

Joint Legislative Panel on Manufacturing in Georgia Holds Final Meeting



Sen. Tim Golden (D-Valdosta)

ATLANTA (December 5, 2008) – Co-chairmen Senator Tim Golden and Representative Allen Peake (R-Macon) conducted the final meeting of the Joint Legislative Panel on the Future of Manufacturing in Georgia Thursday, December 4. Kennesaw State University Coles College of Business hosted the meeting which included presentations by technical college educators, manufacturing economists and analysts, and professional representatives of the industry. Presenters addressed the current state of Georgia’s manufacturing industry from business growth and economic perspectives.

“The manufacturing industry has a tremendous impact on all our lives from the products we purchase to the local economy and job growth,” said Golden. “We must incentivize existing manufacturers to expand and grow in addition to incentivizing new manufacturers to move to Georgia. This will stimulate the economy and increase employment opportunities.”

Daniel Papp, president of Kennesaw State University, explained the industries affected the most by the 18-month recession were technical, educational and commercial businesses. These directly affect the manufacturing industry with a loss of approximately 20,000 jobs from October 2007 thru October 2008. Manufacturing accounts for approximately ten per cent of Georgia’s nonagricultural employment.

“From the time we began our first meeting to the last, the manufacturing segment has lost good-paying jobs and Georgia’s communities have been hurt,” said Peake. “As legislators, we must be pro-active in creating the right environment to keep and grow strong manufacturing jobs in Georgia as well as bring new ones to the State. This is our challenge for 2009 and we will face it head-on.”

Kennesaw State and industry professionals praised the Study Committee’s commitment to examining the manufacturing industry issues and desire to find the best improvements. They presented a realistic view of the industry in Georgia, input from their clients and

possible solutions to improving the industry through adjusting legislation such as tax incentives.

The good news is that Georgia is one of the most competitive states in the nation in terms of building and operating manufacturing buildings. Results of a study presented by Dr. Donald Sabbarese, director of Kennesaw State University's Economic Center, showed that Georgia's best attributes for manufacturing companies are low labor costs, a good business climate, an international airport and a regional hub for businesses. Forbes Magazine also recently ranked Georgia as one of the top states in the nation in terms of economic development.

Richard Kopelman, a partner with Habif, Arogeti & Wynne, LLP (HA&W), strongly urged legislators to enhance tax credit incentives for manufacturing companies. Survey results of Kopelman's manufacturing clients showed that only five per cent of their clients that are eligible for tax credits actually apply. Kopelman encouraged the joint committee to consider applying tax credits to withholdings and allowing monetized tax credits to be bought and sold. HA&W is the largest independent certified public accounting and business advisory firm in Georgia and one of the Top 60 firms in the country.

The members of the Senate Study Committee on the Future of Manufacturing in Georgia include Senators Chip Rogers, Tim Golden, Doug Stoner (D - Smyrna), Jeff Mullis (R - Chickamauga), Chip Pearson (R - Dawsonville), and Ed Tarver (D - Augusta).

The members of the counterpart House study committee include Representatives Allen Peake (R - Macon), Bill Hembree (R - Winston), Stacey Abrams (D - Atlanta), Greg Morris (R - Vidalia), Quincy Murphy (D - Augusta), and Sean Jergusson (R - Atlanta).

The bipartisan study committee will be assessing the information gathered from each meeting to determine recommendations for legislation to be considered during the 2009 Session of the Georgia General Assembly. For more information, please contact the Senator Tim Golden's office or the State Senate Press Office.

Sen. Tim Golden serves as the Democratic Caucus Chairman. He represents the 8th Senate District which includes Brooks and Lowndes counties and portions of Cook and Thomas counties. He may be reached by phone at 404.656.7580 or by e-mail at tim.golden@senate.ga.gov.

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