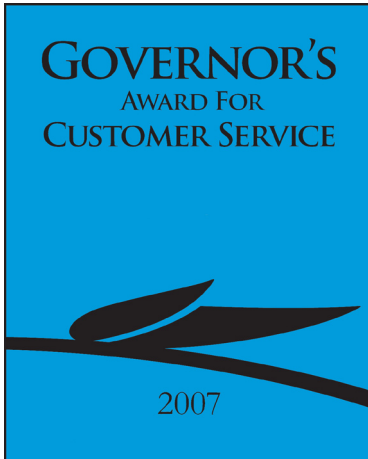




Governor's Office of Customer Service  
**FASTER. FRIENDLIER. EASIER.**

October 2007

## Governor Honors Excellence in Customer Service



More than 400 nominations were received for the first ever Governor's recognition for excellence in customer service. All state agencies and units of the University System of Georgia were eligible. Nominations were judged by a panel of leaders from the business community and the public sector. Winners will be announced Oct. 30 at the Governor's Customer Service Summit.

The Governor's Award in Customer Service will be awarded to winners in the following categories:

- Individual Excellence, including Employee of the Year
- Team Excellence, including Team of the Year
- Call Center Excellence
- Process Improvement
- Leadership
- Agency of the Year

## Rapid Process Improvement Goes to the Head of the Class

Agencies continue to partner with the Governor's Office of Customer Service to bring rapid process improvement (RPI) to their organizations. The Department of Human Resources' Office of Financial Services, an internal financial organization, began RPI this month. The Dept. of Human Resources' Division of Family & Children Services continues RPI, and the Dept. of Revenue's Taxpayer Services Division has just finished its RPI project.

RPI uses a five-phase approach: startup; assessment; improvement; implementation; and results, reward and reinforcement. This allows organizations to maximize workflow and develop a culture of continuous improvement. Experts from the Governor's Office of Customer Service and the Georgia Institute of Technology work with frontline employees and managers to evaluate current processes from the customer's perspective. This collaboration typically lasts nine months.

The Governor's Office of Customer Service is also partnering with Georgia

Perimeter College to bring RPI to student advising. This is the first institution of higher learning to use RPI methodology.

"We want to improve service to our students because there is a direct correlation between outstanding service, a supportive learning environment and an education that will ensure success in graduation and transfer," said Georgia Perimeter College president Dr. Anthony S. Tricoli.



USG Chancellor Erroll Davis chats with a Georgia Perimeter College student.

## Change Agents & Agencies



### Students First as USG's Customers

With his background in the corporate world, it was natural for University System of Georgia (USG) Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr. to refer to the System's 260,000 students as customers. But it took some of those in the academic world a little time to get used to hearing him talk about improving customer service.

"We are working hard to institutionalize the practice of putting our students first," said Davis.

#### Students are customers

Davis became the USG's eleventh chancellor in early 2006. He immediately embraced Governor Perdue's statewide customer service initiative.

Davis initiated a lengthy and thorough review of the Board of Regents' policies that govern the level at which decisions are made. Many decisions no longer require board-level endorsement. Everything from appointments to appeals is now handled at the lowest suitable level of authority. This increases efficiency for the USG's primary customer: the college student.

Student satisfaction is strongly related to student retention and graduation rates. To make sure students are satisfied with the service their college provides, the USG's 35 campuses have each designated a Customer Service Champion.

Campuses have also been encouraged to adopt continuous-improvement methodology that emphasizes customer satisfaction and quality of service.

-more-

More Stories on the Web! <http://team.georgia.gov> > Customer Service

### BenchmarkPortal training for call center managers

Read what participants had to say about the training featured on page 2

### "Anytime" recognition opportunities for exceptional customer service

Nomination forms for Governor's Commendations & Customer Service Heroes

# Call Centers Bring Easier Access to Georgians

## All Call Centers

	3rd Quarter 2007	GOAL
% Calls not answered	12.4%	9%
Average hold time	1 min 47 sec	60 sec

### Solutions Team Grows

Four new call centers have joined the Call Center Solutions Team, a group of state call center managers working together to improve call handling in Georgia:

- Southwest Georgia Transportation  
*Dept. of Community Health*
- Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases  
*Dept. of Human Resources*
- Adult Protective Services  
*Dept. of Human Resources*
- Unclaimed Property  
*Dept. of Revenue*

### Call Center Managers Train

The Governor's Office of Customer Service (OCS) recently brought together call center managers from the private sector and the state of Georgia for BenchmarkPortal's call center management training.

This training allowed call center managers from a variety of backgrounds to compare experiences and exchange ideas. Many were surprised to find little difference between the overall goals and objectives of private sector call centers versus public sector. OCS will continue to host BenchmarkPortal trainings in the future.

*Information manager Gregory Brown, program manager David Fields and call center supervisor Andrea Sneed receive training for new state call center technology installed first in the OCS call center.*



### Key Performance Indicators

For seven quarters the state's 27 call centers have held steady on key performance indicators. Data is compared across similar quarters to see how call centers are moving towards the state goals of decreasing the average hold time to 60 seconds and reducing the percentage of abandoned calls to 9%.

### Dept. of Revenue's Taxpayer Services Call Center

In less than a year, DOR has seen dramatic improvements in its call center. A month-to-month comparison is the best way to see the change, since call volume varies significantly throughout the year. For example, the abandoned call rate for August 2006 was 32.97%. In August 2007 it was 16.07% - a 50% improvement.

The average speed to answer was 4 minutes, 29 seconds in August 2006. In August 2007 it was 1 minute, 36 seconds, resulting in calls being answered more than three minutes faster this year than in 2006.

This improvement occurred because:

- New work status codes improved agent occupancy (the time an agent is readily available for calls) and utilization (the productive time an agent is actually handling calls).
- Key performance indicators are visible in real time to the entire call center staff.
- Staff vacancies were filled more quickly and the disparities between full-time permanent positions and seasonal staff addressed.

These 2007 accomplishments were made with fewer full-time agents than the agency had in 2006. In August 2006, there were 46 full-time agents and in August 2007 there were 38 full-time agents.

## Change Agent...(cont.)

### Increasing convenience

Another outcome of Davis' attention to customer service was the launch in October of [georgiaonline.org](http://georgiaonline.org).

The website is intended to increase student access to and awareness of the University System's online courses and degree programs. It enables students to register and transfer credits among multiple USG institutions.

Several campuses now provide a faster, friendlier, and easier approach for students to experience convenient access to high-quality advisement. Thanks to this effort, students experience an advisement process that is virtually seamless.

### Serving those who serve

In March, the USG made it easier for military personnel to earn college degrees by launching the Georgia Military Education Initiative (MEI). MEI is a coordinated system-wide approach expanding the degree programs, courses and support services available to every branch of the military.

MEI addresses the unique challenges that make it difficult to provide college degree programs to military personnel - a population frequently on the move and out of reach of a USG campus - through traditional means.

### Saving soldiers money

In August, the Board of Regents approved a measure waiving mandatory student fees for any Georgia resident who has seen combat in recent years as active members of the Georgia National Guard or the U.S. Military Reserves.

The waiver could save eligible veterans \$200-\$600 per semester in fees for such things as student health services, parking, technology and intercollegiate athletics.

"We are creating a customer-centric, continuous-improvement culture in the University System," Davis said recently. "Our goal is a University System that is efficient and that also is constantly improving."

## Governor's Office of Customer Service

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