

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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**Economic Development Report  
October 2012**



**Pickens County Stop on the Georgia Power NW Georgia Tour for Statewide Economic Development Project Managers Highly Successful.**

*Strong Community Turnout and Quality Gifts Make Positive Impression*

When we were notified that Pickens County would be included as a stop this year on NW Georgia Tour for Statewide Project Managers, a group came together to decide what we would feature during the visit. Because time was limited this year to an hour, we decided the objective would be to focus on making a positive impression and limiting the locations so that they would stand out from the numerous others that the Project Managers would visit.

On the day of the visit, I boarded the bus at Airport Road in Cherokee County and while traveling to Pickens County, I provided a narrative about the community and highlighted items such as the Strategic Plan, quality of life, and ease of doing business. At the first stop we did a windshield tour of a proposed new industrial area in the southern part of the county followed by a stop at the airport where information about new development as well as the airport expansion was available at a reception attended by Chamber Board Members, Community Leaders, Elected Officials, and numerous individuals wishing to support our local economic development efforts.

Under an intense blue sky contrasting with the mountains clearly visible in almost all directions, Pickens representatives did an excellent job of sharing information about the area, making the visitors feel welcome, and leaving them with an extremely positive impression of our community. Because these Project Managers and others on the tour are the individuals that work directly with companies seeking to locate a new business or industry in Georgia, this positive impression will aid significantly in our efforts to enhance our competitive position. Many thanks to all that participated, your efforts made this a success.

The primary gifts for the visitors consisted of a bottle of wine of their choice produced locally at Sharp Mountain Vineyards, and a Marble Festival t-shirt incorporating the new bluegrass competition in an assortment of sizes. Having been on many of these tours, being given a gift like bottle of a wine that you actually select and will enjoy, as well as a nice shirt that actually fits, demonstrates the willingness of a community to go the extra mile and it definitely is noticed.

In response to my thank you note, Chuck Scragg, the Regional Project Manager with Georgia Power that arranged this tour wrote: *Actually, the thanks should be coming from me to you and the Pickens's community leadership. Not only did I not anticipate the number of local leaders, the unexpected gifts were fantastically received. I really appreciate the refreshments and snacks as well. You and Pickens county "were the talk of the tour".*

# Restaurant Interiors, Inc.

*"Business Without Boundaries"*

## Continued Efforts Result in Move to Holly Street Building

### *No Time Wasted*

The old saying about the "ink was barely dry" came to mind when after many months of work, an agreement was reached on a larger location to accommodate Restaurant Interiors need for space in order to retain the industry and jobs in Pickens County. A short-term lease was signed late Friday afternoon so that the company could begin moving equipment while the long term arrangements were processed. Business owners Steve Boudreau and Jeany Wegenstein wasted no time and began transferring machinery and materials the very next morning and by Monday morning work was taking place in the building on Holly Street.

The growth opportunity for Restaurant Interiors is tremendous and is being driven primarily by an aggressive remodeling initiative Burger King has embarked upon as they have transferred ownership of company owned stores to their most successful franchisees. This has also created new opportunities with other fast-food companies as well as for an expanded product line. Other companies in Pickens County that participate in the production of certain components, such as powder coating door frames, have also benefited from the business growth- which multiplies the job creation potential.

## Other Opportunities

We are in constant communication with the company and offering assistance on a wide range of issues as work continues on new the plant on Hood Road. It is hoped that permission for a public announcement will be given soon, but to date the company wishes for their name to be kept confidential. The target completion date is the end of the year with hiring and production planned for the first quarter of 2013.

Preliminary discussions are taking place with a company for the construction of a 100,000 square foot industrial building that would house manufacturing and warehousing operations. The construction would be completed late summer of next year and would generate 30 to 40 new job opportunities.

A company is seeking a building to use for a six month period with the potential for long term occupancy. The space required is 50' x 100' and the extremely limited number of available facilities that can meet this requirement has highlighted the need for larger, modern, manufacturing facilities and the issue is being addressed by the EDC so that employment opportunities will not be lost.