



# ACTION GREENSBORO

breaking new ground



*Governor's Court Condominiums under construction: another example of progress in downtown Greensboro.*

## Inside

# Greensboro has forward momentum



*Tech transfer: from university labs to new businesses, page 5.*



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## Annual Report

**N**on-profit Action Greensboro's overall goal is simple: to bring more and better-paying jobs to Greensboro, enhancing the quality of life for all. After more than a year of effort involving hundreds of citizens and many organizations, Greensboro is taking decisive steps to shape its future.

Why was Action Greensboro created?

A 2000 study of Greensboro's economic prospects forecast a bleak future. The industries that had been the region's industrial base for more than a century were (and are) in decline. The McKinsey Report warned that Greensboro's prospects would not improve unless the community charted a new, unified course for economic growth and community development.

**A**ction Greensboro evolved to address this situation. Following the recommendations of the McKinsey Report, Action Greensboro targets six key areas:

- Improving public education.
- Developing and marketing Greensboro's image.
- Improvements to the Center City.
- Fostering small business development and entrepreneurship.
- Attracting and retaining young professionals.
- Retaining and enhancing the existing business community and recruiting new businesses and industry.

Action Greensboro pushes these initiatives to the forefront and partners with other organizations to see them through.

Community involvement and progress fostered by Action Greensboro's initiatives are regularly covered by local media. Some components have received passing notice, while others have sparked controversy. Action Greensboro considers the public discussion as positive; it signifies that Greensboro citizens are involved and care passionately about our city's future.

Much of the work being performed by Action

Greensboro's partners goes unseen. Other efforts, particularly in downtown Greensboro, have resulted in visible changes. All these endeavors are the result of businesses, groups and individuals trying to make our city and community a better place.

Success in reversing negative trends comes in incremental steps, not giant leaps. In this report to the community, Action Greensboro highlights the progress made so far.

One of the best indicators of positive change – a change in attitude – is one of the most difficult to achieve. Broad-based citizen involvement, the cooperation of diverse businesses and organizations, and supportive actions by the Greensboro City Council and Guilford County Commissioners tell Action Greensboro that our community mindset is changing. Greensboro is moving forward.



## Commitment to Excellence Fund

### Corporate Contributors' Annual Donation

#### Titanium

(\$100,000 and above)

Jefferson Pilot Financial  
VF Corp.

#### Platinum

(\$50,000 – \$99,999)

Lorillard Tobacco Co.  
RF Micro Devices, Inc.  
United Guaranty Corp.

#### Gold

(\$25,000 – \$49,999)

Burlington Industries  
Crown Automotive  
Management Co.  
Duke Energy Corp.  
General Dynamics Advanced  
Information Systems  
Golden Touch Car Wash  
Long Miller & Associates, LLC  
Moses Cone Health Systems  
News & Record  
Pace Communications  
Pratt Foundation  
UnitedHealthcare  
of North Carolina  
Wachovia Bank & Trust Co.

#### Silver

(\$15,000 – \$24,999)

Bank of America  
Ernst & Young

#### Bronze

(\$5,000 – \$14,999)

Brooks Pierce McLendon  
Humphrey & Leonard LLP  
Central Carolina Bank Foundation  
Koury Corp.  
Samet Corp.  
Smith Moore LLP  
Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc.  
U. S. Trust Company  
of North Carolina

#### Sustaining

(\$1,000 – \$4,999)

BellSouth  
Telecommunications, Inc.  
Bessemer Improvement Co.  
Quaintance Weaver  
Restaurants & Hotels  
WFMY-TV 2

# Improving public education

**W**hy are public schools a crucial factor in economic development? Just ask any employer. A good public education system is absolutely essential because it determines the quality of the work force, the most important factor influencing where industries relocate.

Through Action Greensboro, more than 30 companies have donated over \$2 million to the Commitment to Excellence, which funds innovative programs designed to enhance our schools. In addition, the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, CEMALA Foundation and the Center For Creative Leadership have contributed \$3 million to enhance public education. The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro and CEMALA Foundation have given another \$150,000 to start a Guilford County Education Network.

**T**he Commitment to Excellence funds three Guilford County public school programs designed to provide incentives for higher achievement, attract more of the best teachers, close the achievement gap, and build confidence in the public schools.

**T**he 2002 Academic All-Stars Camp took place July 8-26 on the campuses of Greensboro College, North Carolina A&T State University, and High Point University. Now in its second year, this academic day camp is modeled after the state's Governor's School program, with students invited to participate based on their scores on eighth-grade end-of-grade math and reading tests. Eighty students who participated in the 2001 camp were invited to return (as rising tenth-graders) to the 2002 camp at N.C. A&T. Two groups, totaling 106 top-performing rising ninth-graders, attended camp at either Greensboro College or High Point University. The Academic All-Stars Camp focuses on SAT test preparation, leadership development, and experiences in a field chosen by the student.

**T**he Celebration of Excellence in Education, held August 13 at War Memorial Auditorium, was attended by more than 1,200 people. This second annual celebration recognized and rewarded the 15 most academically improved Guilford County

public schools for the 2001-2002 year, based on improvement of end-of-grade test scores in math, reading and writing. Each of the 15 schools, represented by its principal, received \$8,000 to use for improving instruction and student achievement. Two teachers at each school also were recognized. Nominated by outstanding students as the teacher who had most positively influenced them, each teacher received \$1,000 for unrestricted use.

**T**he TEACH Guilford program offers financial incentives to teachers who commit to teach in low-performing schools, provided that their students meet performance criteria established by the school principal.

Eligible teachers include those in hard-to-fill subjects such as math, science and special education, as well as those who are bilingual. Successful applicants agree to teach full-time in the system for an extended period to qualify for the incentives, or stipends. Currently there are 95 third-, fourth- and fifth-grade teachers in the program.

TEACH Guilford began in five schools in 2001-02 and increased to 10 schools in 2002-03. Teachers in the program at the first five schools are committed for three years. The program has been revised by principals to reward results, encourage longevity, and provide incentives for experienced teachers, who

may be considering retirement, to remain in the profession.

Teachers who join the program and whose students' test scores improve annually receive the following incentives:

- \$1,500 at the end of the first year.
- \$2,000 at the end of the second year.
- \$4,000 at the end of the third year.

Funding for the program is \$595,000 for three years, through the 2002-2003 school year. Subject to its continued success and funding availability, Guilford County Schools will expand TEACH Guilford to the next five most impacted schools for a total commitment of approximately \$1,000,000 for the four-year period.

**T**he Guilford County Education Network, created by the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro and the High Point Community Foundation, provides financial and leadership resources for Guilford County educational programs. The Education Network is an independent charitable organization governed by a 30-member board of directors representing Greensboro, High Point and Guilford County.

The board is currently working to define the organization's role and direction. The network will emphasize community dialogue and engagement to raise the quality of education, and it will afford the Greensboro and High Point business communities the opportunity to focus on county-wide education concerns. One possible function is to provide an independent, objective analysis of the school budget.



*Schools awarded \$8,000 in Commitment to Excellence funds have paid for staff development, purchased books and computers, maps, globes and even mini-blinds, said Superintendent Terry Grier.*



*Teacher Ken Schommer (left) of Griffin Middle School was nominated for recognition by student Dakotah Rickard. They were photographed at the Celebration of Excellence in Education.*

### Learn more:

[www.actiongreensboro.org/schools.html](http://www.actiongreensboro.org/schools.html)



# Developing and marketing Greensboro's image

**G**reensboro's many attributes have defied easy description. People who know the city can talk at length about the wonderful volunteer spirit, business opportunities, parks and cultural facilities, the many colleges, the terrific location, the diverse faith communities, the exceptional environment for family life.

But how best to express all that in a word or phrase? To capture the spirit of Greensboro so that we, as residents, can better understand it and share it with others?

Action Greensboro, working with a large corps of volunteers, tackled this image issue after it was identified by consultants as a major stumbling block to progress. The result is "Greensboro, A Great Place to Connect."

The theme capitalizes on the premise that no matter what an individual (or family or business) is seeking, it can be found among Greensboro's many resources.

In a nutshell, Greensboro Connects. The motto is a celebration of Greensboro's assets, values, heritage, and the promise of its future.

A three-year marketing campaign was launched September 24 with a multimedia gala at the Carolina Theatre and the new



Greensboro Connects logo was introduced.

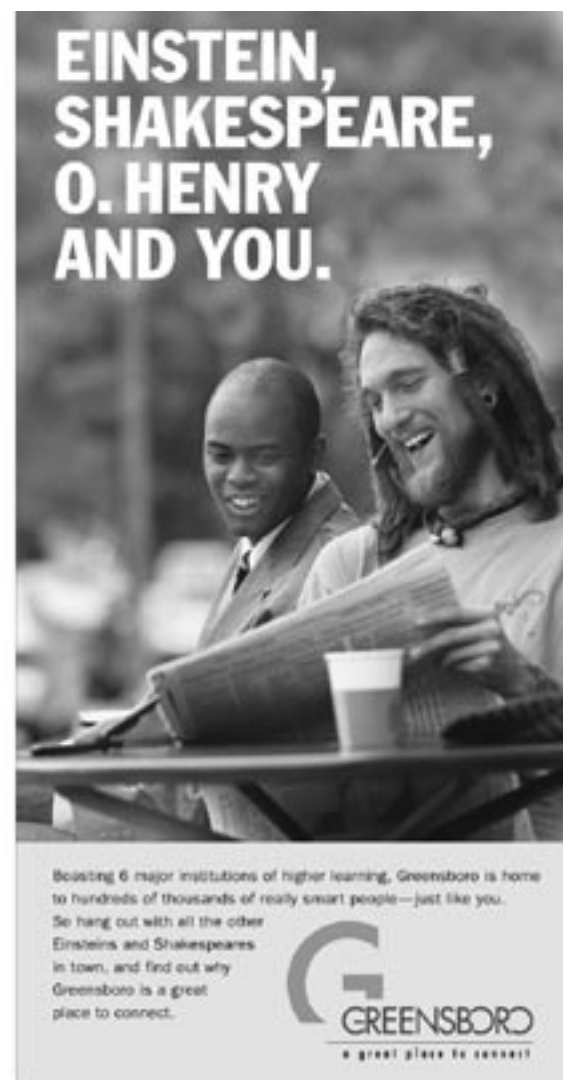
Over time, the goal is for the logo's G to become a unifying visual element. Businesses and organizations are encouraged to incorporate the Greensboro Connects logo into their own printed materials to demonstrate support for this spirit-building concept.

A media campaign involving billboards, radio, television and newspaper advertising will help citizens grasp the breadth of what Greensboro Connects encompasses. In marketing terms, the goal is to "position Greensboro in terms of its strengths."

From this, campaign leaders hope to reenergize community spirit. It's hoped that more citizens will become involved in initiatives to improve the community and be advocates for our city.

The Greensboro Area Chamber of Commerce is managing the Greensboro Connects campaign with events and programs scheduled through 2004. Plans are to work with businesses and non-profit groups, schools and colleges, government and civic groups to showcase community strengths and that Greensboro Connects.

*Print ads are part of the Greensboro Connects campaign to define the city's image.*



## Here's how to connect with Greensboro Connects

**T**he Greensboro Connects campaign welcomes participation by businesses, organizations and other groups. Listed here are ways to help build awareness of Greensboro's many strengths and to show support for this community-wide effort.

For more information on Greensboro Connects, contact Sonya Conway at the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce; phone 510-1234, ext. 312; or send e-mail to [sconway@greensboro.org](mailto:sconway@greensboro.org).

### How to get involved

- Designate an employee ambassador to participate in the Greensboro Connects program.
- Hold a Greensboro Connects awareness event or employee workshop to engage your employees in this celebration of our unique community identity.
- Place a Greensboro Connects decal on your door or poster in your lobby.
- E-mail the new Greensboro Connects logo to your employees.
- Jointly host a Greensboro Connects event to get to know people at neighboring companies.
- Incorporate Greensboro Connects brand values into your hiring practices and employee orientation.
- Send employees through the Experience Greensboro program at the Chamber.
- Publish Greensboro Connects information in your company newsletter.



*The Greensboro Chamber of Commerce has adopted the Greensboro Connects theme into its logo.*

#### Learn more:

[www.actiongreensboro.org/task\\_imagebrand.html](http://www.actiongreensboro.org/task_imagebrand.html)



# Improvements to the Center City

The heart and soul of any city is its downtown. A vibrant downtown is a hub for business, cultural, recreational and entertainment opportunities. Action Greensboro's focus on downtown initiatives reflects the belief that a strong, vibrant future for Greensboro includes a strong, vibrant downtown.

Downtown revitalization saw significant progress in 2002. Here are some of the highlights.

## Learn more:

[www.actiongreensboro.org/task\\_centercity.html](http://www.actiongreensboro.org/task_centercity.html)



Extensive information about the downtown district plan is on view at Greensboro's Central Library on Church Street.



Action Greensboro contributed \$175,000 to Triad Stage in 2002.

Center City Park is the working name for a new visual focal point and gathering place in the heart of Greensboro. The location is bordered by North Elm Street, Davie Street and East Friendly Avenue.

All but one of the parcels needed for the 1.5-acre project have been purchased and are being temporarily held by Downtown Greensboro Renaissance.

What sort of park will it be? What will it be called? Everyone can offer suggestions, including youngsters. Thoughts are welcome on the park's design, maintenance, ownership and operations. All decisions will be determined by the community in a process led by a committee of volunteers.

Design and construction are expected to take two years. Action Greensboro spent \$6 million on the park in 2002.

The proposed downtown minor league baseball stadium is in the design stage, with a site acquired through a land swap with Guilford County. The project involves constructing a new home for Guilford County's Social Services and Health Departments, which now occupy part of the site.

This project has generated much community support as well as opposition. Action Greensboro is confident that the plan will move forward.

A 7.3-acre site bordered by North Eugene, Edgeworth and Bellemeade Streets will be made available for stadium construction as soon as the new, 120,000-square-foot Guilford County Health and Social Services building on Maple Street is completed. Ground was broken at the 10-acre site in 2002.

The stadium, to be owned by a nonprofit organization, will be home to the Greensboro Bats. No tax dollars will be used to construct or operate the stadium.

A new mixed-use residential and commercial area, privately developed, likely will surround the stadium. Planning for this surrounding area will be open to all interested citizens.

The Joseph M. Bryan Foundation and private benefactors have committed \$8.5 million toward building the stadium.

A turning point in the civil rights movement took place on February 1, 1960, when four students from North Carolina A&T State University took seats at the traditionally whites-only lunch counter at Woolworth's. Now that building at 134 South



MacArthur Davis, executive director of Sit-In Movement, Inc. Action Greensboro has pledged \$4 million to the International Civil Rights Center & Museum.

Elm Street is the site of the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, which is slated to open February 1, 2005.

Action Greensboro in 2002 contributed \$490,000 of its \$4 million pledge to the effort, which is being coordinated by the non-profit Sit-In Movement, Inc. When building renovations and historic displays are complete, the museum should be an important destination for tourists and students of history.

The national economic downturn threatened to slow housing development in downtown Greensboro. This led Action Greensboro to find creative avenues to sustain the pace of downtown development and reduce financial risk for developers and investors.

To spur an increase in available downtown housing, Action Greensboro makes grants available to builders that pay up to two years' construction interest on unsold units. Downtown Greensboro, Inc. administers the housing incentives fund. Action Greensboro committed \$500,000 for housing incentives in 2002.

Greensboro's downtown can be viewed as one large entity. But on closer examination, it has four distinct neighborhoods (see diagram). The Center City Master Plan, created in 2001 by the Cooper Carry Center for Connective Architecture in Atlanta, identified them as:

- the Bellemeade neighborhood.
- the Southside neighborhood.
- the Church Street neighborhood.
- the Morehead neighborhood.

Each area is envisioned as a center of activity where people live, work, play and interact in a park-filled urban neighborhood. A greenway will connect all the areas and link with the city's extensive park and trail system.

Downtown Greensboro, Inc. is coordinating the district planning with the Cooper Carry Center and interested citizens. Public workshops will be held through the summer, with the final district plans to be presented by fall.

Action Greensboro paid \$100,000 for management of the Center City Master Plan and began payments to total \$275,000 for the district planning process in 2002 and 2003.



Artist's rendering of the proposed downtown baseball stadium; no public funds will be used for construction or maintenance.

# Fostering small business development and entrepreneurship

**M**ost Americans work for small businesses, and these businesses usually begin on a small scale. More jobs are created as new ventures grow and expand. Action Greensboro recognizes that the future economic health of the area depends on nurturing existing small businesses and helping new ones get started. In 2002, progress was made on several Action Greensboro initiatives to support small business development and entrepreneurship.

**T**he Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative (TEI), funded by Action Greensboro and the Winston-Salem Alliance, promotes economic development by fostering the start-up and success of high-growth companies.



Dennis Toman, president of Secure Designs. The high-tech start-up beat 94 competitors in a TEI business plan contest to win \$50,000.

TEI helps coordinate existing regional resources that may include economic development, business assistance, entrepreneurial, and higher education organizations. The goal is to help meet the development, research, technical, and workforce needs of the target businesses.

TEI assists new businesses in the Triad through training and coaching, business plan competitions, and developing a network of venture capital investors. In 2001-02, 144

entrepreneurs received education, counseling, incubator services, or publicity from TEI, and 97 of these individuals took one or more business courses.

Action Greensboro's 2002 contribution to TEI was \$200,000.

**T**he inner city offers unique competitive advantages. What is the best way for businesses to make the most of them?

Action Greensboro sponsored meetings between representatives of the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC), university business faculty members, and local business leaders to explore this question. The meetings were held in conjunction with UNCG's Bryan School of Business and Economics, North Carolina A&T State University's School of Business and Economics, and the East Market Street Development Corporation.

In a community briefing, ICIC shared its benchmarking research on Greensboro's inner city and outlined competitive

Baker-entrepreneur Ann Matthews and her husband, Bill Snider, own Simple Kneads, an artisan bake shop located off South Elm Street on a newly chic alley. Simple Kneads, which opened in 2001, employs six people.



advantages that include:

- Proximity to the central business district.
- Proximity to transportation networks.
- Proximity to information networks, in particular, broadband availability.

The business schools at N.C. A&T State University and UNCG are studying Greensboro's inner city to formulate a business development strategy. Action Greensboro paid \$5,000 of the cost of this program.

**T**he Inclusive Capitalism Partnership Program (ICPP) wants to stimulate the development of minority-owned small businesses. The strategy is to help create the networking relationships enjoyed by larger businesses and raise the awareness of new business opportunities among minority-owned small businesses.

ICPP is a joint volunteer effort of Action Greensboro, the Greensboro Area Chamber of Commerce, and SouthEast Economic Developments (SEEDS).

Minority contractors in the Triad construction industry are the program's initial focus. ICPP has held four contractors' socials to help build relationships and encourage dialogue between minority and established contractors; more than 120 contractors have participated so far. A presentation also was held to familiarize minority contractors with requirements of the UNC system, state of North Carolina, and city of Greensboro. Action Greensboro's 2002 contribution to the Inclusive Capitalism Partnership Program was \$25,000.

**T**echnology transfer is what happens when an idea moves from university research lab into the business arena. Researchers at North Carolina A&T State University and UNCG from time to time have seen their academic pursuits develop into new business opportunities. Action Greensboro has taken steps to ensure that the environment in Greensboro is ripe for more technology transfer.

Action Greensboro has funded a joint university Office of Technology Transfer and Commercialization in the Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship.

The office will use university faculty and staff to conduct

**Continues on page 7**



Research by UNCG biology professors Vince Henrich (left) and Parke Rublee spawned one of Greensboro's newest technology transfer companies, EcoGenomix, which will focus on water purity.



Tom May (left) is director of the Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship. The position of assistant Director Robert S. Chiles, Sr., whose focus is on minority business development, was funded by a grant from Action Greensboro. The portrait is of the late Vic Nussbaum, longtime Greensboro businessman, civic leader and mayor.

## Learn more:

[www.actiongreensboro.org/task\\_smallbiz.html](http://www.actiongreensboro.org/task_smallbiz.html)

## Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative

[www.triadlaunchpad.org](http://www.triadlaunchpad.org)

## Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship

[www.nussbaumcfe.com](http://www.nussbaumcfe.com)

## Attracting and retaining young professionals

**F**or all of its benefits and livability, Greensboro has slipped in its ability to attract and retain young professionals. The industries that traditionally have brought talented newcomers are in decline, and graduates from our colleges and universities too often seek their fortunes elsewhere.

One of Action Greensboro's major initiatives is to find ways to make Greensboro get and keep its fair share of young professionals, the leaders of tomorrow.

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### Learn more:

[www.actiongreensboro.org/task\\_aryp.html](http://www.actiongreensboro.org/task_aryp.html)

### Coming soon:

[www.visiongreensboro.org](http://www.visiongreensboro.org)

**V**ision Greensboro, a consortium of young professional organizations, is an effort to reach out to young adults and help them connect with the Greensboro community. The 18-member council includes representatives from young professional organizations, colleges and universities and at-large members. Vision Greensboro's administrator also is one of the 18.

Vision Greensboro seeks to find ways to nurture relationships with the college community, aggressively market Greensboro's strengths, and promote opportunities for community leadership and involvement.

Action Greensboro provided funding in 2002 that helped support a welcome back festival for college students (see below), a retreat for Vision Greensboro members, and the salary of a young professionals administrator.

Vision Greensboro has three additional projects under way.

**T**o market Greensboro's assets locally and nationally, a Web site will serve as a one-stop shop for young professionals. The Web site, expected to debut this spring, will be an interactive tool displaying information about the many leadership, volunteer, social, and academic opportunities for young professionals. Its look will be modern and fresh.

**W**elcome packets specifically designed for young professionals will be offered to new young employees and those considering a move to Greensboro. The packets will offer a personal touch and detail connections to the myriad of opportunities in Greensboro.

Also included will be a letter of welcome and personal insights about what life is like for a young professional in Greensboro. Arts, entertainment, sports, volunteerism, and leadership opportunities will be described. Coupons will be included inviting the newcomer to places of interest in Greensboro. These packets will be available to local businesses and to interested individuals through the Vision Greensboro Web site in the spring.

**A** survey will be conducted to identify difficulties businesses have in recruiting, attracting, and retaining young employees. Vision Greensboro members also plan to call or visit newly hired young employees and make them aware of the networks of young professionals and opportunities here.



Serving Vision Greensboro are volunteers Chandra Cagle, Anadri Chisholm-Noel, Terry Noel, coordinator Jenny Stokes, Justin Weik, Amy Lytle, Allison VanLaningham, Julie Newcomb and Jarvis Harris.

## Get Down! Town Festival introduces college crowd to life in the center city

**G**reensboro has more than 36,000 college students, but many of them don't know what downtown Greensboro has to offer. The first Get Down! Town Festival, on August 24, was a welcome back to school event that also introduced students to downtown Greensboro.

Several thousand participants attended the free evening event, enjoying stage entertainment, free merchandise, and specials offered by 17 restaurants, bars and merchants.

The festival showed the students that downtown Greensboro is alive and thriving after dark.

Liberty Oak Restaurant enjoyed record summer 2002 sales that night. The Greensboro Transit Authority partnered with Action Greensboro to provide free transportation to and from campuses until 2 a.m.; nearly 1,000 riders were introduced to GTA's new continual bus service from college campuses to downtown Greensboro.



Volunteers like Jay Mattson (at the wheel) and others kept events running smoothly for the many college students who attended Get Down! Town in August.

## The Core Committee



Skip Alston	<i>Guilford County Commissioners</i>
John L. Bakane	<i>Cone Mills Corporation</i>
Dennis R. Barry	<i>Moses Cone Health System</i>
R. Steve Bowden	<i>R. Steve Bowden Associates</i>
Michael F. Bumpass	<i>Greater Greensboro Merchants Association</i>
Timothy B. Burnett	<i>Bessemer Improvement Company</i>
Watts Carr	<i>Piedmont Triad Partnership</i>
Howard Chubbs	<i>Providence Baptist Church</i>
Sue W. Cole	<i>U.S. Trust Company of N.C.</i>
Roger Cotten	<i>Guilford County</i>
Henry E. Frye	<i>Brooks Pierce McLendon Humphrey &amp; Leonard</i>
Shirley Frye	<i>WFMY-TV</i>
James J. Guidone	<i>Novartis Animal Health U.S.</i>
William L. Hemphill	<i>United Guaranty Corp. (retired)</i>
Keith A. Holliday	<i>Mayor, City of Greensboro</i>
Leonard Kaplan	<i>Toleo Foundation</i>
Randall Kaplan	<i>Capsule Group</i>
Van King	<i>News &amp; Record</i>
J. Edward Kitchen	<i>City of Greensboro</i>
Robert O. Klepfer, Jr.	<i>Tannenbaum-Sternberger Foundation</i>
Beth A. Lacey	<i>American Express Card Services</i>
Cathy K. Levinson	<i>Toleo Foundation</i>
J. Lee Lloyd	<i>Brooks Pierce McLendon Humphrey &amp; Leonard</i>
Robert E. Long, Jr.	<i>Clark/Bardes Consulting</i>
Frank R. Mascia	<i>UnitedHealthcare</i>
Mackey J. McDonald	<i>VF Corporation</i>
Bonnie McElveen-Hunter	<i>Pace Communications</i>
Charles E. McQueary	<i>General Dynamics (retired)</i>
E. S. (Jim) Melvin	<i>Joseph M. Bryan Foundation</i>
Richard L. Moore	<i>Weaver Foundation</i>
Robert L. Newton	<i>Moses Cone Wesley Long Community Health Foundation</i>
David Norbury	<i>RF Micro Devices (retired)</i>
William V. Nutt, Jr.	<i>United Guaranty Corporation</i>
Martin L. Orlowsky	<i>Lorillard Tobacco Company</i>
Dennis W. Quaintance	<i>Quaintance Weaver Restaurants &amp; Hotels</i>
James C. Renick	<i>North Carolina A&amp;T State University</i>
Norman G. Samet	<i>Samet Corporation</i>
H. Walker Sanders	<i>Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro</i>
Stephen D. Showfety	<i>Koury Corporation</i>
Lanty L. Smith	<i>Soles Brower Smith &amp; Company</i>
David A. Stonecipher	<i>Jefferson Pilot Financial</i>
Patricia Sullivan	<i>University of North Carolina at Greensboro</i>
Priscilla P. Taylor	<i>CEMALA Foundation</i>
Craven Williams	<i>Greensboro College</i>

## Small business development

Continued from page 5

training in subjects needed by small businesses. It will create a database of talent and expertise in the Piedmont region needed by technology-based businesses and create and coordinate student internships. And when all this effort begins to pay off, it will market the technologies the universities develop, leveraging their expertise for economic growth in the Triad.

Action Greensboro provided \$165,000 in 2002 to operate the Office of Technology Transfer and Commercialization and will fund it with similar amounts in 2003-04.

The Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship at 2007 Yanceyville Street in the historic Cone Mills Revolution Plant is the state's largest small business incubator.

Upfitted and wired as a state-of-the-art workplace, it retains the beautiful oak floors,

huge windows and high ceilings of a turn-of-the-century textile mill. Rents are purposely set lower than standard commercial rates in Greensboro to provide financial assistance for budding entrepreneurs.

In 2002 the Nussbaum Center grew from 49 to 55 tenants and "graduated" its hundredth company, Binary Systems.

Action Greensboro contributed \$75,000 to the Nussbaum Center in 2002 to fund the position of assistant director. This new staff person will assist with development of a mentoring program and ways to attract minority and women-owned businesses.

The Tannenbaum-Sternberger Foundation provided \$425,000 for renovation of the Nussbaum Center's third floor, creating a total of 119 offices in 72,000 square feet of space.

## A short history of Action Greensboro

Six Greensboro foundations united in 2000 to fund a study to examine the state of Greensboro's economy. The report by McKinsey & Co. compared Greensboro with similar cities and projected where Greensboro is headed unless major initiatives are undertaken. The McKinsey Report outlined an agenda for community discussion and action.

Action Greensboro, a non-profit organi-

zation, was created in 2001 by the same six foundations to spur the community to action. A core committee of business, university and civic leaders sets the overall direction for Action Greensboro.

As Greensboro moves forward and tackles the issues identified in the McKinsey Report, Action Greensboro expects to work itself out of a job within five years.

## Sponsoring Foundations

### The Joseph M. Bryan Foundation

E. S. (Jim) Melvin, *President*

### The CEMALA Foundation

Priscilla P. Taylor, *Executive Director*

### The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro

H. Walker Sanders, *President*

### The Moses Cone Wesley Long Community Health Foundation

Robert L. Newton, *President*

### The Tannenbaum-Sternberger Foundation

Robert O. Klepfer, Jr., *Executive Director*

### The Toleo Foundation

Cathy K. Levinson, *Executive Director*

### The Weaver Foundation

Richard L. Moore, *President*



317 South Elm Street

Phone 336-379-0821

Fax 336-379-9719

[www.actiongreensboro.org](http://www.actiongreensboro.org)

Susan S. Schwartz  
*Executive Director*

Jenny Stokes  
*Young Professionals Coordinator*

Judy Morton  
*Office & Communications Manager*



# Retention, enhancement and attraction of business and industry

*"Economic projections for Greensboro point to a continued downward drift of the region's economic standing over the next five years, because the economy will not continue growing at the rate it has in the past. In the simplest terms, if Greensboro continues to replace higher-paying jobs with lower-paying ones, overall prosperity will decline, despite continuing with nearly full employment."*

– The McKinsey Report  
November 2000

Unfortunately, these predictions came true, and sooner, rather than later. The overall healthy national economy (up until September 11) masked the downturn in Greensboro. Although Greensboro has experienced a minor net increase in some types of jobs, the number of jobs lost is dismal. In 2001, the net regional loss was 22,400 jobs; in 2002, net loss was 2,500 jobs. The impact is extraordinary when considering that in 2000, the region had a net gain of 5,000 jobs.

Unlike previous experiences with layoffs, the jobs lost in the past few years will not come back. Lacking diversity in its economy, Greensboro will feel the repercussions for years. Real per capita income has not grown as much as in some of Greensboro's competitor communities or as in North Carolina as a whole. Poverty rates are up and home ownership rates are down.

Greensboro's economic development policymakers in 2002 struggled with two sets of challenges. The first was the area's overall economic condition, as the predictions of the McKinsey Report played out in accurate, if accelerated, fashion. The second set of obstacles, also noted by McKinsey, was the city's "alphabet soup" of economic development agencies, many with overlapping goals and missions.

McKinsey recommended streamlining economic development efforts to eliminate duplication and competing interests. The consulting firm returned to Greensboro at the invitation of Action Greensboro to work on this task. That effort failed.

The overwhelming importance of economic development efforts, and the significant funds spent toward job retention and growth, demanded another attempt at resolving the issue. This time, the parties would be asked to address strategy, not structure.

In August, representatives of nine economic development organizations, the city, county, GTCC, N.C. A&T State University, UNCG and Action Greensboro began developing a community-wide economic development plan. The goal was to develop a top-notch plan for Greensboro and then decide who would do what. Action Greensboro brought in Mac Holladay of Atlanta-based Market Street Services to facilitate this process.



Consultant Mac Holladay of Market Street Services.

The Operational Economic Plan for Greensboro was rolled out on December 11. The plan points out:

*"Like many cities, Greensboro has both advantages and challenges that it must address as a community if it is to continue to offer a competitive business climate for existing business, new businesses and potential entrepreneurs. Concerns about the community's economic development structure and service delivery continue to be a distraction, and have become Greensboro's biggest roadblock to sustained prosperity."*

This is a short-term action plan focused on the operational side of local economic development programs. It addresses five areas:

- Existing business and business recruitment.
- Entrepreneurship and small and minority business development.
- Downtown/Center City revitalization.
- Tourism, culture, arts and recreation.
- Marketing.

Two key areas to be addressed later or as components of these initiatives are:

- Education and workforce development.
- Regionalism.

The newly formed Greensboro Economic Council will oversee the plan. Members include the mayor, the chairman of the Guilford County Commission, and the chairs of Greensboro Economic Development Partnership, the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, the Greensboro Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Downtown Greensboro, Inc., the Greater Greensboro Merchants Association, and a representative of Action Greensboro's Economic Development Task Force. The council will have no budget or program and will not be incorporated.

Individual work groups will address the action plan's five program areas. In addition to performance measures outlined for each action step, additional benchmarks can be used to evaluate the long-term progress of the council. These include:

- Growth in real per capita income.
- An increase in average wages.
- Economic diversity.
- Declines in poverty rates.
- Increases in high school graduation rates.
- More graduates from colleges, universities and technical schools.
- Further declines in teenage pregnancy rates.
- Decreases in infant mortality rates.
- An increase in net population.
- Growth in home ownership.

## Learn more:

[www.actiongreensboro.org/task\\_biz.html](http://www.actiongreensboro.org/task_biz.html)



VF Corp., whose brands include Greensboro-based Wrangler, relocated its headquarters here from Pennsylvania in 1998. Economic development efforts must be focused to bring more companies here.



Greensboro needs more cutting-edge industries like RF Micro Devices, which was founded here, to assure future prosperity.



Liberty Oak restaurant relocated to downtown Greensboro from an outlying strip mall. It is one of many restaurants adding business vitality and evening activity to the Center City.