**Diverse, Forward-Thinking Economy Issue Work Group Identifies Innovators**

“We could be called the cutting edge manufacturing capital... or the innovation and applied technology capital of the world.” This statement echoes the sentiment from the Work Group after hearing about the findings from an inventory of local business innovations. Examples from the list include:

- Protective coating for wind turbines
- Industrial robotic equipment
- Advanced adhesives
- Lubricants for diesel engines
- Testing laboratory
- Dalton Utilities’ OptiLink fiber optics network to every premise
- Dalton Utilities: a “living laboratory” for green technology
- Largest solar plant in GA
- Largest wastewater reuse project in U.S.
- GEO Hay and Building Products using recycled materials
- Advanced medical center known for stroke care and da Vinci Surgical Robotic System
- Food industry additives and chemical processing components

The Work Group continues to explore possibilities for establishing a business incubator program, identifying existing resources that support business creation.

**Successful, Sustainable Industries Issue Work Group Explores Local Perceptions of Floorcovering Industry**

UGA Candidate for Masters in Business Administration (MBA) student Charles Simpson has worked under the direction of the Successful, Sustainable Industries Issue Work Group to articulate the difficulties that our local industries face in attracting a qualified workforce, and to begin to develop a marketing campaign to address those difficulties. Charles is living and working in Dalton this summer and is currently gathering qualitative and quantitative information from community and industry leaders and from students.

**Prenatal to Pre-K Issue Work Group Focuses on Nutrition**

This summer, the Prenatal to Pre-K Issue Work Group is supporting existing efforts related to nutrition education, tapping Dalton State College students to assist with educational programs and information distribution at area camps, food distribution sites and other events.

**K-12 Education Issue Work Group Explores Recommendations to Improve Local Systems**
Earlier this year, the K-12 Issue Work Group identified the following four weaknesses as the top issues facing our local school systems:

(1) **We have an outdated mental model of “how we do school.”** The way that we have done school over the past several generations is no longer the best/most relevant way in this “digital age.” We need to reconsider the role of administrators, teachers, and students. Is there a new mental model that we need to be creating?

(2) **We have outdated curriculum.** To address this weakness, we need to know what knowledge has value in today’s society and, better yet, what knowledge will have value in tomorrow’s society.

(3) **We are underutilizing technology.** For the most part, we are using technology in our education system to do “the same old thing.” Primarily, it is a teaching tool and not a learning tool. How can we better utilize the technology that we have?

(4) **We have disconnected families.** As education evolves and family make-ups change, we need to reconsider the role of the family in education. It is no longer appropriate for the family to simply drop their child off at the school house door.

The K-12 Issue Work Group continues its work on creating a list of possible recommendations for addressing these four issues.

**Higher Education Issue Work Group Explores Opportunities for Internships and Enhancing Technical Education**

The Higher Education Issue Work Group recognizes that there are not enough co-ops/internships for high school and college students in the community. A team is currently working with the schools to determine the needs and areas of concentration for these “hands-on” educational opportunities. In addition, a survey was distributed to community and business leaders in an effort to identify possible career and workplace opportunities that might be available and to determine factors influencing those opportunities.

The Higher Education Issue Work Group is working with Jeff Fletcher, a recent UGA graduate with a Masters of Business Administration, to bolster the image of technical jobs, as an avenue for recruiting more students into technical education. The group is organizing and sponsoring a weeklong summer camp for middle school students on June 13-17. The camp focuses on Design, Technology and Manufacturing, reaching almost 30 students with hands-on learning and career exploration.

Additionally, members of the work group and others from our community traveled to Newnan, GA, for a tour of the Central Education Center on May 4. The Central Education Center is well-known for its strong partnership with local industry and for its exceptional technical/career readiness programs.
**Landscape Designs Are Being Created for Local Greenways, Parks and Trails**

The Archway Partnership placed landscape architecture student interns in the community this summer to work on designs for several community projects. Two interns are working with the City of Dalton to design hiking and biking trails and another intern is working with Whitfield County to propose design enhancements to parks and recreation facilities and create a farmers market design concept.

**Downtown Dalton Issue Work Group Hears Report from MBA Students**

Two students from the UGA Terry College of Business presented their research findings to the members of the Vibrant Downtown Issue Work Group on May 6. The students presented information regarding the businesses/types of businesses that can be financially feasible and successful in a downtown area, and identified how similar communities have recruited those businesses. Second, the students compared our downtown to others to identify potential obstacles to recruitment, such as zoning restrictions and operational policies, and presented recommendations for drawing visitors and local citizens to the downtown area. Third, the students studied how successful non-chain businesses can be maintained in downtowns.

**Arts and Culture Issue Work Group Creates Inventory and List of Priorities**

Efforts to compile a comprehensive inventory of arts and cultural assets are underway. While this inventory will require constant updating, the goal is to establish a baseline of opportunities that can guide marketing efforts targeting both residents and visitors. The inventory includes galleries, studios, festivals, markets, performances, arts and music instruction, dance, exhibits and displays, tours, literary events, lectures, theater, and many other community assets.

Over the summer, the group is focusing their efforts on gathering information to support their top priorities from the “wish list”: Performing Arts Center, Arts and Culture Consortium, and Industrial Heritage and Future. A number of studies from earlier efforts to establish a performing arts center in the community are available and will need updating based on current desires for uses of the center, funding options and other factors. The work group also plans to gather best practices related to the establishment of a consortium to support arts and culture. This consortium is not expected to include fundraising as a responsibility; rather it will focus on marketing and coordination of efforts among community entities. Acknowledging that other Archway Partnership efforts are focusing on the floorcovering industry’s image, history and future, the group will work cooperatively with other established work groups to determine shared action plans.
TRANSPORTATION

At its June meeting, the Archway Executive Committee decided to form an Issue Work Group to focus on transportation issues, a priority identified in the listening session and subsequent visioning process. An organizational meeting will be scheduled in late July or August to prioritize efforts and create a work plan.