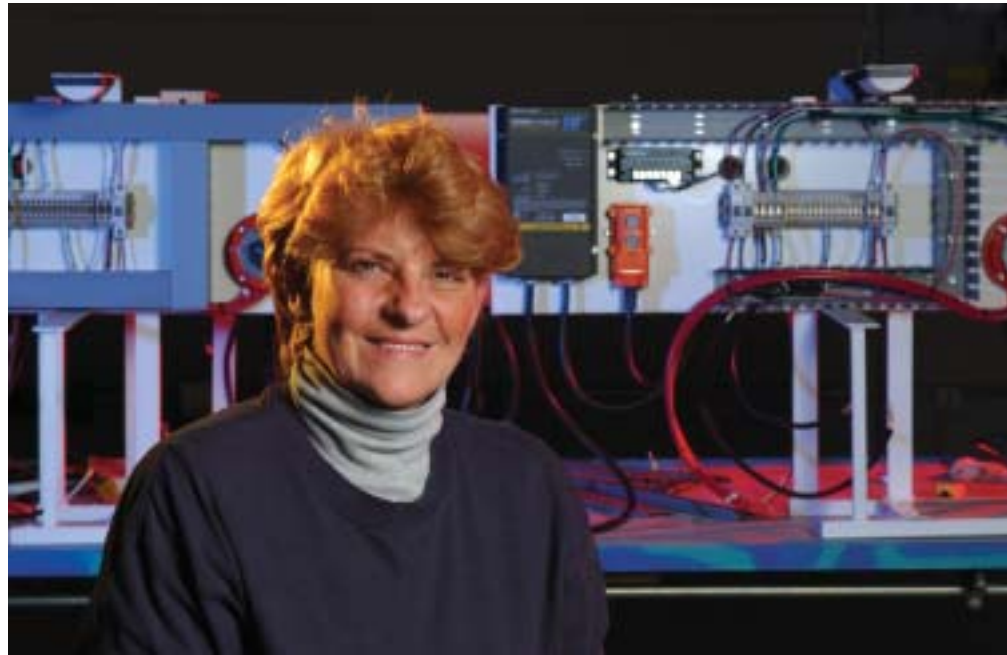
- ◆ Financial Management
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Tax Planning
- ◆ Customer Service
- ◆ Personnel Management
- ◆ International Marketing and Finance
- ◆ How to Start a Business
- ◆ Raising Capital

In addition to offering public classes, we provide tailored, in-house training for all types and sizes of businesses and trade associations on a variety of management-related subjects.

“The *FastTrac* sessions were really helpful for us. Not only were the presentations helpful, the exposure to the others and the realization that we all faced the same problems, just different angles, made a real difference for us.”

GWEN

After being an electrician for more than 20 years, Monda Causey Mathis of Fort Gaines knew all the ins and outs of building electrical panels. She is a long-time member of the National Association of Women in Construction. She started her own company two years ago with the knowledge and ability, but without all



Monda Causey Mathis

the connections she needed to get into the bidding for some contracts. Her company, DMS Services, builds electrical controls and structural steel control piping for industrial operations. They also install electrical and mechanical controls. Her line of business is highly specialized, with each panel manufactured for a specific installation.

"I knew I had to get something to open the door for opportunity," she says, and becoming Certified as a Woman-Owned Business Enterprise was a logical next step. It took several months

to complete the paperwork and schedule a site visit from the Columbus SBDC office. But the certification effort has already paid off.

DMS Services is now building substation controls for Georgia Power/Southern Company and has been accepted into their Supplier Diversity Mentor Program. Although she was already building DCS chemical control panels for Merck & Co., she has seen a significant increase in volume from that company since attaining Certification. All are the result of her Certification. When asked how it has made a difference, Monda says, "It has really helped me in the bid process. Each contract is different and very specific. Going through the WBE Certification process really helped me fine tune my skills in that area." Monda also adds, "I believe each woman can form her own legacy and bridge the gap for our daughters and their daughters into all fields. I want my nine-year-old daughter to know she can achieve ANY goal and pursue ANY field when she puts her mind to it."

Women-owned businesses are the fastest growing sector of the economy. But those same businesses account for only a small percentage of federal and corporate procurement contracts. Recognizing that businesswomen in Georgia were making a significant contribution to the state's economy and supporting them made good business sense, Business Outreach Services/SBDC founded the Georgia Women Entrepreneurs Network (GWEN). In addition to providing learning and networking opportunities at an annual conference, GWEN has teamed up with the National Association of Women Business Owners to Certify women-owned businesses for federal and corporate procurement officers.

Because no national certification program for businesses owned and controlled by women had existed before NWBOC, women found it necessary to have their businesses certified many times to compete for contracts with different corporations and government agencies. NWBOC's single verification process will eliminate redundant certification reviews and facilitate doing business with corporations and governments, thereby substantially reducing this burden. A woman business owner in Georgia who is interested in being certified can simply call her nearest Small Business Development Center for the information and support she needs to complete the process. The two businesses mentioned above are examples of the impact the Certification can have.

In the Atlanta area, Glenda Ryan and Krystal Pate, a mother-daughter team in Morrow, are beginning to reap the benefits of their WBE Certification. After successfully creating and running Southern Crescent Personnel for almost ten years, they were still trying to get through to several large hospital systems. Southern Crescent Personnel specializes in medical and dental staffing for temporary, temp-to-hire, and full time placements. They furnish employees to hospitals, medical clinics, and dental offices. Krystal said, "The process was not all that difficult, but lengthy. We submitted a very detailed application in February of 2001. A few months later, Lydia Jones of the Georgia State University SBDC completed our application process with an indepth verification inspection during a personal visit." Glenda added, "The WBE Certification has made a real difference for us. We're now a designated vendor for two large hospital systems and are working on another."

Glenda had worked with Business Outreach Services/SBDC since she started the business in 1993 and still appreciates all the help she gets. "Now we have the Certification framed and enclose a copy of it with every proposal we make," she says.

One of Glenda's goals is to see how many different ways they can use the Certification to grow their business. "We haven't had the Certification that long, but we're already seeing a difference. I'm looking forward to being able to turn a thriving business over to my daughter one day!"



Glenda Ryan and Krystal Pate

"The WBE Certification has made a real difference for us. We're now a designated vendor for two large hospital systems and are working on another."

APPLIED RESEARCH

What's not to love about succulent, sweet Georgia shrimp? The thought of a big batch of them—fried, boiled, or done up in a snazzy gourmet dish—makes most of us drool! At the same time, we rarely pay much attention to the dynamics of the shrimp market or the challenges Georgia shrimpers face in their business.

One of those challenges is the fluctuation in prices, caused largely by competition from imports, about half of which are farm-raised, not wild caught. When UGA Marine Extension Agent Richard Vendetti was assisting the Georgia Shrimp Association with their strategic plans, they hit on the idea of positioning

Georgia Shrimp much like Vidalia Onions or Maine Lobsters. Marketing Georgia Shrimp as a premium product could solidify the reputation for quality and taste, create a market niche for Georgia shrimp, and build yet another unique product for the state.

The question became, "How do we make that happen?" That's where Business Outreach Services and the Georgia SBDC Network came in. Vicki Russell and Alfie Meek in the Applied Research Division went to work. Vicki, serving as research analyst and project director, found some pretty interesting information. After doing four surveys



of restaurants, distributors and wholesalers, processors, and seafood markets, she learned that high-end restaurants had the most interest. Their customers are willing to pay higher prices, and chefs indicated that they would love to try out the idea.

Alfie determined the economic impact of such a program, and the results were impressive: if they could consistently sell all the shrimp in one premium size category, they could generate an economic impact of over \$9 million, with \$7 million of that in income to Georgia shrimpers. They could also create about 84 new jobs.

Planning and coordination for the development of a certification program continues with input and support from a variety of organizations and governmental entities.

The next round of research will probably include some taste testing, other qualitative research, and some planning for marketing, promotion, and certification. "This effort involves so many different people and organizations," Richard said. "It's a great example of how private industry, government programs, and non-profit organizations can pull together on an issue of importance to the economic health of Georgia. We know it can work; it's just a matter of time, money, and energy to bring the plan to fruition."

Similar efforts by individuals or small groups over the last 30 years have been unable to get the program started. Sweet Georgia Shrimp will become a reality here because of the collective efforts of all the major players in Georgia's shrimping industry.

And just wait until you taste them...

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The Applied Research Division's mission is to address economic development needs for information by providing applied research to small businesses and communities. This service includes the application of economic analysis, market research, geographic information system technology, as well as a wide range of resources for secondary research and an extensive primary research effort.

In addition to the projects highlighted in this report, the Applied Research Division assisted numerous Georgia businesses, communities, and economic development organizations during 2001. Some of the projects that were completed during the year include:

Measuring Underemployment in the Dublin-Laurens County Area, a study designed to test a new methodology of measuring the level of underemployment in a community.

A marketing research/analysis for Main Street Douglas that will help Douglas determine the revitalization direction and business recruitment objectives for their downtown district.

Work on the Social Vitality Index for the Technical Advisory Committee to the Lt. Governor's Rural Development Council.

Survey research assistance and analysis was provided for the Athens Area Arts Council to determine the economic impact the arts community has on the city of Athens and to determine future funding requirements.

Habitat for Humanity's International headquarters annually attracts thousands of visitors and volunteers to Americus. The non-profit homebuilder took yet another step toward its goal of educating people about the worldwide need for adequate housing when it broke ground for the Global Village and Discovery Center early in 2002. According to Habitat founder Millard Fuller, the complex "will give people the opportunity to see the simple, decent houses that Habitat is building in places like Asia, Africa, and South America. We want to show the world that people can make a difference—one life, one family, and one house at a time."

Once completed, the center will offer an interactive museum, multi-media presentation, and replicas of houses from all over the world. It will also be a stop on The Sam Shortline Train, taking tourists from Cordele to Plains.

Projects like this don't just happen. They require vision, planning, and coordination among dozens of agencies and groups. They also require money. Lots of it. Before any private organization can build a major facility like this, local governments have to deal with all the infrastructure issues like water, sewer, access, and impact on surrounding properties. That's when the City of Americus and Habitat officials turned to Business Outreach Services/SBDC.

They wanted to apply for a One Georgia Grant for Global Village infrastructure and had to demonstrate a significant public benefit from the project. Sharon Kane of the Applied Research Division of Business Outreach Services/SBDC headed the project. "We used an economic impact model focusing our analysis on Sumter and the contiguous counties," she explained. The results told an important story.



The first year operations and visitor spending stood to create 28 new jobs, have an economic impact of \$1.9 million to Sumter County, with another \$7.7 million in income and jobs created by visitor spending each year. The study also predicts that by its fifth year of operation, the Global Village should generate more than \$1 million in tax revenues. "Even though we didn't use any construction figures in our analysis, it's easy to see how the ripple effect can come into play," Sharon commented.

The analysis not only helped with the One Georgia Grant, according to David Williams, executive vice president of Habitat. "It provided us with tremendous leverage early in the project. The research served as a 'Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval' for the private donors we needed to make the project a reality." He went on to praise the highly professional,

scientific analytical approach that Sharon and her team brought to the project.

"Business Outreach Services/SBDC provides a tremendous return for taxpayers of the state of Georgia. In turn, the Global Village project will also have remarkable impact in southwest Georgia. It's a win for everyone involved," he

"Business Outreach Services/SBDC provides a tremendous return for taxpayers of the state of Georgia. In turn, the Global Village project will also have remarkable impact in southwest Georgia. It's a win for everyone involved."

If you thought economic development in Georgia's small communities was a "one-size-fits-all" process, you only need to look to two different communities, on opposite sides of the state, to learn otherwise. Services are tailored to each community, each project, and to each plan.

Hal Carter was interested in adapting the old Bonair Hotel in Bainbridge to other commercial uses, and first called on economic development consultant Bill Russell through the Main Street Program. "I had met Bill before, but had not thought about using his help for this project," Hal recalls. Bill helped Hal



Bonair "Before"

work through all the numbers on the best use of the space, and they changed the original plan a bit as a result. The outcome is impressive: Anchored by an antique mall, beauty salon, and several retail shops, the old hotel also boasts unusual—and fully occupied—loft apartments on the second and third floors. The City of Bainbridge received a One Georgia Grant to restore the balcony and leased it back on a long-term lease.

"Bill was a great help, especially in setting up the Antique Mall," Hal recalls. "We're now ready to move on to our next project, a restaurant and loft apartments in an historic building in Sylvester."

About 200 miles to the east, folks in Darien are excited about their new development, as well. Better Home Towns director Karen Moore explained the new waterfront project. "We had already built a lovely park and riverfront area, featuring the tabby ruins of old Fort Darien. The adjacent property was the long-time home of Skipper's Seafood, so when he was ready to retire, it just made sense to have that property be part of the public area."

She went on to articulate an exciting vision: "We've leased the old seafood plant to a restaurant group who will refurbish it, modify the deck area, and rehab an outbuilding as an oyster bar. There will be a new public boat slip, too. The crowning glory of the development will be 42 condominium units, all of which were reserved before ground was broken!" Karen's enthusiasm for the project is contagious.

And Bill Russell was instrumental in helping put it all together. The financing package was anchored with a \$500,000 One Georgia Grant. "This will turn into at least \$8 million for the city's tax digest, up to 150 new jobs, and give us the cash flow to sustain other development and improvement projects!" Karen explained. Bill also points out that this is one of the first public-private partnerships funded through the One Georgia program. "It was a pretty complicated project, but we helped work out the numbers and prepare the grant application," he said. "Of course we were all delighted when the money came through!"

Mayor David Bluestein commented, "This is the beginning of the revitalization of downtown Darien. It's a dream come true." Karen added, "Not only is it a dream come true, this project has helped us learn to dream big and we're already working on other ideas. And we couldn't have done it without Bill's help."



Bonair "After"

"Not only is it a dream come true, this project has helped us learn to dream big and we're already working on other ideas. And we couldn't have done it without Bill's help!"

FROM NEGLECT TO REVITALIZATION

During 2001, our economic development consultants worked with over 93 Georgia communities providing a variety of services.

Our economic development consultants help communities and regionally-based groups identify and implement strategies to develop an area's total economy. By examining the economy in its entirety, our consultants facilitate a process of developing plans that capitalize on the unique characteristics of each community. For those communities interested in a local business development strategy, our consultants will then work with locally-chosen economic task forces who set and accomplish attainable objectives to ultimately improve the total economy of their area. Establishment of local financing pools and downtown revitalization projects and assistance with and access to tourism studies and over/under supply studies are just a few of the ways we can assist in developing local economies.

Next time you're in the mood for some heart-thumping fast driving, ride up to Dawsonville and pretend you're a race car driver on a classic old Georgia dirt track. But please don't do that on a public highway! Head for Thunder Road USA, downtown Dawsonville's blockbuster new tourist attraction. They have simulators where you can drive like crazy, never get a ticket, and learn all about the history of NASCAR in the process.

This new interactive, lively place was born in 1995 when local leaders grew concerned about the decline of the downtown area. The group called on Paul Kreager of Business Outreach Services/Georgia SBDC Network to help develop a strategy to save downtown Dawsonville. With Paul's guidance, they decided to focus on a unique



Paul Kreager and Gordon Pirkle

piece of local history: the beginnings of NASCAR, born in the north Georgia mountains in the days of Prohibition, when whiskey runners souped up their cars to be able to outrun the police when making deliveries to Atlanta. Not only did they have the lore of the old days and the

excitement of modern racing to build on, a number of the earliest race winners still live in Dawsonville.

First came a 1997 economic impact study conducted by the Business Division of Gainesville College. The study showed that a racing museum could be a viable entertainment anchor. Further feasibility work convinced them to expand the concept to include more than just a museum. The group formed a nonprofit corporation, chaired by local leader and businessman Billy Wallace, and incorporated the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame. Then came a 1998 downtown streetscape plan, completed by UGA's School of Environmental Design, that developed traffic flows, parking, and sidewalks around this dream.

From that time until the present, the project has moved almost as fast as the drivers they celebrate. From the groundbreaking in 1998 to the tremendously successful grand opening in May, 2002, Thunder Road USA has demonstrated what can happen when elected officials, private industry, and Business Outreach Services/SBDC team up. Funding for the 44,000-square-foot Phase I came from a variety of sources. The board raised \$1 million in seed money and obtained an 80 percent USDA Rural Development Office loan guarantee for

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another \$10 million. Three local banks joined forces to make the loan, for a total package of \$11 million.

"It's one of those projects that take a really long time to develop. The payoff is the community excitement and the development of a stable growth vehicle for the future," says Paul. "These folks have stuck with it, they have developed innovative solutions to each problem that arose, and stayed focused on the long-term vision."

With an estimate of 250,000 visitors each year, ThunderRoad USA will generate 30 new jobs in its operation, with another 752 jobs created in other parts of the community. It will also increase local educational and career opportunities and provide scholarships to area students.



Gordon Pirkle and Billy Wallace

"Dawsonville is already feeling the positive impact of Thunder Road USA. Traffic counts are up and existing restaurants are much busier," said Billy Wallace. "We already have four or five new businesses opened and others are planned."

What's next? Billy quickly ticked off the answers to that question. "We have a 4000-square-foot banquet and meeting area that we need to finish out. That will generate even more revenue. People like to see race cars, so we want to build a 10,000 square-foot facility to display an even wider variety of cars."



"I'm proudest, though, of the teamwork that went into this project. We pulled together and we made it work. Paul Kreager was with us every step of the way and his help was incredibly important." He sums it all up by saying, "This is an incredibly exciting place to go! You just have to see it to believe it!"

During 2001, 735 people attended 11 OEDA-sponsored training programs.

The Office of Economic Development Assistance (OEDA) is a collaborative effort of Business Outreach Services/SBDC, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership to support local, regional, and statewide community economic development.

OEDA serves as a central point of contact for a representative of the technical assistance and research resources of the three sponsoring units. In addition to providing assistance and information, OEDA organizes a number of training programs focused on local and regional development authorities. These include board member training for development authorities and downtown development authorities, a leadership and management institute for development authority executives, and legal seminars for development authority attorneys. These programs are sponsored in cooperation with entities such as the Georgia Economic Developers Association, the Georgia Municipal Association, and the Institute of Continuing Legal Education.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

When America's leading manufacturer of agricultural cleaners and disinfectants (sanitation technology) needed help with an international expansion, they turned to the SBDC's International Trade Division.

After enjoying tremendous success in the United States for over 40 years, BioSentry, a Stone Mountain-based chemical manufacturer of cleaning and sanitation products for poultry and swine farms, recognized that their greatest potential for growth was in overseas markets. Consultant Dimitris Kloussiadis went to work right away, helping BioSentry's International Manager, Gabriel Pardo, work through various issues involved in international business.

Because the company offers a variety of programs to clean growing environments for poultry and swine and others to destroy dangerous bacteria in those environments, the issues of formula registration, ownership of trademarks, and shipping were particularly complex.

Dimitris helped guide Gabriel and others through a number of important steps in their expansion efforts. They worked together to identify sales leads in several South American companies and to work out processes for international price negotiations and payments. Because trade laws vary so much from country to country, Dimitris' assis-

tance was particularly important in forming partnerships with international distributors. "That can be very tricky, and you can lose a lot of money if it isn't done correctly," Gabriel said. "Dimitris was especially helpful in working out those arrangements."

The results have been impressive. At a time when other companies are slowing their growth, BioSentry is opening a new manufacturing facility in India. In addition, BioSentry has partnerships with companies in Columbia, Brazil, and several other countries. They are working on developing distribution relationships in Asia and in other parts of the world.

"We were so impressed with BioSentry, we nominated the company for the Small Business Administration's Exporter of the Year Award," said Dimitris. "This is an extremely sophisticated company with a long tradition of excellence. They have committed the capital and the time to make their international efforts a success."

Gabriel reflected on the results of his work. "Not only did Dimitris help us with some difficult processes, he has served as a sort of personal coach for me through the entire course of developing this venture. We are excited and optimistic about our

plans for continuing the international growth of our manufacturing and sales operations."



Dimitris Kloussiadis and Gabriel Pardo

During 2001, the International Trade Division provided assistance to 175 Georgia companies. The International Trade Division helps companies succeed in international markets by providing sound advice and technical assistance in determining the exportability of products and services; identifying appropriate markets and buyers; developing market entry strategies; establishing shipping and distribution networks; determining appropriate payment methods; and identifying export financing and insurance needs. In addition to individualized consulting, special training courses are offered throughout the state to assist both new and experienced exporters.

STATE OFFICE

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
1180 E. Broad Street
Athens, GA 30602-5412
(706) 542-2762

Albany Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
230 S. Jackson St., Suite 333
Albany, GA 31701-2885
(229) 420-1144

Americus Office

Georgia Southwestern State University Small Business Development Center
800 Wheatley Street
Americus, GA 31709
(229) 931-6918

Athens Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
1180 E. Broad Street
Athens, GA 30602-5412
(706) 542-7436

Atlanta Office

Georgia State University SBDC
University Plaza
Atlanta, GA 30303-3083
(404) 651-3550

Augusta Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
1054 Claussen Road, Suite 301
Augusta, GA 30907-0305
(706) 737-1790

Brunswick Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
501 Gloucester Street, Suite 200
Brunswick, GA 31520-7014
(912) 264-7343

Carrollton Office

State University of West Georgia SBDC
130 Cobb Hall
Carrollton, GA 30118-4130
(770) 838-3082

Columbus Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
1030 First Avenue
Columbus, GA 31901-2402
(706) 649-7433

Dalton Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
Technical Building, Room 112
213 North College Drive
Dalton, GA 30720-3745
(706) 272-2707

Decatur Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
DeKalb Chamber of Commerce
750 Commerce Drive
Decatur, GA 30030-2622
(404) 373-6930

Dublin Office

Georgia Southern University SBDC
1200 Bellevue Avenue
P. O. Box 818
Dublin, GA 31040-0818
(478) 274-2496

Duluth Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
3675 Crestwood Parkway, Suite 280
Duluth, GA 30096-1802
(770) 806-2124

Gainesville Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
604 Washington Street, N.W., Suite B-2
Gainesville, GA 30501-8544
(770) 531-5681

Kennesaw Office

Kennesaw State University SBDC
1000 Chastain Road
Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591
(770) 423-6450

Macon Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
401 Cherry Street, Suite 701
Macon, GA 31201-3384
(478) 751-6592

Morrow Office

Clayton College and State University SBDC
5900 North Lee Street
Morrow, GA 30260-1250
(770) 961-3440

Rome Office

Floyd College SBDC
415 East Third Avenue
Rome, GA 30161-3241
(706) 295-6326

Savannah Office

The University of Georgia Business Outreach Services/SBDC
111 East Liberty Street, Suite 200
Savannah, GA 31401-4410
(912) 651-3200

Statesboro Office

Georgia Southern University SBDC
College of Business Admin.
Statesboro, GA 30460-8156
(912) 681-5194

Valdosta Office

Valdosta State University SBDC
College of Business Administration
Thaxton Hall
Valdosta, GA 31698-0065
(229) 245-3738

GEORGIA SBDC NETWORK
BUSINESS OUTREACH SERVICES



The University of Georgia



**Business Outreach Services/
Georgia SBDC Network
Chicopee Complex
1180 East Broad Street
Athens, GA 30602-5412**

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