

May  
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# CEO Report

The Council for Economic Outreach will support local businesses that continue to grow, attract and assist start-ups eager to make the Gainesville area their home, and work with targeted industries to locate businesses in Gainesville/Alachua County. Our economic development program will provide better employment opportunities for a healthier community and become a successful model of collaboration by the local business community, municipal and county governments and the University of Florida and Santa Fe Community College.

As a shareholder in the Council for Economic Outreach, we know it is important to you that your investment is being managed and spent according to CEO's five-year strategic plan, Opportunity 2010.

An Oversight Committee consisting of CEO shareholders, will meet three times a year to represent the investors, ensuring that the organization is meeting its' goals and objectives and wisely managing your investment. The first meeting was held on April 4, 2007.

The Oversight Committee consists of:

- Eric Godet – Regeneration Technologies, Inc. (Committee Chair)
- Jack Bovay – Bovay, Cook & Ossi
- Sam Goforth – Wachovia
- Chic Holden – Holden, Rappenecker & Eubank, P.A.
- Dick Mahaffey – SunTrust Bank
- Susan Parrish – Coldwell Banker/MM Parrish Realtors
- Kathy Pierce – Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc.
- Ishmael Rentz – SL Construction & Remodeling, Inc.
- Michael Walsh – MM Parrish Construction Company

The CEO staff continues to work on our five-year strategic plan which focuses on expansion and retention of existing businesses, helping to "grow our own" through start-up ventures and attracting targeted industries to Alachua County. We appreciate these individuals serving on the committee and we appreciate your commitment to our economic development organization.

Thank you for your continued investment.

Sincerely,

Kinnon Thomas, Thomas Sound Group  
2007 Chair - Council for Economic Outreach

## Wal-Mart Distribution Center Opens

March 13 marked the official opening of the new Alachua Wal-Mart Distribution Center. CEO and the City of Alachua began collaborating on this project in 2002, when the site location search first began.

The distribution center provides high wage jobs to more than 650 people at an average wage of more than \$14 an hour. CEO helped Wal-Mart secure dollars from an Economic Development Transportation Fund through Enterprise Florida which helped in constructing an access road to the facility.

The massive center occupies 1.25 million square feet, housing 27 acres -- or 24 football fields -- under one roof. The parking lot alone contains 35 miles of striping. The Center will stock and shift inventory to 38 Wal-Mart stores across the Southeast.



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every path starts with passion

# Business Insight Status Report

The CEO Business Insight project is underway and has completed 15 Corporate Surveys. CEO is partnering with other agencies and economic development organizations in the state. Enterprise Florida is the lead organization for the Business Insight Program.

The survey being used has been developed to capture, analyze and provide reporting tools to establish a company's value to the community, growth potential, risk of downsizing or relocating, and satisfaction and employment trends.

The current surveys have been conducted with firms in several targeted business sectors, including, biotechnology, medical device manufacturing, mining & materials and multi-discipline engineering firms. Surveys are being conducted with senior leadership and managers.

Surveys indicate overall satisfaction with our community as a place to do business based on quality of life, advantages provided by the University of Florida and a generally manageable business environment. There is also an overall trend to expand and add jobs to the local Alachua County economy especially in the biotechnology and medical device manufacturing sectors.

The survey also uncovered some risks to growth and expansion. The most common stated issues were:

- 1) Difficulty in recruiting senior management and experienced technical positions;
- 2) Lack of facilities to support expansion in biotechnology sector such as wet labs;
- 3) Cost and reliability of flights from Gainesville Regional Airport;
- 4) Available jobs for trailing spouses and partners, and
- 5) Continuity of public policy towards encouraging growth of business. Property taxes and cost of housing for entry level and lower wage employees were also cited.

Surveys will continue and will extend to financial services, information technology, logistics/ warehousing, construction management, medical services and light manufacturing. CEO expects to conduct 50-60 surveys by Spring/Summer of 2007.

## Space/Land Task force

In response to a severe shortage of existing space and land for site location purposes, CEO has created a special task force dedicated to addressing this issue. The group is comprised of CEO investors with a keen knowledge of commercial real estate.

The group is currently evaluating the 2006-2007 CEO project demands, and the the sectors in which they fall (biotechnology, manufacturing, business services, distribution, etc). In addition, the group is performing an audit of all of the existing space/ land in Alachua County that is zoned for business or industrial interests.

The group will process this information and provide solutions that could vary from providing spec space in business or industrial parks to preparing land for immediate development in an ideal location.

## Santa Fe CIED Center Opens

Santa Fe Community College's Center for Business is evolving and the whole economy stands to benefit as it opens the doors to the new Center for Innovation and Economic Development (CIED) on University Avenue.

The Center features state of the art facilities including a lounge with wireless internet access, a mobile laptop lab for on-site training, smart whiteboards, and technology which syncs tablet PCs with projection displays. The facility is available for businesses who wish to rent space, one room of which can accommodate more than 50 people with breakout space. The center will also host a small incubator for emerging businesses which is anticipated to be fully operational in 2008.

President Jackson Sasser said "the Center for Innovation and Economic Development places us strategically in the renaissance of downtown Gainesville. The center is intentionally placed close to East Gainesville to which we've been committed for some time. Our concentration is to grow jobs that will support the community and sustain a good quality of life."

## First Quarter Projects by Industry Sector

Biotechnology - 5  
Business/Customer Service - 5  
Distribution - 3  
Engineering Services/Hi-Tech - 2  
Manufacturing - 1

