

5-12-2016

Business Innovation Group (BIG) News

Georgia Southern University

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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Business Innovation Group (BIG) News" (2016). *Business Innovation Group News*. 21.
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SBDC Launching StartSmart in Statesboro

May 12, 2016



Owning your own business is the American dream, but building it to withstand the test of time takes a unique set of tools—and a lot of hard work. Get results for your business through the SBDC StartSmart where you will be able to evaluate and refine your business concepts, improve your knowledge of business concepts, research markets and competition, develop a financial forecast to improve chances of success, and develop a thorough, practical business plan. Moreover, on-going consulting from SBDC professionals will keep you on track. StartSmart will show you the way. StartSmart is designed specifically for new entrepreneurs, it provides the resources and support to launch your company and put your dreams within reach. StartSmart will help you launch a business built for today's challenging times. In just four sessions, learn to evaluate and implement your vision by creating a thorough, well-researched business plan. Important topics to be covered in eight high-energy, interactive modules include:

1. Foundations for a Successful Business
2. Marketing Research & Analysis
3. Capturing the market
4. Efficient Operations
5. Financial foundations
6. Financial Plan
7. Bringing it All Together
8. Implementing and Presenting the Plan

For more information on StartSmart, contact Clare Ursillo by phone at 921-478-7232 or by email at cursillo@georgiasbdc.org. Visit <https://www.georgiasbdc.org/startsmart> if you would like to sign up for StartSmart.

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Tags: [American dream](#), [Entrepreneurship](#), [SBDC](#), [StartSmart](#)

May Client Spotlight

May 12, 2016



BIG Café has been a huge success to many local entrepreneurs as well as aspiring entrepreneurs. Each individual who attends BIG Café has the potential to gain knowledge that they may not have otherwise attained. BIG Café brings forth solutions to real-world business problems. Larry Lester is a committed member to BIG Café, who began coming our second meeting and hasn't missed one since. Like many others, Larry has gained essential knowledge for business practice just from merely attending BIG Café. However, the unparalleled benefit of presenting at BIG Café became apparent to Larry so he decided to maximize his benefit from BIG Café by presenting in December 2015. At this time, Larry was in the beginning process of expanding his current business, CBA Flooring Company. CBA Flooring Company purchases quality flooring products from sustainable manufacturers and distributors to market,

promote, advertise and sell these products through catalogs, websites, ecommerce, and public relations at a low cost. They also alliance the flooring services via subcontract of experienced individuals and companies for a rapid service turnaround time. Since BIG Café, Larry says that "my business has had significant progress." Larry has been able to establish accounts with flooring manufacturers and distributors, network with many entrepreneurs, and receive great business advice from Jill, Suzanne, Ben, Becky, and Dominique. Moreover, Larry has won his first commercial flooring bid, building relationships with community leaders, and is currently working on hiring new employees while establishing his company as an LLC. BIG is excited to see the positive impact it is having on the lives of those in the local community. BIG can provide you with the same opportunity as well!



Posted in [Entrepreneur Spotlight](#), [In the News](#)

Tags: [BIG Cafe](#), [CBA Flooring](#), [Larry Lester](#)

Retail Data 30-Mile and 30-Minute Around Lincolnton, Georgia

May 12, 2016



The Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development (BBRED) has a long-standing mission to serve the needs of our clients with timely and accurate information. In accordance with this mission, BBRED offers a series of short and quick reports with a heavy focus on numeric data. In most cases, these reports are ready within a week of the client's initial request. The goal of these reports is to provide our clients with information they require to make decisions in real time. In mid-April, the research team completed just such a report for the Lincoln County development Authority. This report focused on the retail market within a 30-minute and 30-mile radius from Lincolnton, Georgia. It included retail gap data, retail spending by type of store and food away from home spending. The development authority is planning to use this information as part of an effort to add additional economic resources to this community. Finally, BBRED would like to thank the North American Development Bank and the GENIE program for financially supporting this research project.

Posted in [In the News](#), [involvement](#), [Research](#)

Tags: [BBRED](#), [Lincoln County Development Authority](#), [retail gap analysis](#)

New BBRED Series: From There to Here

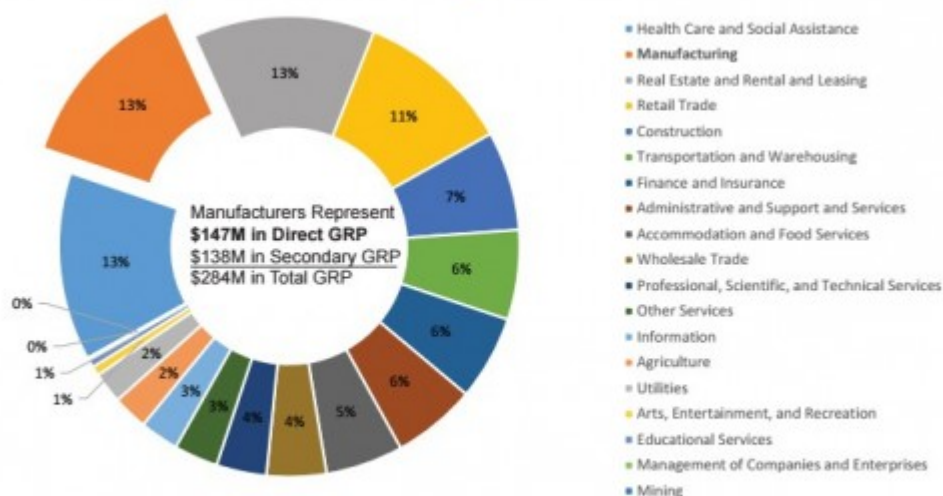
May 12, 2016



The Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development (BBRED) has created a new series called From There to Here. This series will share how BBRED's clients are using the research project. As reported in the November 2015 newsletter, the Development Authority of Bulloch County (DABC) received a study titled Manufacturing Industry Economic Impact Summary. DABC has used this study as part of its celebration of Manufacturing Appreciation Week, which is sponsored by the Georgia Association of Manufactures and was held during the week of April 18-22, 2016. It appeared in the Statesboro Herald in the Inside Bulloch Business column with DeWayne Grice on April 18, 2016.

This study noted that 1,729 people are directly employed in Manufacturing in Bulloch County, which generates nearly \$676 million annually for the Bulloch County Economy. In addition, DABC also shared this information at the Leadership Bulloch Alumni Community Panel Breakfast and with the DABC Board of Directors. BBRED would like to thank the DABC for requesting this report and for their support of this research program.

Bulloch County Private Sector Gross Regional Product



Posted in [In the News](#), [involvement](#), [Research](#)

Tags: [BBRED](#), [Development Authority of Bulloch County](#), [economic impact study](#), [Leadership Bulloch](#), [Manufacturing](#), [research](#)

BIG Cafe April Update

May 12, 2016

BIG Café, the monthly networking event held by the Business Innovation Group was a great success. Local Entrepreneurs, students and faculty gathered together at City Campus in downtown Statesboro on Wednesday, April 13, enabling one another to help solve business problems by providing feedback while enjoying a delicious complimentary cup of coffee provided by Cool Beanz and doughnuts provided by the DSDA.

The two presenters for BIG Café were comprised of Jerry Blakely, owner of Roaster's Caffé and Ethan Gillespie, owner of EagleiRepair. Each presented with hopes of receiving feedback from the attendees to help solve business problems. Jerry Blakely proposed the question, "How do I reach outside markets?"

Demetria Smith, owner of Simplified Flooring stated that Jerry could "create an incentive to start a membership by offering something free and allowing them to pay for shipping to let them see what it's about." Jeff Graham, owner of Wise Choice Realty said that Jerry should "go to a farmers market on Saturdays so people could try it and have information about site." This would allow Jerry to interact with the consumer and get feedback from their perspective to better enhance the consumers experience. Other suggestions included utilizing search engine optimization, getting the product out to people who are already in that community so they can start talking about the beans, and market the fair trade.

After our brief coffee break, Ethan Gillespie presented and posed the question, "How do I build my advertising and marketing to reach college students?"

Fred David, owner of Minuteman Press suggested that Ethan should "partner with groups and clubs like Greek houses, offer a discount, and students are good with word of mouth." Elena McLendon, with the DSDA stated, "Public Relations at Georgia Southern University will take on projects to increase likes on social media and will create a plan for you." Other suggestions included putting booths at events such as the fair and the rodeo, partnering with Party Harbor to host an event, and give sorority groups a monthly contract.

BIG Café was a huge success thanks to everyone who attended and gave invaluable feedback. Also, special thanks to Jerry Blakely and Ethan Gillespie for presenting, and to our sponsors David Hoyle, Cool Beanz and Elena McLendon, DSDA. If you would like to present your business obstacle(s) at BIG Café, please contact Jill Johns at jjohns@georgiasouthern.edu or 912-478-0872. Attend the next BIG Café if you would like to come together to network, drink free coffee, and help one another thrive. Also, attend five times and you can receive a free BIG Café coffee mug!

View April's BIG Café at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnLjQvrPN4o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwISG6-D8FU>

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Tags: [BIG Cafe](#), [Cool Beanz](#), [DSDA](#), [EagleiRepair](#), [Ethan Gillespie](#), [Jerry Blakely](#), [Roaster's Caffé](#)

Meet BIG Graduate Assistant Onorio Molina

May 12, 2016



Onorio Molina is a graduate assistant working under Ben McKay at BIG while attending Georgia Southern University as an accounting student in the Masters of Accountancy program. As he makes his transition from undergraduate studies to graduate school at Georgia Southern, Onorio has proven to be a student whose main focus is not simply on having good grades but on developing relationships that will last. After meeting with several accounting firms at an event on Wednesday, April 28, everyone gathered at the Performing Arts Center for dinner to recognize the firms that had traveled from different parts of the state and individuals that had received scholarships. As his classmates and other students received their awards, he couldn't help but applaud for everyone and acknowledge the hard work they had put in. Onorio is no novice to hard work and maintained a 3.92 GPA in his undergraduate studies while participating in intercollegiate sports. However, as the award ceremony came to an end, a representative from Moore Stephens Tiller LLC, announced the recipient of the firm's 2016 Accounting Day scholarship. Onorio was shocked to hear his name.

"The whole thing was unexpected," he said. "I came out here with the intention of meeting new people and learning about the different opportunities these firms have to offer. I would like to take this moment and let the firms and professors know that gestures like these do not go unnoticed." He later went to say that several of his professors he had met with earlier this year had provided him with good advice and encouraged him to continue to strive for the best and that things would unfold accordingly. He also mentioned that pursuing a graduate degree at Georgia Southern was one of the best choices he had ever made.

Posted in [In the News](#), [Research](#), [Teaching and Learning](#)

Tags: [Graduate Assistant](#), [Onorio Molina](#), [research](#)

May Student Spotlight

May 12, 2016



College of Business seniors Eric Degen (Management-Entrepreneurship) and Chris Poncsak (Marketing-Sales) are the co-founders of ChapterEase, a software management system that addresses the unique chapter management needs for fraternities and sororities.

The idea for ChapterEase was born out of their own experiences in hardships as the president and social chair of their fraternity, Sigma Nu (Theta Kappa chapter). Degen, from Canton, Georgia, was the first president after the fraternity reorganized. It now has 92 active members and nearly 1,000 alumni members. They noticed that many fraternities and sororities were using a patchwork of various smartphone apps to try to plan, communicate, and coordinate a variety of activities from socials, to philanthropic activities, to study hall, and voting.