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Greg Parker and The “Chewy Ice” Venture

September 9, 2011

On September 8th, 2011, Greg Parker addressed the COBA entrepreneurship students of Georgia Southern University. He shared a very inspirational speech about his amazing success story of starting a single convenience store at the age of 21, and becoming the “Profit Prophet” of the industry as described in Convenience Store Petroleum Magazine. Greg emphasized the need for perseverance, and told the students that their mindset should be to “think like an immigrant”, meaning they should do whatever is necessary to achieve success as mediocrity will not provide them with a lavish life.

The small town boy from Collins, Georgia also provided the students with great insight to some very crucial keys to success. He places a vast amount of importance on the people he surrounds himself with, because he says, “If you focus on the happiness of your employees, then they will focus on the satisfaction of their customers.” This is proven true by the average 22 year tenure of his Direct Reports Team. Another great value he stressed was to “worship data”, but to also know how to analyze it to make you successful. He emphasized that even though all the facts and figures in the world point towards mass financial default, “this is one of the most exciting times to be alive, as there is so much opportunity”, and it is up to them to “find a better way.”

Furthermore, Greg admits that it is easy to always look for other opportunities to become profitable as he has attempted many business ventures. But the best lesson these young entrepreneurs can learn is “to do what you’re best at”, and for Greg Parker that is being the profit leader in the convenience store industry.

The Company: The Parker Companies owns and operates 32 retail stores in Southeast Georgia and Bluffton, South Carolina. It also owns and operates Parker’s Urban Gourmet Market; Spin City (a Laundromat concept); a wholesale oil distributorship, and Parker’s Square in Richmond Hill which consists of both office and retail space.

Industry Activities: Greg is a vice chairman of the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) Center for Foodservice Excellence and an active member of Pepsi’s Retail Advisory Council. He recently served as vice chairman of the NACS Research & Development State of the Industry Committees for five years, and served as chairman of the BP-Amoco Marketers Association for three years. He also served on the Coca Cola Retail Advisory Committee for three years.

He is currently active in Petroleum Marketers Study Group, is a member of both the Young President’s Organization and World President’s Organization, is on the Strategy Board for Amyris Biotech, and heads up a CEO committee made up of top CEOs in the US and led by one of the most respected analysts in the world, Walter Zimmerman.

Community Activities: Greg currently serves on the board of the Savannah Economic Development Authority. He also served as chairman of the Savannah Master Plan Task Force, was on the executive board of the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority for several years, is a member of the Mayor’s Crime Task Force, and is a past board member of the Savannah Chamber of Commerce.

Greg also is active with community and charitable groups including the Savannah College of Art & Design and Savannah Country Day School. He is a 2005 recipient of the Savannah Urban Entrepreneur Award.
**Personal:** Greg graduated from the University of Georgia in 1975 with honors. He and his wife have been married for 21 years and have three children.