December 4, 2006

Dear All:

Attached you will find the complete set of recommendations that has been received from the community so far. You have worked very hard to create these solutions to address poverty in our community and to improve the quality of life for all Athenians. Thank you for your work!

There are over 100 recommendations addressing a variety of issues including Education, Early Learning, Dependent Care, the Economy, Housing, Health, Workforce, Mentoring, Service Providers, Transportation, and Adult Education.

Your participation and recommendations have made several things very clear. First, poverty affects all of us. It reflects negatively on our community and limits economic growth. Poverty makes government, education, health care, and social services more expensive not just for the poor, but for everyone.

As a community we have learned that the issues of poverty are interrelated and must be addressed with a holistic approach. High expectations must be maintained not only of our citizens, but also of our institutions. Business as usual is not working. To break the cycle of poverty we need innovation and creativity.

During the next two months we will continue working with the committee chairs and Steering Committee to research and refine the recommendations. The Steering Committee will agree upon the set of PPA recommendations at its retreat in February. These PPA recommendations will be posted on the web and discussed with you at Town Meetings in March prior to them being sent to the Co-Conveners for their approval. Your continued involvement is critical to ultimate success.

Thank you for your commitment to our community!

Sincerely,
Steve Jones, Chairman
Partners For A Prosperous Athens

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:

A key element in improving the quality of life for those in poverty is access to good paying jobs with benefits. New job creation is best achieved through a coordinated regional approach. The region has not consistently approached new job creation in this manner.

Committee Recommendation:

Athens-Clarke County should partner with other area counties to create a regional economic development entity responsible for proactively marketing the region to prospects interested in establishing new operations in the region.

Research/information used to validate this recommendation:

Discussions with local and statewide economic development professionals.
Review of selected new industry prospects who chose not to locate in Athens-Clarke County.
Observations of other areas where this strategy seems to be working well (i.e., "Research Triangle.")
Discussions with Board of the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center.

Additional information/research needed:

1. Does our region have a market niche?
2. What are possible niches that would be practical for this new entity to pursue? Can a niche be developed for bio-tech and "culture industries" or retirement industry?
3. Is there public and/or private sector support for a "focused business park" for the high tech or bio-tech industry?
4. Is the "retirement industry" an obvious opportunity? If so, do strategies need to be developed and implemented to address additional medical service needs and housing needs?
5. Detailed strategy/implementation documents from other areas who have implemented a regional economic program. Should especially address financial issues.
6. Are there other regions with similar characteristics to the Athens area where this is working?
7. How can the region address transportation needs as a part of a regional economic development strategy?

Input from groups/people to help clarify this recommendation:

- Drew Page, Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Foundation
- Georgia Power Company Economic Development staff.
- Georgia Department of Economic Development staff
- 316 Joint Bio-Tech Authority
- Oconee Co economic development representative
- Local medical service providers and persons familiar with communities who have successfully developed a strategy for attracting retirees.

Actions and Resources Necessary to Implement:

Political buy-in and funding from participating counties.
Financial support from private sector.

Anticipated Reactions -
- **In Support:** General public; some elected officials; ACCEDF; statewide economic developers; GA Department of Economic Development; University of Georgia; Athens Technical College.
- **In Opposition:** Some elected officials; some existing industry.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:

Retention and expansion of existing business and industry is the most effective and efficient method to create new jobs. There are inadequate strategies in place to encourage retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Committee Recommendation:

Develop adequate strategies and funding alternatives to encourage retention and expansion of existing businesses. Action steps:

- Survey existing businesses to determine gaps in desired services and barriers (real and perceived) to expansion. Utilize the resources of SBDC and EDF for existing information.
- Establish a council group (such as a coalition of area Chambers of Commerce) to meet regularly and work cooperatively to develop programs to nurture existing businesses. Athens Area Chamber of Commerce should take the lead in organizing this council.
- Establish a function in Athens-Clarke County government to serve as a central resource for new businesses startups and expansions. This entity would provide information and technical assistance for issues such as permitting, licensing, process, etc.
- Develop and execute a formal program for community leaders to make in-person visits to corporate offices of every major business or industry in ACC, inviting them to expand their operations.
- Explore possibilities of new business capital through "bond funds" or "investors clubs."
- Widely publicize the removal of barriers to new business expansion or creation.
- Encourage ACC citizens to support the local economy through "buying local."
- Enhance recognition programs for ACC businesses through the media and existing organizations.

Research/information used to validate this recommendation:

Input from committee members in business or familiar with business practices.

Additional information/research needed:

- Formal survey of existing businesses to determine present and future needs and to identify barriers that may cause them not to expand here.
- Briefing from Small Business Development Center to supplement individual interviews with businesses.

Input from groups/people to help clarify this recommendation:

Ongoing input should be received from:

- Athens Area Chamber of Commerce (Rich Cary)
- Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Foundation (Drew Page)
- Local business and industry representatives who have expanded recently or are considering expanding.
- ACC Department of Human and Economic Development (Katherine Hogue)
- Oconee Chamber of Commerce (Charles Grimes)
- Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (Jim Dove)
- Georgia Power Company (Jim Sykes)

Actions and Resources Necessary to Implement:

Commitment of entities listed above to create and implement these recommendations.

Anticipated Reactions -
- **In Support:** Business community.

- **In Opposition:** Those required to change processes or to create new processes.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

I. **List the Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:**

- **WRITE THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION** (limit focus to one subject or action item, more than one recommendation may be needed to address a particular learning):**
Pursue Passenger Rail (Brain Train) between Athens and Atlanta as an economic opportunity for Athens.

- **Identify any research, or other kinds of information that was used to craft this recommendation.** (add additional sheets as necessary)

- **Identify additional research or information that could help clarify this committee recommendation. List potential sources if possible.**

- **Indicate people or groups that we need to talk to help clarify this committee recommendation. List any recommended locations.**

- **What kind of action or resources would be necessary to implement the recommendation?**

II. **Indicate what forces and influences are likely to occur that will support or oppose implementation.**
  Forces that support (please list):

  Forces that oppose (please list):

**As information is received and/or clarified, these potential recommendations may change or be discarded.

>
>
>Committee/Sub-Committee:
>- Select only one -
>
>
>List the Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:

>
>Write the Committee Recommendation:
>When seeking new businesses for the community, attend to the impact of the
>business on quality of life. Target attraction efforts for "desirable businesses."
>
>For example, a few low-level jobs that also come with high levels of
>pollution will cost the community more in health care over time.
>
>It would be wise to identify particular kinds of businesses to
>cultivate/target, in order to maximize resources.
>
>
>Identify any research or other kinds of information that was used to craft
>this recommendation:
>Health care costs contribute to poverty levels, and impact the community
>as a whole.
>
>A targeted effort for "desireable businesses" is likely to be more
>effective than a scatter-shot appraoch.
>
>
>Identify additional research or information that could help clarify this
>committee recommendation. List potential sources if possible.
>Check with NE GA Children's Env Health Coalition for more info.
>
>
>Indicate people or groups that we need to talk to help clarify this
>committee recommendation. List any recommended locations.
>NE GA Children's Env Health Coalition
>
>
>Forces that support:
>General community concerns about pollution. SBDC and other UGA resources
>that can help identify viable, desirable businesses.
>
>Forces that oppose:
>Individuals who see "all jobs/growth as good." Desperation leading to bad
>decisions, or poor decision-making processes.