

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

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Above: Dan Amos (left), chairman and CEO of AFLAC, with Bob Jones, president of Columbus Technical College, pictured with an AFLAC duck.

There is power in partnerships, power for our customers – both our students and Georgia's businesses – and strength for our system. With this issue, we begin a continuing series whose components will appear over the next few volumes as we bring you stories from throughout our state, stories of how our system of technical colleges engages in partnerships all over Georgia that, in a sense, build our system as they become our outposts in Georgia's vast network of business and industry strength.

Depending on just where you are in our system, you may be very aware of our extensive partnerships or the knowledge may be rather minimal. I would like for every member of our system statewide to appreciate and understand the foundation of our system's pro-business-partnership philosophy, why it is important to us, and what partnerships and potential partnerships exist for us in their community and in others.

As our system was first developing into what it is today, I took several study tours that were critical to the development of this important cornerstone of the philosophy of our technical college system. The first, underwritten by the German Marshall Fund, gave me a thorough grounding in the German Dual System. Basically, this is a three-year apprenticeship program that includes one- to two-days a week of classroom instruction with virtually all of the technical and skill training provided in industry settings, with much of the training done in classrooms and labs provided within plants and businesses. A second, a benchmarking trip

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with a group of technical college presidents taken to study practices of the Dual System that might enhance our delivery system, convinced us that one of the most significant features of that system, the strong connection to the business community, could be most valuable to us. From this came a resolve that we would ensure that our equipment and programs were kept up-to-date, that we would build strong connections with our customers so that we'd understand what they needed from us, and we would design our programs so we would teach appropriate skills that would meet our customers' needs.

On a similar trip to Japan a few years later, where we studied the way that Japan's system of technical education works, we observed that their system, too, is profoundly reliant on the business community as a location for, and a partner in, the education and training process. The successes, economy, and efficiency of these systems further strengthened our resolve and led to more extensive development of industry-based programs, such as Advanced Manufacturing Technology. The more deeply we committed to this approach, the more our connections to business developed into a focus on meeting the needs of

our customers. Finally, this has grown into partnerships that, as you will read in comments from one of our partners highlighted in this issue, "are more like family."

Beginning this series by focusing on the Columbus area's major healthcare organizations was a natural. The Columbus area is a place where business, education, and economic developers know how to work together to help their community grow and prosper. I hope you will be as delighted as I was in the results of the interviews with the CEOs of Columbus Regional Healthcare Systems, Doctors Hospital, and St. Francis Hospital. Please read what they have to say in these pages, and then go onto the Web and read the complete interviews. They tell the story of how the partnerships work – and what they mean to their organizations – better than I ever could, and I want each one of you to understand, through these insights into the operations of three of our important customers, just what our efforts ultimately mean and how they benefit our state.

Another important business presence in Columbus is AFLAC, a leading provider of insurance sold on a voluntary basis at the worksite in the United States and the largest foreign insurer in Japan. AFLAC insures more than 40 million people worldwide. AFLAC is a Fortune 500 company,



DOUGLAS



HARTIN



GAYMON

Our system has so many good friends in Columbus. Here, I'd like to highlight just three, who, in addition to those mentioned elsewhere in this issue, are especially important to our efforts in the healthcare industry: Technical and Adult Education State Board member Sharon Douglas, former State Board member Jean Hartin, and Chamber of Commerce President Mike Gaymon. I thank them and all the many others who work with us in the Columbus area to make our partnerships so effective.

and it is a fine company, indeed. In January 2002, *Fortune* magazine named AFLAC to its list of “The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America” for the fourth consecutive year and in February 2002 to its list of “America’s Most Admired Companies” in the life and health insurance industry. Our work with AFLAC provides a recent example of one way our technical college system develops relationships with companies, relationships that enlarge in scope and depth over time and become true partnerships.

Because AFLAC had been adding a large number of new employees in Columbus, Quick Start, our internationally recognized training program, had been working extensively with AFLAC, designing and delivering training to meet AFLAC’s needs. To work effectively in the AFLAC jobs, employees needed a thorough grounding in the insurance environment, in computer and communication skills, in customer service, and personal-effectiveness skills. Quick Start’s training professionals, through on-site research and otherwise establishing close connections with the company, had developed many and varied materials specific to the industry. By utilizing this valuable resource, our system was able to develop, within an impressively short timeline, a pilot program that will soon result in a certification program that will be available first at Columbus Technical College and then statewide and produce candidates for jobs in the insurance industry and the medical community statewide.

This is basically the way most of our major workforce-development certification programs, like Certified Manufacturing Specialist and Certified Customer Service

Specialist, came into being: an industry demonstrates a need and a future for qualified employees with specific skills, Quick Start’s expertise and base of knowledge is drawn upon to design and develop appropriate training, and the technical colleges take the program from the pilot and move it throughout Georgia. AFLAC’s needs

drove the initiation of the effort and gave us the necessary information, but it ultimately benefits the industry statewide. This is a model I believe in, and it is a model we have used to efficiently and cost-effectively begin a transformation of the way people are prepared for success in the workplace.

When you drive by a manufacturing plant, a hospital, a call center, any place that is part of the economy of your community, I want to know that you see something that we – and you, personally – have investment in, an entity whose future may depend, in part, on your efforts, an organization that has a connection to and an investment in, your technical college and our system. These partners employ the students we train, and they work with us to ensure, right at the local level, that our programs and services are what they need to be to keep their operations running successfully today and into the future.

These partners are part of our technical college community; our connection to them is essential to the vitality of our system.

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Partner Power

MICHAEL GARRIGAN, CEO ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL

Our situation in healthcare is not driven so much by how other businesses are driven. Healthcare probably as much as any business is somewhat immune to the economic conditions that affect other employers. People are still going to have accidents, and people are still going to have babies, and they are still going to have heart attacks, and people are still going to get hurt, they're going to get sick, all those things that happen in life, and so they'll come in and they'll need medical care, they'll need rehab services, or they may need home-care services or they may need assisted-living arrangements. Maybe they need the outpatient services that we provide through our women's center, through dietary training, and other services. We have a durable medical-equipment company and a number of other related activities that go somewhat outside the realm of traditional acute-care hospital situations.

We have public-relations people, we have bio-engineering, as most organiza-

tions do, we have HR functions, we have a psychiatric hospital – separate, but a part of our organization – that needs all kinds of psychiatric nurses, psychiatric counselors, mental-health consultants – you name it.

So when you add up the totality of all these different activities, there's a good number of the graduates out of Columbus Technical College that would be candidates for employment with this organization.

I am hopeful – and confident, at the same time – that Columbus Technical College can continue to assimilate and provide the resources to continue the various programs that we're talking about here into the future and that we can continue to help each other. I am confident, also, that the number of people interested in health-related areas is going to continue to grow – and so will the number of applicants the school will experience. We look forward to our future together.



“We’ve been delighted with the fact that Columbus Technical College has moved aggressively into training for healthcare specialties.” MICHAEL GARRIGAN

REMARKS FROM CEOS OF THREE OF COLUMBUS' HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS
Complete interviews are available at www.dta.com

LARRY SANDERS, CEO COLUMBUS REGIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Several years ago we learned that Columbus State University was choosing to no longer train associate-degree nurses – that they just didn't see that as a part of their mission.



[Associate-degree nurses are] critical – they're absolutely essential – to the success of the healthcare organizations here in Columbus, and Columbus Tech stepped in to fill the void.

I'm proud to say that the image of Columbus Technical College has changed dramatically over the last three or four years, due to the leadership of Dr. Breeden and Bob Jones and lots of other people affiliated with Columbus Tech. They've been out in the community; they've been totally connected to the community. The physical facilities that they have developed and proposed for the future have captured the interest of students.



Columbus Technical College's Healthcare Partners Enlarge the Impact of a Dynamic Program

COLUMBUS TECH'S HEALTHCARE PARTNERS
[ae.org/fromthecommissioner/partners.html](http://www.columbus-tech.edu/ae.org/fromthecommissioner/partners.html)

We made a conscious, major decision to align ourselves with them in a long-term partnership.

By working hand-in-hand with Columbus Tech all the way through the process, what we are able to do is convey to them and to their faculty members and, ultimately, to their students, who we are as an organization and what our needs really are. We have involvement, really, all the way down to the classroom. Because of this relationship, we have the opportunity to have some of our key professionals meeting with students, helping to educate them. What it establishes clearly, from the beginning, is what our expectation of quality really is and what a dedicated employee needs to be in order to be successful in our organization. I think

“Our organization and Columbus Tech and, I’m sure, the students, are all going to be the beneficiaries of this working relationship. It’s family.”

LARRY SANDERS



it’s given us the chance to be as close to training our own workforce as you can get without actually being the educator in your own right. It’s a unique opportunity to convey our expectations right in the middle of the classroom, and then Columbus Tech helps us turn out a product that meets that expectation.

HUGH WILSON, CEO, DOCTORS HOSPITAL

I’d say over the last year we’ve dealt with many different personnel needs. One comes to the forefront for a period of time, and we solve it temporarily and then another one presents itself. We go from lacking med techs to lacking pharmacists; lack of radiology technicians becomes a problem from time to time as well. Certainly, nurses – we have about a dozen nursing positions that we could fill right now, and, of course, that’s another time where Columbus Technical College comes into play. I see Bob Jones [president of Columbus Tech] at Rotary – I’ll stop and we’ll chat a bit, and he comes by my office generally several times a year. We talk about the needs of the hospital and the needs of Columbus Tech, and, obviously, they help us and we help them. We’re pleased to employ their graduates. We talk about what we can do to assist them in gearing up to train additional workers. I don’t know what we’d do without

“I don’t know what we’d do without Columbus Tech at this point in time.”

HUGH D. WILSON



Columbus Tech at this point in time. And it’s going to get worse before it gets better It’s very well publicized in our industry that as you cross that 55 barrier and move on up, the number of hospital days grows exponentially. We’ve got a great big bubble coming along and hospital utilization is about to go through the roof, and as it does, there’s going to be a severe crunch put on the healthcare industry

Bob Jones has told me they’ve got some interesting plans for expansion [at Columbus Tech] which we really need. We’ve got a good thing going here. **FTC**



AROUND

The State



Miller Brewing Co.'s Tools for Success scholarship program, which has become an important and

valuable workforce tradition, will make its 2002 awards at **Albany Technical College** on Oct. 31st. This is the fifth annual awards ceremony. The philosophy behind the scholarship program is to develop the area's workforce, according to Paul DeLoach, regional state affairs manager at Miller. "By providing the tools of the trades, vocational graduates can bypass low-level 'helper' positions and perform the higher-level jobs that employers are desperate to fill," he says. "This moves them into hard-to-fill jobs more quickly and opens up entry-level positions." Upon graduation, the winners receive tools valued from \$1,500-\$2,500.



The National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) has recently granted accreditation status to **Appalachian**

Technical College's Metal and Plastics Apprenticeship Program. Appalachian Technical College is one of only eighty schools nationwide and the first school in Georgia to receive this prestigious honor. NIMS establishes national industry skill standards in metalworking, and students at Appalachian Tech will be able to take performance examinations following their training to qualify for NIMS credentials. Employees who receive NIMS credentialing are highly desired by manufacturers in the metalworking industry.

ATC

The **Athens Technical College** Automotive Technology program is now certified by the National Automotive Technician Education

Foundation (NATEF) and the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

In order to receive this recognition, the training program underwent rigorous evaluation by NATEF. Nationally accepted standards of excellence in such areas as instruction, facilities and equipment were used. Upon completion of the evaluation, NATEF recommended that Athens Technical College be certified by ASE, a national, non-profit organization which



The Early Childhood Care and Education Program at **Flint River Technical College** has been among the College's program offerings for just 11 years. However, during that period of time, the Early Childhood Care and Education Department has generated

\$2,074,200 in funding for the College's Early Childhood programs and has helped to provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding for other child-related programs and organizations in the surrounding communities. In the process, over 50 jobs have been created, several businesses have been spawned, and state pre-K programs have begun.



Gwinnett Technical College's horticulture program has added a state-of-the-art classroom facility on the Lawrenceville campus.

The 300-plus students that participate in the horticulture program each year will gain additional classrooms, new greenhouse space and top-quality laboratory space in the new building. The building is designed to be environmentally friendly. Water conservation methods and daylight lighting are just a few of the features that adhere to an environmentally conscious design. The new laboratories feature the latest equipment for the environmental horticulture industry. The

soil lab and botany lab will enable students to experience a wide variety of laboratory activities, such as micropropagation and soil analyses.



North Georgia Technical College has opened a Hispanic Resource Center on the Clarkesville Campus.

This center, located in the campus library, has a collection of Spanish language materials including books, magazines and newspapers, and information on North Georgia Tech's technical programs and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. There are also two dedicated computer workstations with access to the Internet, a printer and a scanner available for use by the Spanish-speaking community. This resource center is free to the general public.

North Georgia Technical College serves as host and fiscal agent to the Northeast Georgia Corner Connection School-to-Work Consortium, which recently received several Georgia School-To-Work grants, including a grant to study the viability of aquaculture in Northeast Georgia. This project will research ways that aquaculture can increase economic development opportunities in the seven counties served by NGTC.



The **North Metro Technical College** Horticulture Program is adding two new Horticulture special-

izations due to the growing need for employees in these areas. The two new certificate programs are Landscape Management and Golf Course Management.

The Horticulture Program will also be the first program of its type to require a workplace Spanish course as part of the curriculum. There are currently over 100 students enrolled in North Metro Tech's Horticulture Program.

Graduates are placed in many local companies, including **Pike Nurseries, White Oak Landscape, Home Depot, John Deere Landscapes, Chatham Landscape, Post Properties,** and **High Grove Partners.** The placement rate for the program is 100 percent.



South Georgia Technical College has

received a \$50,000 donation from the **Caterpillar Excellence Fund** in support of its Diesel Equipment Technology Program. This money will be used to strengthen students, faculty, and curriculum in heavy equipment and diesel engine training by supporting acquisition of equipment components for instructional purposes, aiding faculty in attending courses and seminars to broaden expertise in new technical areas, upgrading or developing courses and materials to support new curriculum needs and strengthening student development through recruitment and scholarships.



Southeastern Technical College

has received \$94,600 from the U. S. Department of Agriculture to purchase two truck transmission simulators used to train prospective truck drivers.

The simulators provide a safe way to train independent truck drivers. Last year the Southeastern Technical College Foundation raised over \$200,000 to go towards the Commercial Truck Driving Program and received a \$115,000 match from the State of Georgia. Funds are now being provided through the USDA-Rural Development's Rural Business Enterprise Grant (R.B.E.G.) Program. A major focus of these grants is to create or maintain jobs in economically challenged areas. **FTC**

TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Albany Technical College • Albany, Georgia
Altamaha Technical College • Jesup, Georgia
Appalachian Technical College • Jasper, Georgia
Athens Technical College • Athens, Georgia
Atlanta Technical College • Atlanta, Georgia
Augusta Technical College • Augusta, Georgia
Central Georgia Technical College • Macon, Georgia
Chattahoochee Technical College • Marietta, Georgia
Columbus Technical College • Columbus, Georgia
Coosa Valley Technical College • Rome, Georgia
DeKalb Technical College • Clarkston, Georgia
East Central Technical College • Fitzgerald, Georgia
Flint River Technical College • Thomaston, Georgia
Georgia Aviation Technical College • Eastman, Georgia
Griffin Technical College • Griffin, Georgia
Gwinnett Technical College • Lawrenceville, Georgia
Heart of Georgia Technical College • Dublin, Georgia
Lanier Technical College • Oakwood, Georgia
Middle Georgia Technical College • Warner Robins, Georgia
Moultrie Technical College • Moultrie, Georgia
North Georgia Technical College • Clarkesville, Georgia
North Metro Technical College • Acworth, Georgia
Northwestern Technical College • Rock Spring, Georgia
Ogeechee Technical College • Statesboro, Georgia
Okefenokee Technical College • Waycross, Georgia
Sandersville Technical College • Sandersville, Georgia
Savannah Technical College • Savannah, Georgia

South Georgia Technical College • Americus, Georgia
Southeastern Technical College • Vidalia, Georgia
Southwest Georgia Technical College • Thomasville, Georgia
Swainsboro Technical College • Swainsboro, Georgia
Valdosta Technical College • Valdosta, Georgia
West Central Technical College • Carrollton, Georgia
West Georgia Technical College • LaGrange, Georgia

TECHNICAL DIVISIONS

Bainbridge College • Bainbridge, Georgia
Clayton College and State University • Morrow, Georgia
Coastal Georgia Community College • Brunswick, Georgia
Dalton State College • Dalton, Georgia

Web-based courses of Georgia's technical colleges are accessed through Georgia Virtual Technical College (GVTC), <http://www.gvtc.org>.

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COMING NEXT ISSUE:

Our next issue will focus on evaluating our system's results: how the Carl Vinson Institute of Government validates our quality-assurance system.



Carl Vinson Institute of Government