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SEGAJDA Presents BBRED Impact Analysis of Colonel's Island Rail Connector

January 30, 2015

The Southeast Georgia Joint Development Authority (SEGAJDA) spent two days promoting their six-county region in Atlanta in November which included sponsoring the Georgia Economic Developer's Association's (GEDA) annual awards luncheon and a presentation to Project Managers from the Georgia Department of Economic Development. Those attending included Governor Nathan Deal and Commissioner of Economic Development, Chris Carr.

During the GEDA luncheon, the authority shared a video with the 250-plus guests, touting the region's assets and the economic impact of a railroad extension at the Brunswick Port's Colonel's Island Terminal, made possible by the SEGAJDA in 2006 and sharing the results of the the Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development's (BBRED), part of the Business Innovation Group at Georgia Southern University, recently completed economic impact analysis of SEGAJDA's new railway connector that shortened the transit time from the Port of Brunswick's Colonel's Island Terminal to Macon and several automobile assembly plants in Alabama. The Colonel's Island Terminal is the number one port in the United States for new car imports and second overall for the processing of auto imports and exports. Mercedes Benz ships 60,000 automobiles a year from its manufacturing plant in Alabama to Europe using the intermodal freight system of the Southeast including trucks, railroads, and the Port.

This new connector has reduced typical transit time from about one week to around three days or less. The decrease in transit time increased traffic on the Macon to Brunswick rail line operated by Norfolk Southern. In turn, the increase in traffic had a positive impact on the regional economy.

The research team examined the connector in two ways. First, the team examined the amount of efficiencies (i.e., savings) due to the reduction in transit time. BBRED determined that utilization of the connector equated to \$1.8 million in increased efficiencies to the logistics pipeline in 2013 alone. For example, the time to transport vehicles from the Mercedes Benz facility in Vance, Alabama, was reduced from approximately 3 to 5 days to just 24 hours. This reduction, combined with all other efficiencies, resulted in over \$9 million in cost savings from years 2007 to 2013.

"The development of the connector track not only enhanced the competitiveness of the rail system from the Port of Brunswick," said Dominique Halaby, BBRED director. "The resulting efficiencies resulted in new economic activities and jobs for the State."

The increase in usage of the connector added \$35.2 million to Georgia's with roughly \$21.5 million captured in the SEGAJDA region equating to an employment impact of 89 new jobs. The result is a rail system that serves as a critical link between the Port of Brunswick and the entire Southeast United States. In turn, this rail link is now a vital part of the local and state economy.

Wally Orrel, SEGAJDA vice chair and McIntosh County Industrial Development Authority executive director stated, "The impact of this joint venture between the six counties (Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, McIntosh, and Wayne), DCA, and the Norfolk Southern Railroad has been extraordinary. The thousands of jobs and investment dollars it created by expediting the shipments of automobiles and commodities to and from the Port of Brunswick continues to explode yearly."

For more information about SEGAJDA or BBRED, visit their websites at segajda.com or www.bbred.org, respectively.

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January BIG Entrepreneur Spotlight

January 30, 2015



This month's BIG Entrepreneur is Paul Johnson, Owner of Kingdom Cuts in Downtown Statesboro. Paul started Kingdom Cuts in December of 2013 after working in the industry for just over thirteen years. He became unhappy with a change in pay structure at the shop he was working for at about the same time the perfect opportunity for a space presented itself.

Paul is also the Pastor of the Spirit and Truth Worship Center located on East Main Street. The church had some store frontage space that was not being utilized to it's full capabilities. The partnership was meant to be so Paul started Kingdom Cuts and the church started making rent off of a space that was making nothing.

When asked about his first year he said, "It has been very prosperous, especially for my own chair as a barber." As most beginning entrepreneurs know, "The hours are long." Paul knows the importance of keeping consistent store hours. He is there to open in the morning and close at night.

"Growth can be good, but you have to be ready to handle it," says Paul. He said it can be stressful having more clients than barbers to take care of them. He wants to grow the business but still be respectful of the clients' time, so he's making sure he has the right team of stylists to take care of the work load. Paul has experienced tremendous growth in his own clientele. He has added one other full-time and three part-time employees to the business as well.

He started working with the Georgia Southern Innovation Incubator in February 2014. One of the first tasks he asked for help with was doing a market analysis of his clientele. The research helped him determine that his marketing efforts may not need to be focused on Georgia Southern students, but rather on families as they made up a larger part of demographics closest to him. When asked about working with the incubator program at BIG, Paul said "I have found the incubator to be pivotal in in helping my business by giving me expert advice and guidance to help me be successful. I feel like I'm not

in it alone. Like there are other people who want to see my business succeed.” Paul even mentioned that Dean Amason is one of his best clients.

The Business Innovation Group has enjoyed watching him grow and congratulates him on a very prosperous first year! We hope our January BIG entrepreneur has many more to come.