

**Rural Georgia is blessed with a workforce that has an excellent work ethic, a dedicated sense of loyalty, and a healthy enthusiasm for growth.**

—LT. GOV. MARK TAYLOR



## Taylor Sees State's

**L**t. Gov. Mark Taylor's passions for public education and economic development have converged at an exceptional crossroads in Georgia history. As Georgia's economy has boomed in the past decade, Taylor has been at the forefront of legislative decisions concerning our schools and rural economic development, bringing together two of the most vital elements of sustainable growth for any socio-economic model. Although born in Atlanta and educated at Emory University and the University of Georgia Law School, Taylor was raised in South Georgia, and his vision of Georgia's future is tied to his rural roots.

"It is absolutely essential to the health of the state that rural Georgia not be left out of the equation of progress and growth," Taylor said recently. "We have counties that have not enjoyed the economic growth Atlanta has over the last 25 years, and while that is changing, it is up to leadership—both local and at the state level—to stay focused on the *whole* state."

Taylor's message, not surprisingly, is that balanced growth must be vigorously encouraged by the state's leaders and economic developers at every level. He sees the network of technical colleges and the Quick Start program, which cater directly to the communities they serve, as a highly effective system for the dissemination of real-world knowledge and skills. He is proud of the quality and easy accessibility of the technical colleges to all Georgians.

Taylor believes our public schools and technical colleges represent the "bricks-and-mortar" foundation of rural economic growth, a "superb infrastructure of excellent staff and high quality programs within 35 miles of every citizen."

"Our technical colleges are absolutely critical to our overall economic health, just as training and re-training the workforce are critical to industry. And rural Georgia is blessed with a workforce that has an excellent work ethic, a dedicated sense of loyalty, and a healthy enthusiasm for growth," says Taylor.



# Georgia's Economic Development a Top Priority And Rural Georgia One of Its Best Assets

While Taylor concedes that “we are not where we need to be” in terms of skilled labor in the non-metro areas, he feels strongly that the potential is there. Skills need to improve on what he calls an “expedited time-table,” and he supports efforts to improve K-12 education, as well as keep our technical colleges energized and well-funded.

Taylor serves as chairman of the Georgia Rural Development Council, an organization of 35 rural leaders from around the state that was created by Gov. Joe Frank Harris in the 1980s and brought back into action by Gov. Roy Barnes.

Taylor sees the GRDC as a cheerleader for rural Georgia whose goal is to help remove barriers to economic growth. One of its initiatives is the One Georgia Authority, headquartered in Dublin. As vice chairman, Lt. Gov. Taylor oversees management of a \$1 billion state investment in Georgia’s 71 poorest counties. The Authority’s funds come from Georgia’s portion of the National Tobacco Settlement and are aimed at supporting the counties most in need of a financial boost to move their economic development efforts forward.

Does this emphasis on economic growth across the state herald an end to our traditional agricultural culture?

“Absolutely not,” says Taylor

.....  
*What would Lt. Gov. Taylor say to a prospective company considering a rural Georgia location?*

- “Our rural areas have an innate enthusiasm for growth.”
- “We have an available workforce that is willing and able to be trained.”
- “We have the network of education and workforce training (Quick Start) in place.”
- “We are hard at work improving our highways in rural areas.”
- “Georgia’s rural areas have fabulous natural resources available.”
- “There is a sincere reaching out to industry in these communities.”
- “Our rural workforce has a tremendous work ethic.”

emphatically. “You do not abandon your strengths in an effort to improve. No one does. Corporations don’t and we shouldn’t. Agriculture represents 16 percent of our gross state production. We need to build on this strength, learn how to modernize, and help our farmers not be dependent on bulk commodities. I encourage agricultural research in Georgia and want more support for Cooperative Extension throughout the state. It makes business sense,” says Taylor.

The overall focus of programs like Quick Start and the technical colleges that help deliver its services to employers is to spread opportunity throughout Georgia.

“Announcing new jobs at our industries and the establishment of new companies in Georgia is the bottom line. It’s much too early to have a sense of satisfaction—we have our work cut out for us. We want to be able to look out across Georgia and see prosperity for everyone, not just the lucky few,” says Taylor.

Taylor lists four goals for this year’s legislature, support for which he believes will drive economic growth in a broader swath across the state: leadership development; health care; access to technology—both the skills and the actual infrastructure—and workforce development.

OS



## Lt. Gov. Taylor on Quick Start:

.....  
*Prior to 1989, Quick Start was the only state incentive we had to offer companies interested in Georgia. I believe the success of Georgia’s economy over the last two decades is tied to Quick Start.*

*Quick Start is clearly one of the most successful state incentive programs in the nation. It has proved itself and does not rest on its laurels. Employers in Georgia can feel its positive effect every day.*

*Without our ability to train and re-train where necessary, we would be in a very vulnerable position economically.*