

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY NEWS

Education and Training Key to Economic Growth

**By: Michael Thurmond
Georgia Commissioner
of Labor**



Michael Thurmond

The Great Recession is reaping a bitter harvest of job losses and deep budget cuts throughout Georgia's public education and training system.

Although federal stimulus dollars are providing some temporary relief, more than \$1 billion in state funding has been slashed from Georgia's K-12 and post-secondary education budgets.

Budget shortfalls have forced educational leaders to institute furloughs and/or lay-offs.

"Non-essential" classes in music and foreign languages are disappearing.

Sadly, athletic and enrichment programs for students with disabilities are being reduced or eliminated. As Georgia's budget crisis deepens, economists are making dire predictions of continuing declines in state revenues.

Absent a quicker-than-expected economic rebound, additional federal stimulus or new sources of revenue, more draconian budget cuts are inevitable.

Georgia's public education and training system is standing at the proverbial crossroads between continued progress and a return to mediocrity.

Further reductions in state education budgets will cripple the development of Georgia's 21st century workforce. Now is not the time to drastically reduce investments in our children's future.

Ironically, this severe

economic downturn presents Georgia with an unprecedented opportunity to increase our competitive advantage by improving the quality of our most valuable economic development resource -- Georgia's workforce.

A thorough and thoughtful debate must be had regarding the potential impact of additional budget cuts to Georgia's public education and training system.

The critical question must be raised: Should Georgia's political, educational and business leaders support accessing alternative or new funding streams to protect and improve the quality of public education in our state?

Despite the economic downturn, strategic investments in cost-effective programs will assure the development of a skilled and productive Georgia workforce. I offer three examples where increased funding will pay huge dividends:

(1) Expand parental involvement initiatives. Fledgling school-based parent involvement programs are

critical to the long-term development of our children and educational system. Students whose parents are involved in their educational careers have higher high school and college graduation rates, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

(2) Promote increased respect for school-to-work initiatives. Georgia's high school co-enrollment programs, apprenticeships, internships, technical, career and agricultural programs are important tools in preparing students for the workforce.

School-to-work initiatives, like the Georgia Department of Labor's Jobs for Georgia Graduates (JGG) program, help reduce the drop-out rate. JGG provides "at risk" students with pre-employment and job development training. During the 2008 school year, 95 percent of JGG's 794 participating seniors from 36 schools earned a high school diploma.

(3) Strengthen Georgia's technical and two-year colleges. For high school graduates not interested or ready to enter a four-year college, two-year and technical colleges are solid options. These institutions are academically sound, less expensive and graduates start their careers sooner than four-year college graduates. Two-year and technical colleges also provide educational opportunities for adult workers seeking a change of career or expansion of their skill sets.

King of Pop...continued from page 3

is the best-selling album of all time, with an estimated 50 million copies sold worldwide.

At the time of his death, Jackson was rehearsing hard for what was to be his greatest comeback: He was scheduled for an unprecedented 50 shows at a London arena, with the first set for July 13.

The public first knew him as a boy in the late 1960s, when he was the precocious, spinning lead singer of the Jackson 5, the singing group he formed with his four older brothers out of



Michael Jackson

Gary, Ind. Among their No. 1 hits were "I Want You Back," "ABC" and "I'll Be There." He was perhaps the most

exciting performer of his generation, known for his backward-gliding moonwalk, his feverish, dance moves and his high-pitched singing, punctuated with squeals and titters, as was his ever-changing, surgically altered appearance.

At press time, funeral arrangements were incomplete.

Jackson leaves an indelible mark on the music world and entertainment industry that will continue to permeate for decades to come. His death leaves a tremendous void.

Director...continued from page 1

Centralia, Washington, is a seasoned professional with over twenty years of management and leadership experience in the non-profit sector.

He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Economics with an option in Management from Washington State University, Pullman, Washington and a Master of Arts Degree in Adult and Community Education from Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage, Alaska.

He served as Director of the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Anchorage, Alaska from 2001 - 2003 and as Rehabilitation Specialist from 1987 - 1995.

Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired is a 501C (3) organization

that provides vision rehabilitation services throughout Alaska. As Executive Director of the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, he managed and supervised all organizational affairs, and was responsible for the administration of direct fiscal, fund development, grant activities, public relations, and provided guidance with regard to vision rehabilitation to government, education, and business communities, as well as developed strategies for the long-term vitality of the agency.

His professional experiences also include: Access Technology Specialist with the Bartimaeus Group in McLean, Virginia (2000) and Computer Access Specialist at the Maine Center for the Blind in Portland, Maine

(1995 - 2000). A technology specialist and consultant, Mr. King is the owner of JimLKing.com Consulting Services, which provides assistive technology evaluation and training, worksite evaluation, braille literacy and communication skills training, and other services to individuals, state agencies, businesses, schools, and organizations.

He also develops on-line training materials, conducts workshops, and participates in public speaking events.

The Board of Directors is expecting great things from Mr. King. Please come and give him a big Savannah Welcome. For additional information, please call (912) 236-4473.

Savannah-Chatham BOE Announces Early Registration Dates, Summer Reading Information

For your convenience, the following opportunities are offered to expedite the registration and enrollment process.

You are encouraged to register prior to the first day of school, to ensure that your child is scheduled appropriately for classes.

Summer Registration Days/Dates:
Monday through Friday, July 20 through July 31.

Location:
The Board of Education;
208 Bull Street; room 103
Time: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Schedule Adjustments
All currently enrolled high school students will receive their schedule for the 2009-2010 school year in the mail.

The schedules will be mailed during the first week in August.

If a schedule is not received in the mail, please contact the school to schedule an appointment to pick up your schedule.

Schedule adjustment dates are available for students requesting schedule changes due to passing a course in summer school, etc.

These schedule changes can be made during "Enroll Me Monday's". Other times to make schedule changes will be granted by appointment only.

Enroll Me Mondays

The "Enroll Me Mondays" program provides an opportunity for parents and students to register for school, enroll in classes, and make preparation for a successful school year. The applicable dates, times, and locations are as follows:

August 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Beach High School
Groves High School
Jenkins High School
Johnson High School
Savannah Arts Academy
Savannah High School
Windsor Forest High School.

Reading and completing assignments over the summer has been a requirement in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System for many years.

What is new this summer is a unified plan for students in the district.

Previously, each school decided its own reading list and requirements for assignments.

This year, students in Grades K-12 will be required to read two selections from a district Reading Program list. In addition, a Reading Log will be kept for both books and an activity completed for one book, class time.

Summer Reading information is available on the district's website under the Academic Affairs section.

Meet Local Singles!!
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RENTALS AVAILABLE

- 505 W. 34th St. (2 Bedrooms)..... \$485
- 515 W. 33rd St. (3 Bedrooms)..... \$550
- 508 W. 33rd St. (3 Bedrooms)..... \$550
- 520 W. 33rd St. (3 Bedrooms)..... \$550
- 520 W. 34th St. (3 Bedrooms)..... \$550
- 412 W. 33rd St. (2 Bedrooms)..... \$485
- 414 W. 34th St. (3 Bedrooms)..... \$550
- 129 Millen St. (2 Bedrooms)..... \$400

