

Progress Report First Quarter 2009



The second year of implementation for the Georgia Initiative is well underway and significant progress continues to be made towards the program's overall goal of transforming the Georgia Chamber into a more proactive organization that is well prepared to advance issues of importance to our state's business community.

From January through March, this was accomplished through:

- ✓ Improved communication to members and key stakeholders with the distribution and web-posting of a weekly electronic legislative update that highlighted key issues and made calls to action as required. The Chamber also conducted a bi-weekly conference call for local chamber of commerce leaders to keep them informed and advise when action was needed.
- ✓ Ensured focus on issues most important to Georgia business through the development and implementation of a new process to ensure that legislative positions recommended by the Chamber's Government Affairs Council were consistent with the policy positions advocated by the policy committees.
- ✓ Key issues during the 2009 legislative session included, but were not limited to taxation, transportation, trauma care, education and water management. (A complete overview of this year's legislative session is being developed.)
- ✓ Leveraged new policy department to improve advocacy through the creation and distribution of a series of white papers on trauma care and Medicaid funding that were used to support legislative efforts.
- ✓ Grew statewide presence through the distribution of monthly columns from the President & CEO to newspapers statewide, highlighting issues of importance to the business community.
- ✓ Ensured an ongoing impact on water management policy by submitting 170 potential candidates, of which 65 were chosen, to serve on the Regional Water Councils created by the Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan.
- ✓ Expanded the involvement of business leaders from throughout the state through the appointment of 130 business leaders to policy committees for the 2009 term. (Members and current policy statements are listed on the Georgia Chamber website.)
- ✓ Initiated preparations for the 2010 election cycle through the creation of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce Independent Expenditure, for which fundraising efforts will begin later this year. This entity will allow the Chamber to have a voice in elections and ensure that the candidates elected are friendly to business.
- ✓ Gained key information about Georgia's business community by conducting a survey of current and past members to assess the impacts of the current economic recession and gain insight into how the Chamber can be a stronger resource to the business community. (Results will be available in May.)