

STATE STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision for Georgia

Georgia is a state blessed with bountiful resources and great people. It is the fastest growing state east of the Mississippi River and is known worldwide as a place in which the environment for business is positive and the quality of life for its citizens is excellent. However, no state can rest on its laurels and expect its economy to continue to flourish and its citizens to grow and prosper. We must maintain our positive national status, but we have new work that must be done to expand our prosperity to all regions of the state and solve issues that threaten our continued success. There are eight areas upon which state government and the people of Georgia must focus to achieve a better Georgia in the new millennium. We start from a great position. We also have formidable challenges. Together we can build the Georgia of the new century by focusing on the education of our people, the health of our citizens, the health of our economy, the stewardship and smart management of our growth, the improvement of our environment, the safety of our communities and a government that is accountable to the taxpayers, the citizens whom government serves. Finally, we must embrace and expand the capacity and the use of all forms of technology, particularly information technology, to achieve success in all elements of our society.

Education for Georgia's Future

Our state has a strong foundation for educating all of our citizens. However, we must do better. We must act upon our belief that every child in our state can learn, and that no child should be left behind. In the global marketplace of the new millennium, Georgia must improve the education services that we provide our citizens, from birth through lifelong learning opportunities and all education components in between. To improve these education services, the state must focus upon the results that we want our education programs to produce. To make this progress in education results, we must have improved cooperation and communication among all education components at the state, regional and local levels. Additionally, we must develop a system of accountability for all components of the education system. This focus upon accountability will require the development of a measurement system and a student information system that track the progress of every student, at every level of their education experience. The final outcome will be a dynamic education system that delivers on the promise of a quality education for every citizen. Every citizen, our economy, our communities and our society will be the winners for this focus and effort.

Safe Communities and Safe Citizens

Our state and its citizens enjoy a superior quality of life. However, we must be ever vigilant to provide each citizen and community with a sense of security and real safety. No citizen or visitor to this state should fear for his or her safety on our streets, in our neighborhoods or in any community anywhere in Georgia. This requires Georgia to first focus upon the prevention of crime. When crime does occur, however, we must demand and produce swift and accurate justice and provide appropriate sanctions for those offenders who chose to commit

crime against the citizens of this state. Our judicial system must be well equipped and staffed to ensure that justice is swift and fair. Our law enforcement community must have the tools and the manpower to prevent crime by its presence and interaction with the community. There must be adequate staffing and equipment to respond quickly and efficiently to crime when it occurs. Finally, we must provide sufficient secure facilities to protect society from violent and dangerous felons.

Statewide Economic Prosperity

Georgia has enjoyed rich economic growth over the past several years. It is imperative that we continue to enhance the business environment of the state to compete in the global economy. As a regional leader in the South, Georgia must capitalize on the technology resources and infrastructure that we now have to attract new businesses and to keep and expand existing business. As the global and national economies become increasingly knowledge-based, information-driven, and service delivery-focused, we must position Georgia and its citizens to take advantage of these new and emerging markets. We must also focus on bringing economic vitality to all of rural Georgia by investing in economic development strategies and the infrastructure that value innovation, attract businesses and keep communities vital and viable. With the entire world as a market, we must help localities formulate ideas and create businesses and strategies that meet this new international market for products and services. In concert with the state's education reform efforts, we must ensure that Georgia's workforce is well prepared, educated and trained. New and existing businesses must have a qualified workforce to create economic prosperity for Georgia. We must always provide a positive environment for business to flourish and ensure a quality of life that will attract companies to locate and thrive here.

Transportation and Land Use Planning

The metropolitan areas of Georgia have experienced remarkable and prosperous economic and physical growth over the past two decades. Many of this state's metropolitan counties are among the fastest growing counties in the United States. While this has been a blessing for the economic prosperity of our citizens, it has also created challenges for the continued exceptional quality of life that we enjoy throughout Georgia. The orderly development of our metropolitan communities is required to protect our water and air quality, to improve our commute times and reduce traffic congestion, to protect our "green spaces" and to promote our overall quality of life that every citizen demands and deserves. The balancing of growing our economy and building businesses while ensuring a good quality of life for each citizen must be carefully managed for 'good' growth. With better coordination and collaboration between local entities and the state, we must ensure that wise transportation and land use decisions are made when we add housing and business developments and new business centers. Our cities and communities in the metropolitan areas of Georgia must be livable, prosperous, clean, safe and places where people want to work and can enjoy their lives in the way they choose. These are communities where commerce can thrive.

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Clean Environment and Water Stewardship

Georgia's natural resources are vast and impressive. We must never reduce our commitment to keeping these resources clean and wholesome for our present citizens as well as for future generations. This will require a united front from government, business, communities and individual citizens. Clean air, water and soil are critical components of a successful state and a positive quality of life. We must conserve when needed. We must clean up our mistakes of the past. We must ensure that the infrastructure for water and sewer statewide is modern and safe. Our rivers and lakes must be clean, and our water sources must be protected and preserved. And we must be vigilant in our wastewater management to support our overall water resource management. Without clean air, water and soil, we cannot have healthy citizens and our ability to attract and keep business will be negatively impacted. We must have the resolve to be vigilant in balancing our needs for growth with our needs to have healthy citizens and communities. We must forever protect our natural resources for today and in the future.

Community Health

A strong state is made up of strong and healthy citizens and communities. The continuing shift in healthcare delivery across America has created challenges for our state to ensure that all citizens receive the healthcare that they need. With pressing issues of healthcare costs and medical insurance coverage for all citizens, the state must continue its efforts to control state associated healthcare costs and provide the necessary insurance coverage to indigent children who are not insured. Georgia needs a healthcare system that works in the marketplace but also provides medical care for every Georgian who needs that care. This requires a strong partnership among the medical delivery system, the insurance industry and the state to maximize citizens access to comprehensive healthcare. Good healthcare systems that provide comprehensive, accessible and efficient medical care for citizens are important to the economic vitality of the state.

Accountable Government

Good government is an important component of a successful state and community. Government can broker alliances with the private sector and citizens to foster solutions to many issues. A successful state government should not get in the way of its law-abiding, tax-paying citizens. Georgia's state government must be managed to provide the maximum of responsive, useful and excellent services for the minimum, most efficient cost. Citizens trust government that provides services they need and that can show results of the programs that are provided. In education, every citizen should know if our children and students have learned the curriculum that they are expected to

learn. In the environment, citizens want to know if the air and water is cleaner. If targets and improvements are not achieved in these and other areas, then strategies can be implemented to get the results that citizens need and demand. State government can manage its programs more effectively and efficiently if it measures results for accountability purposes. The taxpayers must always be able to determine the value of what they get for their tax investment.

Technology

Every other component discussed in this vision cannot be achieved without the integrated use of technology throughout Georgia and at all levels of government in our state. The global marketplace is becoming a knowledge-based economy. Information and the quick access to that information will be the critical component in achieving the success we have outlined in education, community and citizen safety, statewide economic development, well managed growth for Georgia, a clean environment and water stewardship, community health and finally, an accountable and good government. Technology will provide the connectivity between all elements of government, the private sector and Georgia's citizens. Georgia must build the technology infrastructure and capacity to compete in this new global marketplace. Georgia must also ensure that we have a technology-literate citizenry and workforce. The new millennium will bring enormous challenges but also remarkable opportunities for Georgia. Our state, its businesses and its citizens must be connected to that world of the 21st century to prosper, and technology will provide that connection.

Conclusion

The future of Georgia is bright and full of promise. We must rededicate our efforts to provide quality education for all Georgians of all ages. We must provide for the safety of all our citizens and communities. We must foster a prosperous economic environment. Because of our successes in economic development, we must manage the development and population growth through good transportation and land use planning. We must ensure a clean environment and proper stewardship of all of our water resources. We must enable a comprehensive healthcare process that provides access to adequate healthcare to all Georgians. We must demand and deliver a good and accountable state government that provides effective and efficient services and programs. And, finally, we must embrace and expand technology in the lives of all citizens to achieve all of the above goals.