

# Better Jobs & Brighter Futures for Greenville

BY JERRY HOWARD, GREENVILLE AREA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Since its founding by Greenville County Council in mid-2001 to “promote and enhance the economic growth and development of the county for the benefit of the citizens,” the Greenville Area Development Corporation (GADC), has assisted over 140 companies in adding 8,865 new jobs and more than \$1.8 billion in capital investment.

And while Greenville County annually invests more than \$600,000 to fund GADC initiatives, those efforts have resulted in over \$16.3 million in taxes paid. That’s more than \$5 in taxes paid to Greenville County for every tax dollar invested in GADC efforts.

While our state and nation battle the current recession, there is ample evidence that economic development efforts are making Greenville more prosperous. By employing an integrated strategy, judicious investment and strong leadership, the GADC and Greenville County have enjoyed a run of success in economic development and diversification that few communities can claim.

Since no single organization can “own” economic development responsibility, multi-party collaboration has been at the heart of Greenville’s success. We collaborate with such partners

as the Upstate Alliance, Greenville Chamber, South Carolina Department of Commerce, municipalities and our business community – all to deliver better jobs and brighter futures.

Economic development is multidimensional – encompassing investment and job creation initiatives: incentive development and management; education and workforce development; transportation; utilities and infrastructure; real estate product; quality of life; and strategic alignment among committed organizations.

In each strategic dimension, GADC plays a role – whether directly managing, supporting and assisting, or coordinating with peers on some aspect of the process. As the only organization with legislative authority to negotiate incentives for expanding and new companies, “closing a good deal” for Greenville County is always “Job 1.” The GADC’s record of helping existing businesses grow and thrive, and landing quality new corporate citizens, proves that such focus pays off.

As our economy evolves, so does our strategy. Recent expansions by Concentrix (200 jobs) and WW Grainger (500 jobs) deservedly generate headlines, yet GADC also supports smaller businesses. From advanced manufacturers

like Innegrity and Advanced Composite Materials to innovation-focused enterprises like American Titanium Works’ R&D Center and Deltex Medical, we’ve assisted more organizations under 250 employees since 2001 than larger organizations.

Today’s core target segments of advanced materials, automotive, aviation, health sciences, corporate headquarters and information technology require innovative and focused marketing. Deploying such strategies as industry consultant meetings, trade shows and innovation/investment forums like Innoventure, this selective targeting produces big financial benefits. Since 2005, target segment companies we’ve assisted in cumulatively reflect an average hourly wage of \$28.06 – nearly double historical county, state and national wage averages.

GADC’s innovative Business Retention & Expansion Program – established in partnership with the City of Greenville, Greenville Tech, the Greenville Chamber, South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Workforce Investment Board and Employment Security Commission – increases understanding of how businesses are performing and how to assist

them better. More than 330 businesses have been contacted to date.

Operating with a staff of only seven professionals, the positive results are only possible with financial support from over 125 investors and a visionary Board. The County Council-appointed Board is culled from open applications, and blends business savvy, civic commitment, fiscal experience and entrepreneurial drive. It includes Chamber directors, retirees, utility executives and leaders in education, services, government and industry. All are passionately committed to Greenville's success.

The GADC is tasked with improving quality of life for county residents through economic development. With accountability as our pledge, documented results as proof of performance and a passion to help Greenville County attain greater prosperity, I encourage you to join us in creating better jobs and brighter futures for all. **GM**

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