

# Partnership Leads to Community Indicators Database

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Thomas Thomson, executive director of the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (left); Michael Toma, director of the Armstrong Center for Regional Analysis; Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson; and Gregg Schroeder, president and CEO of the United Way of the Coastal Empire.

## Partnership Leads to Community Indicators Database

(November 17, 2010) A partnership between Armstrong Atlantic State University, the City of Savannah, Chatham County and the United Way of the Coastal Empire has led to the establishment of the Savannah Chatham Community Indicators database, a tool to help local government and community leaders measure progress and assess needs in four key areas—education and youth development, health and wellness, economic independence and regionalism.

Michael Toma, professor of economics and director of the Armstrong Center for Regional Analysis, is the lead researcher of the project ([www.savannah-chatham-indicators.org](http://www.savannah-chatham-indicators.org)). The project also had research and technical support from several Armstrong faculty and staff and 20 students who conducted telephone surveys of thousands of community residents.

“The Savannah Chatham Community Indicators database includes twenty key indicators describing the wellbeing of the community,” said Toma. “These indicators may be used to establish a baseline for identifying priorities, developing solutions and monitoring progress toward an improved quality of life in our community.”

Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson joined Toma, Gregg Schroeder, president and CEO of the United Way of the Coastal Empire, and Thomas Thomson, executive director of the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, in the Armstrong Center to announce the rollout of the project.

“For many years we’ve talked about progress and accountability in our community as we spend millions of dollars in programs that serve our residents,” said Mayor Johnson. “This new tool will help us measure progress and be more accountable to our taxpayers and all the community partners.”

The indicators are meant to provide information that is meaningful, valid, understandable and readily applicable in matters of community importance in Savannah and Chatham County. The information collected in the database will be regularly updated as research data becomes available. It will provide a view of emerging trends, opportunities and challenges; serve as a catalyst for conversation among community leaders; and inform residents about important issues

in their community.

Many community stakeholders were involved in a strategic planning process that identified priority areas of interest covered by the indicators. This process included surveys of community and business leaders, a survey of the population and focus group sessions with community and business leaders. The process was completed between 2007 and 2009. The Savannah Chatham Community Indicators database emerged from that process.



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