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## TADs Vital to Economic Development in Atlanta

On Monday, June 8, the Atlanta Board of Education approved a resolution affirming its participation in two city of Atlanta tax allocation districts: the BeltLine TAD and the Perry-Bolton TAD. We are pleased that a resolution has been reached on this matter that will benefit all the citizens of Atlanta and Atlanta Public Schools (APS). Educational achievement and economically vibrant neighborhoods go hand in hand. We look forward to continuing to partner with APS in ways that improve the quality of life in Atlanta's communities.

Under the resolution, all of the retroactive school district tax increment collected in the BeltLine and Perry-Bolton TADs will be released to APS, and APS reaffirmed its commitment to participate in both TADs. This agreement will help APS meet its needs in the short term and maintain momentum for the BeltLine project and the Perry-Bolton area in northwest Atlanta.

ADA now turns its focus to receiving APS consent and participation for the city's final four TADs. ADA hopes that investment by the city of Atlanta, Fulton County and Atlanta Public Schools can lay the foundation to turn around the areas in and around Greenbriar Mall, Turner Field, Lakewood Fairgrounds, Fort McPherson, Bowen Homes, Bankhead Courts and Atlanta Industrial Park, which have suffered decades of disinvestment. The final four TADs, sometimes referred to as the Commercial Corridor TADs, will operate as pay-as-you-go TADs, which opens the door to small-scale and mid-size projects. Bond issuances may be used in addition to pay-as-you-go when the scale of a project would support such financing. "These areas of the city need every incentive available in the toolkit," says Cheryl Strickland, Managing Director of TAD Programs at ADA. "Without the help of APS, we can't guarantee anything will happen, which would be a shame. It's about equitable investment and equitable development."

TADs are a national redevelopment best practice, and they are playing a major role in Atlanta's revitalization, according to a study released in 2007 that provides a first look at finances and growth rates for Georgia's tax districts. "They promote redevelopment in areas that were underutilized, and they're doing it in a way that lets new development - not the average taxpayer - pay for the public projects needed to make the development happen," says Jim Durrett, executive director of the Livable Communities Coalition.

Over the next 25 years, these four TADs have the potential to create 16,000 new jobs, add 5.7 million square feet of commercial space, yield more than \$255 million in new sales tax revenue, grow property tax revenues in the districts by 70 percent and attract a staggering \$5 billion in new private investment.

## An Online Community for Atlanta

The Atlanta Development Authority is pleased to announce its collaboration with Public Broadcasting Atlanta. Our partnership involves a new online community being developed by PBA called Lens on Atlanta, which will be generally available in early August.



Lens on Atlanta is a first-of-its-kind social community that gives regional institutions, community organizations, activists and individuals a free social media/Web 2.0 platform. The tools will allow us to build stronger relationships, engage the community and raise awareness of our community initiatives. PBA is committed to strengthening the metro Atlanta community by leveraging the power of digital communications.

The online community allows organizations and individuals to utilize free social media tools such as forums, wikis and blogs. This Web site is a place where people can learn about what others are doing to improve the metro area. Users can connect and create conversations around issues that are important to them with the goal of creating positive change in the community. Here are some features of the Lens on Atlanta community:

**Friends:** Search user profiles and look for colleagues in your organization who have already joined Lens on Atlanta. Once you see someone who you'd like to connect with, click the "befriend" button on their profile page. You'll be able to easily connect with them and share information via a link on your profile.

**Forums:** One of the best ways to introduce yourself to the Lens on Atlanta community is through the forums section. Forums enable open discussions about topics and issues that are important to the community. Feel free to post a comment on another member's thread topic, or you can start your own thread on an existing forum.

**Blogs:** Lens on Atlanta allows each user to create and easily update a blog for their organization or an area of personal interest. A blog allows you to provide information about a certain area of expertise, share timely information or facilitate conversations with other members. When setting up a blog, keep your blog summary short and to the point.

**Media:** Lens on Atlanta allows users to upload photos, audio and video to the site. This user-generated feature enables you to share media that is relevant to your audience and can be an engaging way to attract viewers or members to your content.

**Other features:** Tagging allows Lens on Atlanta visitors to search for content based on common words. For example, if your content pertains to a transportation issue in Dekalb County, you may want to tag the information with "Dekalb County," "transportation," or other key words to distinguish your content.

If you or your organization would like to join ADA in the Beta test phase of the Lens on Atlanta community, contact Sonya Moste or Kathleen Poe in ADA's marketing department for information on how to get started.

## The New Schools at Carver Celebrates its "Legacy Class"

Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur Blank and the nation's top superintendent gathered last month to congratulate 273 graduates from The New Schools at Carver. As members of the "Legacy Class," Carver's first graduates from the transformed high schools will go on to college with more than \$18 million in scholarship offers.

Dr. Hall congratulated the students for exceeding all expectations. What began as "an idea in a board room," Dr. Hall said, has now become "the blueprint by which the district will graduate 98 percent of its students prepared for college and career." Fueled by the success of Carver students, APS plans to transform all its high schools into smaller learning environments over the next few years.

Arthur M. Blank, owner of the Atlanta Falcons and co-founder of The Home Depot, also shared praise for Carver's graduates.

"It was a bold experiment," said Blank, whose Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation has invested heavily in academic programs at the school. "It took the courage to try something new. Now that special day has arrived."

Blank noted that Carver students would go on to attend some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the country. He challenged the Legacy Class of 2009 to continue their path to success, armed with a "curious mind, a competitive spirit and a compassionate heart."

"We never gave up. We kept moving forward to our personal best," said senior Khali Jones, valedictorian of the School of Health Sciences and Research and a Gates Millennium Scholar. "We all have done what few thought we would."

## ARCHE Report Quantifies Return on Investing in Education

According to a report released by the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education on May 19, the amount of education Georgians attain plays a major role in quality of life, job success and many other measures of prosperity for individuals and society.



"Higher Return: How Investing in Education Pays off For Georgia" - online at [www.atlantahighered.org/ReturnOnInvestment](http://www.atlantahighered.org/ReturnOnInvestment) - shows that education is a smart investment for Georgians and their state. It documents how education at all levels pays off for individuals in measures ranging from higher salaries to home ownership to children who tend to do better in school. Benefits to the state include a more talented workforce, higher tax revenues, lower spending for prisons and public assistance, and healthier citizens. Some findings:

- Georgians with a bachelor's degree or higher average twice the income - and half the unemployment - of high school graduates.
- One-fourth of adult Georgians who did not finish high school live in poverty.
- In Georgia homes where no one finished high school, more than half of children under 17 live in poverty.
- On average, because of higher income, a Georgian with a bachelor's degree pays 72 percent more in state and local taxes than a person with a high school degree.
- Eighty-six percent of prisoners in Georgia did not continue education past high school. Their incarceration costs Georgia nearly \$800 million annually.
- The strong correlation between education and income is evident among Georgia counties, with only 11 of 159 counties exceeding the U.S. average for educational attainment.

The report, sponsored in part by the Georgia Power Foundation and the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, analyzes data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey and other federal and state government data sources. Data was compiled and analyzed for ARCHE by Human Capital Research Corporation.

"The numbers are dramatic - when we invest in education, as individuals and as a society, there are clear and measurable returns," said ARCHE President Michael A. Gerber. "And if we fail to invest, we pay the costs."

### **Better Jobs, Less Poverty**

The report compares Georgia salaries for high school graduates to those of college grads in jobs ranging from auto mechanics to sales reps. A retail salesperson with a bachelor's degree, for example, makes on average more than twice as much (\$53,121) than a salesperson with a high school diploma (\$26,293).

The report also shows that the odds of living in poverty plummet as education levels rise. About one-fourth of adult Georgians who didn't finish high school live in poverty. That percentage drops rapidly as education levels increase.

### **More Taxes Collected, Less Spent**

The state is perhaps the biggest beneficiary of higher education levels. If just 1 percent of Georgia's workers with high school diplomas moved into the bachelor's degree category, Georgia would gain an additional \$32 million more per year in state and local taxes (\$1.2 billion over a 40-year working-life period).

On the other hand, people with lower levels of education receive the majority of spending for public assistance and prisons. In addition, about 64 cents of every dollar Georgia spends on public assistance goes to citizens with a high school diploma or less.

### **Key Determinant of Well Being**

Chart after chart in the report shows education as key to a better quality of life:

- Homeownership, the American dream, has a strong correlation to education level.
- States that rank low in education levels rank higher in households that have difficulty providing enough food for all members.
- Georgia students who have college-educated parents score higher on the SAT.
- Georgians 65 and older with more education are less likely to report difficulty performing a wide range of activities.

### **ABOUT ARCHE**

The Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education brings together 19 Atlanta-area public and private colleges and universities. Founded in 1938, ARCHE builds awareness of the size, scope, impact and value of higher education and helps its members share strengths through cooperative programs. Visit [www.atlantahighered.org](http://www.atlantahighered.org) for information about ARCHE, its members, and its reports.

## Upcoming Economic Development Events

**BeltLine Bus Tours.** Inman Park MARTA station, 9:30 a.m., Fridays and Saturdays weekly. Free. Register for the tour at <http://www.beltline.org/GetInvolved/TourtheBeltLine/tabid/1746/Default.aspx>

June 12-September 16, **America I AM: The African American Imprint.** Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center. "America I AM" celebrates 500 years of African American contributions to our society through artifacts, documents, multimedia, photos and music. For more information visit [www.americiam.org](http://www.americiam.org).

June 13, **14th Annual Reynoldstown Wheelbarrow Festival.** 11 a.m.-11 p.m. at the intersection of Kirkwood and Flat Shoals Avenues. The theme for this year's festival is "Taking it to the Streets" where neighbors and other city residents will have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of fun activities including a barbeque cook-off, an artist market, a parade, musical performances on two stages, and a health fair. All proceeds from the festival go to neighborhood revitalization and public safety. For more information visit <http://wheelbarrowfestival.com/>.

June 16, **Symposium on India and the US: Challenges and Prospects.** 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Metro Atlanta Chamber, 235 Andrew Young International Blvd. The 3rd Annual India-USA symposium will include: Ken Stewart, Commissioner, the Georgia Department of Economic Development; Banashri Bose Harrison, Honorable Minister (Commerce), Indian Embassy, Washington, DC; Sanjiv Arora, Consul General of India, Houston; Pete Sinisgalli, President and CEO, Manhattan Associates, Inc.; Lalit Dhingra, President, NIIT Technologies, Inc.; and Ann Durham, President of Global Vehicles. \$90. For more information contact Ric Hubler at [rhubler@macoc.com](mailto:rhubler@macoc.com).

June 24, **Small Business Monthly Information Session.** 5 p.m. at the offices of the Atlanta Development Authority. To RSVP, send an e-mail to [cbrackett@atlantada.com](mailto:cbrackett@atlantada.com) or call (404) 614-8295.

July 4, **AJC Peachtree Road Race.** From Lenox Square Mall to Piedmont Park.

July 29, **Small Business Monthly Information Session.** 5 p.m. at the offices of the Atlanta Development Authority. To RSVP, send an e-mail to [cbrackett@atlantada.com](mailto:cbrackett@atlantada.com) or call (404) 614-8295.

July 29-August 2, **National Black Arts Festival.** Various venues around Atlanta. For more information visit <http://www.nbaf.org/>.



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