

Ports Authority Brings Service Ashore



The Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) is on track to make fiscal year 2008 its most successful year ever. How? By asking their customers what they want, and then delivering unmatched service.

In the first 10 months of FY2008, the GPA has handled more than 21.4 million tons of cargo, a **20.6% increase** over last year, significantly outpacing all other U.S. ports. The Port of Savannah, now the fourth busiest and fastest growing container terminal in the U.S., boasts a 19% increase in business, and the Port of Brunswick reports a 98.5% increase at its Colonel's Island Terminal.

GPA facilities support more than **286,476 jobs** throughout the state, contributing \$14.9 billion in income, \$55.8 billion in revenue and \$2.8 billion in state and local taxes.

Bringing in the business

With executive director Doug Marchand at the helm, several years ago the GPA adopted a unique approach to attracting customers that is now known in industry circles as the "**Savannah model.**" While

other ports wooed shipping companies, the GPA went straight to the business source: retailers.

The GPA learned that retail businesses wanted to reduce the time and costs of transporting imported and exported goods across the country. To meet this

need, the GPA has promoted coastal Georgia's abundant land and buildings available for retail distribution centers, something no other U.S. port can offer.

With distribution centers for **Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Target, IKEA** and others set up in Georgia, shipping lines have an incentive to make Savannah their preferred port of call. Nearby interstate highways, airports and expanded intermodal railways enable retailers to transport their products to U.S. stores faster and cheaper. This also supports the GPA's efforts to reduce fuel consumption and emissions.

Balancing imports and exports

Georgia's ports benefit our export economy, too. The GPA maintains an equal balance of imports and exports, which is attractive to shipping firms and domestic producers. Savannah's top export? Wood pulp.

More cargo, less waiting

Those doing business with the GPA appreciate its efficiency and attention to customers. In addition to major physical expansions and upgraded processing software, the GPA offers broad customer assistance: kiosks at its gates to reduce wait times for local truckers; a single point of contact for all services at its Client Relations Center; and 24/7, real-time access to container information on the Internet.

"We have implemented proactive procedures to ensure that customers receive a fast, dependable response to service assistance, cargo coordination

and issue resolution to keep cargo moving seamlessly," said GPA's Director of External Affairs Robert Morris.

"Our gates are open six days per week and process as many as 8,000 truck moves per day, yet the lines to get in and out remain short."



Photos courtesy of the GPA

Change Agents & Agencies

Dr. Anthony Tricoli: Transforming Georgia Perimeter College



Since becoming the President of Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) in October 2006, Dr. Anthony S. Tricoli has been on a mission to change the culture and the perception of two-year institutions across Georgia.

Listening to the customer

"When I accepted the position at GPC, I knew it wasn't going to be easy. I was facing the prospect of a large reduction in student enrollment due to closing our Lawrenceville campus," said Dr. Tricoli.

"Many students at GPC are not what you would consider 'traditional' college students. They work full-time jobs and have families to support. That is one reason why we began focusing on recruiting students for online classes."

With online classes and other new and enhanced services and recruitment efforts, GPC didn't just prevent enrollment from dropping; it increased it by 8,000 students.

Creating a new image

"It is a common misconception that two-year colleges are not held to the same academic standards as a major university," said Dr. Tricoli. "You hear a lot of people refer to community college as the 'thirteenth grade.' But nothing could be farther from the truth at GPC.

"Two-year colleges provide the same core curriculum as four-year institutions. And, requirements that instructors hold a Master's degree or above offers students added assurance that the faculty has the knowledge and credentials to *(continued)*

DECAL: Serving Georgia's Smallest Customers



Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has updated its web site (www.decal.state.ga.us) to make it easier for parents to locate and evaluate child care and Pre-K programs in their communities. This new service helps parents make informed decisions about the best programs for their children's needs.

Options and opportunities

DECAL's web site provides helpful definitions of the various types of child care and pre-K options in Georgia. With improved search capabilities, parents can search for nearby programs by the facility's name, county or zip code.

The web site also offers reviews of each child care facility and Pre-K program and door-to-door directions using Google Maps.

Increasing enrollment

DECAL leaders hope the new and improved web site will help drive Pre-K enrollment across Georgia.

"Our goal is to fill every slot that is available statewide. This enhanced web site will help make the search process quicker and easier for parents," said Mary Mazarky, assistant commissioner for Pre-K.



DOAS: Making Customer Service a "Reality"



The DOAS Customer Service Team: (from left) Jim Sever, Bob Bender, Terry Newsom, Billy Gilbert and Commissioner Brad Douglas.

This month, the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) was given the unique honor to participate in **Service Star 2008**, a reality game show broadcast on the web at www.crmxchange.com.

The show features customer service teams from public and private organizations who compete against one another by responding to customer service scenarios. The winning team receives a \$1,000 check to be donated to a designated charity.

Up to the challenge

The DOAS team beat out other customer service teams from across the globe to compete as one of the six finalists, along with teams from Caterpillar, MassMutual, McKesson, MetLife and California Casualty. In Round 1, teams addressed a customer service scenario involving a difficult customer who continually buys and returns merchandise.

Although they didn't make it to the final round, the DOAS team made a significant impression on their opponents and judges. "If I ever decide to relocate to another state, Georgia is definitely the place I want to live," said Lior Arussy, the moderator for *Service Star 2008*.

Taking good risks

"Although we gave our best effort and came up a little short, I must tell you that I really sense we are 'getting it' when it comes to customer service," said Commissioner Brad Douglas. "Only by comparing ourselves to others, competing and taking risks can we improve."

Perimeter College (cont.)

lead them toward academic success. Student success is strategically placed at the heart of all we do."

A "guaranteed" service

To further prove that student success is at the heart of GPC, Dr. Tricoli established a new service called the Transfer Admission Guarantee, or TAG. With TAG, students who complete their core courses or earn a two-year degree from GPC with a certain grade point average will be admitted automatically to their choice of more than 20 participating public and private universities, including the University of Georgia and Georgia State University.

Customer service at the forefront

In January, GPC created its very own Office of Customer Service, directed by Fran Mohr.

"It was a natural fit for me," said Mohr. "I was already working with the Governor's Office of Customer Service as a Customer Service Champion. It gives me the opportunity to use what I know about customer service to create a dynamic office at GPC."

On the RPI partnership

GPC was chosen as the inaugural University System college to participate in Rapid Process Improvement (RPI) with the Governor's Office of Customer Service, focusing on student advising.

"Through the RPI program and efforts of the cross-departmental RPI teams, we have developed academic advising processes that will enable our students to have the best advising in the state," said Dr. Tricoli. Students now receive advising earlier in the semester, so that any problems are addressed sooner.

"This new process works," said Dr. Tricoli. "Our faculty advisors are now using custom tools that enable them to perform uniform and effective advising across all GPC campuses."

He added, "What I appreciate about partnership is how it creates a team environment. It is vital to encourage unity and to involve people with decisions that impact how they perform at work."

GPC, the third largest institution of the University System of Georgia, serves more than 21,400 students through five locations in metro Atlanta. For additional information, visit www.gpc.edu.

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