

Fiscal Year

2024

YEAR IN REVIEW



GOLDEN ISLES

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

# Board of Governors

## **Christy Jordan (Chair)**

*Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel*  
Southeast Georgia Health System

## **Bill Dawson (Vice Chair)**

*Retired, General Manager of Operations*  
Georgia Ports Authority

## **Daren Pietsch (Secretary Treasurer)**

*President/Director*  
Torras Companies

## **Greer Anderson**

*Regional Banking Manager*  
United Community Bank

## **Richard B. Nixon, Jr.**

*South Atlantic Gulf Coast District Representative*  
International Longshorem

## Staff

### **Ryan Moore**

*President & CEO*  
Golden Isles Development Authority

### **McKenzie Padgett**

*Director of Business Development*  
Golden Isles Development Authority

### **Sherri Pruitt**

*Director of Business Retention and Expansion*  
Golden Isles Development Authority

### **Joan Hearn**

*Financial Administrator*  
Golden Isles Development Authority

2023  
2024

# A Year in Review...

For those who missed it, the 2024 Women's Rugby Team faced Australia in their final match of the Olympics for the bronze medal. In the final minute, USA's Center broke a tackle and ran the length of the pitch to score a try for team USA, the conversion kick sealed the win and gave them the first ever Women's Rugby medal! As a former player and fan, I watched much of the game, but like many, I don't remember most of the game up until that point. However, I have no doubt that the players on the field were hustling every minute of the game, and every minute was important. This is the way of economic development – there is a lot of effort, small wins, and defeats along the way to making announcements. This was a year of final minutes for the Golden Isles Development Authority (GIDA).

The McBride Industrial Park is down to one final site as we hosted two ribbon cuttings and put two sites under contract, Buc'ees will open next year, Jered is under construction on their new facility – a project seven years in the making, and all GIDA property at Tradewinds Technology Park is under contract with two ground breakings scheduled before the end of the year.

The Port is on pace to be the busiest Auto-port in the nation, and recent investments by the Georgia Ports Authority and Wallenius Wilhelmsen have positioned Colonel's Island to be the most advanced vehicle and large equipment processing port in the world

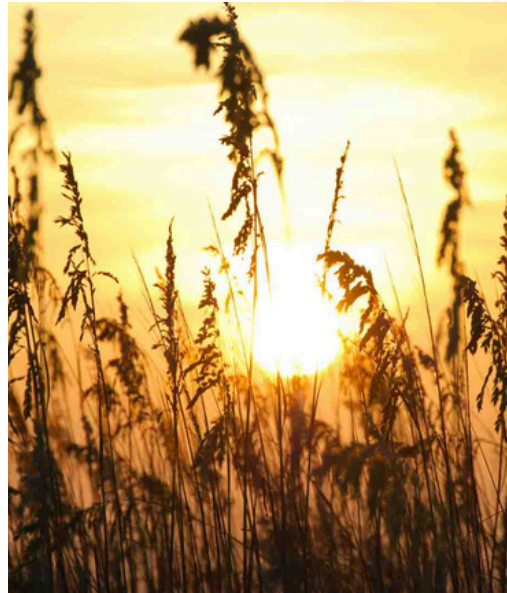
As we conclude these projects, we reflect on this community's commitment to economic development, and the foresight that our predecessors had to make critical investment in this organization and infrastructure. This year we celebrated the 100-year anniversary of the F.J. Torras Causeway, it was a day of celebration, but also, a reminder of the importance of having a vision for the future and the impact of investments that support that vision.

The GIDA is committed to investing in the future and thinks long-term. We invite everyone to join us to envision the community we want in 100 years and make investments in infrastructure and people that make our grandchildren proud.

**Ryan Moore**  
*President & CEO*  
GIDA



# ABOUT US



## Mission

Promote economic prosperity for Brunswick and Glynn County by assisting retention and expansion of existing industries, securing new diversified industry locations, and creating job opportunities and investments.

## Shared Vision

Working together to make Brunswick and the Golden Isles an exceptional place in Georgia to live, work, and visit by strengthening our communities and enhancing the quality of life.

*Organizations across Brunswick have come together to form a Shared Vision for the community.*



# Core Values



We are dynamic, adaptable generalists. We value and respect each other's time in and out of the office. We collaborate where possible, but lead when necessary.



We hold ourselves accountable – good or bad. We do not pass the buck.



We are bold. We act decisively and are willing to fail fast and move on. We believe none of us is as smart as all of us.



We listen. We seek opportunities and provide solutions by treating our partners like the individuals they are. We are stronger when we actively encourage all members of our community to contribute. We foster open-mindedness, compassion, and inclusion among the various groups we support.



# Shaping Success

Accountability for our actions and results is one of our core values. Since 2019, GIDA has used the Objective and Key Results (OKR) system for goal setting and has processes and tools to track the team's actions toward reaching those goals.

Here are some of those results:

## 38 New Projects

The potential value for these projects is over \$19B of new, direct capital investment and over 12,000 potential jobs.

## 59 Attraction-Focused Activities

Events hosted or attended, including direct outreach to support the attraction of new industry.

## 58 Industrial Business Visits

Current and new business visits to industrial businesses located in Glynn County show an increase of 5% over the prior year.

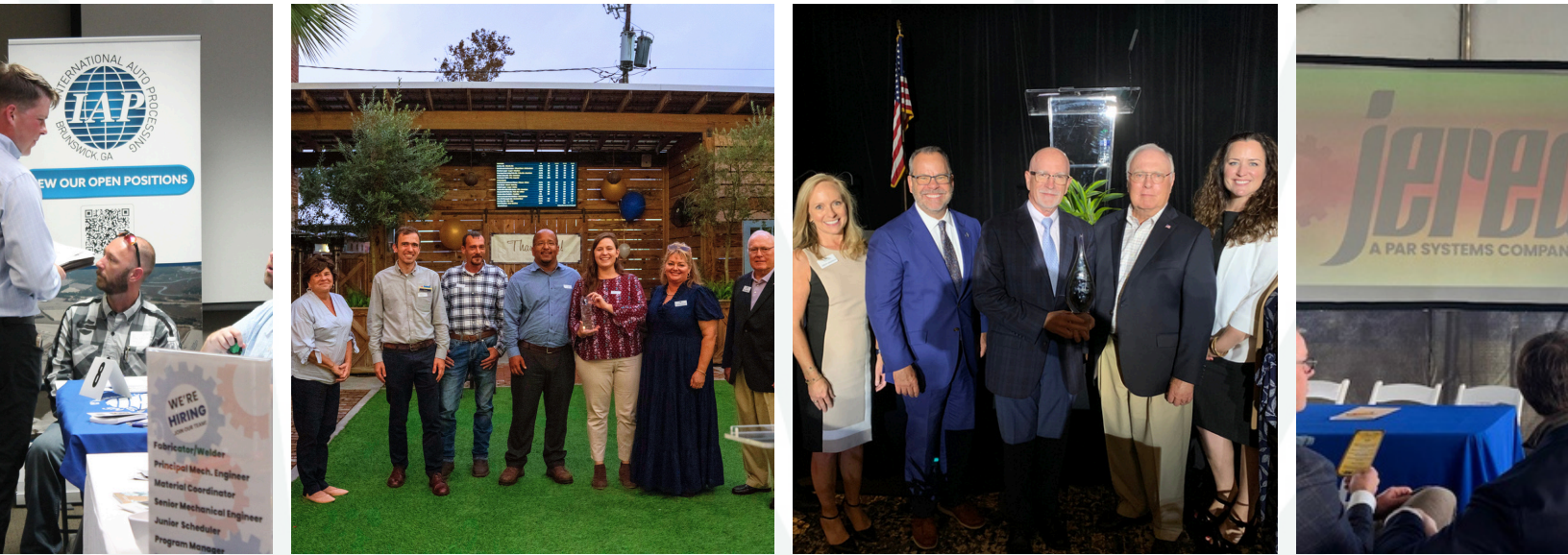
## Over 100% of Growth Across Social Platforms

GIDA increased engagement rates on LinkedIn (105% growth), Facebook (112% growth), and Instagram (120% growth).





# Nurturing Growth



Our organization creates long-term and sustainable growth by investing in the attraction of new industries, industrial parks, and the expansion of entrepreneurship in the Golden Isles.

Since 2019, GIDA has participated in 7 announcements of \$178M in direct capital investment. The announcements include Hillpointe, Jered, Buc-ee's, Live Oak Fiber, Symrise, Second Harvest, and Weyerhaeuser Company.

\$300,000 in Share the Future Funds have been awarded in that time to Glynn County-based companies. These funds were in support of local expansions in the community.

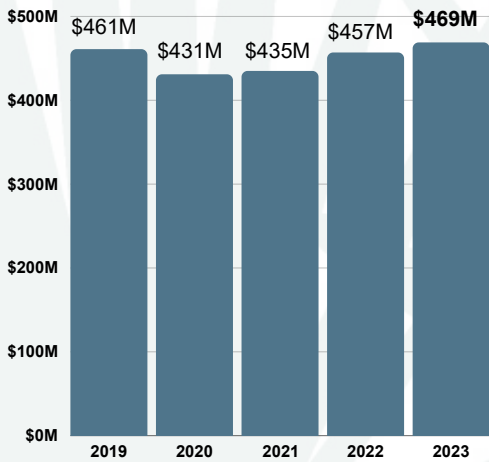
GIDA also reviews and provides recommendations on Glynn County's Revolving Loan Fund. In the past 5 years, GIDA has recommended \$297,000 in loans to the Board of Commissioners.





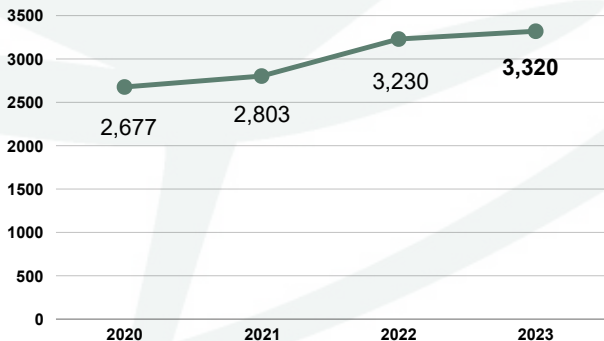
# Total Wages & Household Income

The attraction and expansion of businesses have a ripple effect on the overall economic well-being of a community. GIDA pays close attention to how Glynn County is trending in wages, employment, Gross Domestic Product, number of private establishments (establishments that produce a good or service), and our industrial sector's overall value. The charts below illustrate the growth for the most current years available.



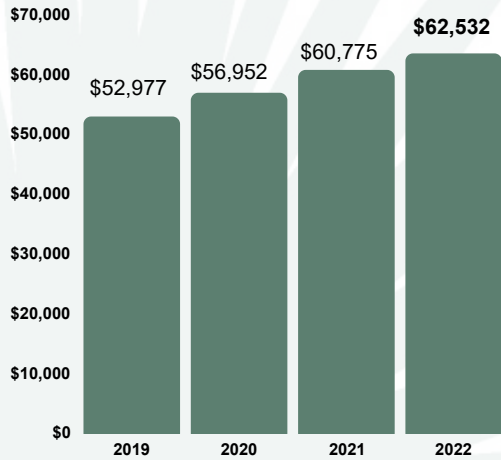
**Total Wages**

Average annual wages per worker increased 2.7% in the region over the preceding four quarters.



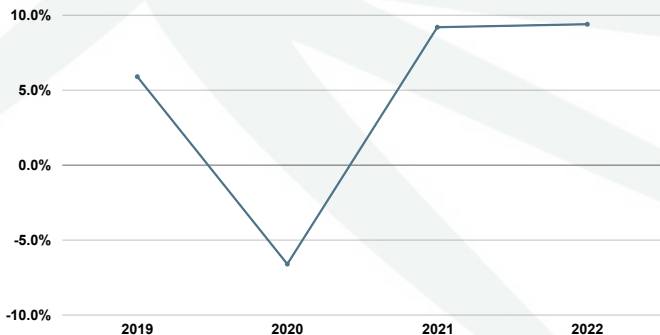
**Private Establishments for All Industries**

In the past four years, the number of private establishments (establishments that produce a good or service) in Glynn County has grown significantly from 2,677 in 2020 to 3,320 in 2023. This is a 24% increase in private establishments operating in the Golden Isles over the past four years.



**Median Household Income**

The wage increase has had a positive impact on the median household income, which has increased by 20% between 2019 and 2022.



**Gross Domestic Product Growth**

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2022, nominal GDP in Glynn County, Georgia, expanded by 9.4%. As of 2022, the total GDP in Glynn County, Georgia, was \$5.28 billion.



# PLACEMAKING

## Golden Isles Mattress

Golden Isles Mattress, female-owned and operated by Lauren Sobala, has been a local business operating for approximately 7 years in Glynn County.

**Problem:** Business at Golden Isles Mattress is booming, leading to expansion to a new location. To ensure safety and appeal, the new site needed proper lighting, clear signage, and exterior enhancements. These improvements enhanced customer visibility, create a welcoming atmosphere, and support the store's continued growth and success.

**Solution:** Enhance safety and visibility at our new location by installing adequate lighting, clear signage, and improving the façade.

**Results:** The exterior of the new facility's aesthetics increases safety and the business's attractiveness and/or competitiveness. Golden Isles Mattress was approved to receive \$10,000 through our Share the Future grant and allocated to a new exterior sign.



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“Signage reflects a business’s authority and expertise, and its quality can either attract customers or turn them away. I would not have been able to make this purchase without the help of the Golden Isles Development Authority.”

Lauren Sobala  
Golden Isles Mattress

”



# We Make, We Thrive

The industrial sector is a vital component of the local economy and the focus of the GIDA's attraction and expansion efforts. Some of the greatest ad valorem tax-paying entities in Glynn County are industrial facilities.

Furthermore, because manufacturing is a capital-intensive activity, industrial property generally represents more value to the tax digest than other uses. Industrial acreage accounted for only .62% of the total acreage in Glynn County but accounted for 10.0% of the total digest value (2023).

As of the first quarter of 2023, there were 1,954 people employed in manufacturing in Glynn County, and manufacturing paid an average annual wage of \$72,792, a wage that is 42.1% higher than the average of all industries in Glynn County (\$51,228).

## TOP 10 TOTAL REAL & PERSONAL TAX 2023

BRUNSWICK CELLULOSE INC .....	\$3,416,343
GEORGIA POWER COMPANY .....	\$2,185,909
SEA ISLAND COMPANY, INC .....	\$1,180,995
PINOVA, INC .....	\$543,632
SEA ISLAND ACQUISITION .....	\$451,444
RICH PRODUCTS .....	\$387,215
KING & PRINCE SEAFOOD CORP .....	\$379,851
NHI-REIT OF SEASIDE, LLC .....	\$329,292
SYMRISE, INC .....	\$324,802
BRUNSWICK CELLULOSE, LLC .....	\$318,426





# INNOVATION

## Golden Isles Gourmet Popcorn

Golden Isles Gourmet Popcorn (GIGP) is a newly created, woman-owned local manufacturing company located in Brunswick, Georgia. GIGP is designed as a premium gourmet popcorn and specialty snacking experience. GIGP will be sold at local events and celebrations, local businesses in Brunswick and SSI, and eventually expanding to an online store.

### Problem:

GIGP required funding to acquire two out of the four essential pieces of equipment necessary to launch a high-volume popcorn company. This investment enabled GIGP to efficiently produce large quantities of popcorn, meet market demand, and ensure the highest quality standards.

### Solution:

Equipment to increase the production capacity, enhance the supply chain efficiency, and meet the growing demand of the facility.

### Results:

GIGP received a grant of \$5,000 from GIDA to support the purchase of this crucial equipment. The equipment will facilitate the growth of the facility, enabling it to expand its operations and explore new business avenues.



“

With the help of the Golden Isles Development Authority, I have been able to purchase the equipment needed to expand my business. My gourmet popcorn production has tripled with my new equipment, allowing me to increase the quality and quantity of popcorn I can provide to my corporate and business customers.

Lori Peacock, Owner & Founder  
Golden Isles Gourmet Popcorn

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# EMBRACING ACCOUNTABILITY

## Funding Sources

<b>Contract with Glynn County</b>	37%
<b>Interest Collected</b>	47%
<b>FTZ Revenue</b>	2%
<b>Bond Fees</b>	4%
<b>Lease Payments</b>	9%
<b>Sale of Assets</b>	.5%

## Funding Uses

<b>Operational Costs</b>	63%
<b>Capital Improvements</b>	6%
<b>Marketing</b>	22%

## Keeping it Local

The team at GIDA are champions of the local and small business community. Not only do we want our entrepreneurs and main street businesses to succeed, but we recognize the benefits shopping local has for our community. For every dollar spent at a small business in the U.S., approximately 67 cents stay in the local community. We strive to purchase local as much as possible to support our business community.

**\$60,000 of our budget expenditures went to local businesses through our Share the Future Initiative.**

**At least 65% of our controllable spending was with local businesses. Everything from engineering work for clients, print material, or office supplies - GIDA thinks, and spends, local first.**



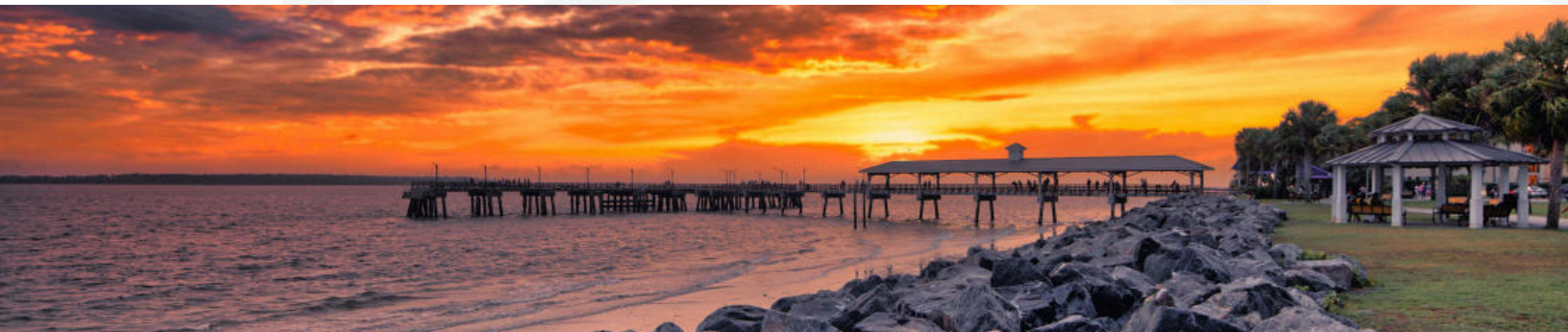




# YOUR PROGRESS, OUR PURPOSE

**GIDA works for the community. Here are a few initiatives and highlights from the past year:**

- Jered/Par Marine breaks ground on new 100,000 sq/ft facility for expansion
- Hillpointe announces plans to construct 500,000 sq/ft of warehouse and office space
- Buc-ee's celebrates groundbreaking
- Innovation Isles Aerospace Park receives GRAD Certification
- America's Second Harvest hosts Ribbon Cutting ceremony
- Brunswick Cellulose named Intl Manufacturer of the Year by Savannah World Trade Center
- New collaborative space for GIDA and the Lucas Center for Entrepreneurship
- Talent Development Strategy launches Book Bus initiative and Second-Year Externship
- Pinova Initiative secures 200 careers for displaced employees
- Keep Glynn Running message impacts over 10,0000 students, counselors, and parents
- 2nd Annual Manufacturing Appreciation Dinner held
- Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) announces Grace Graffiti as “2024 Small Business Rockstar”



# Your Progress explained...

**Jered Expansion Groundbreaking:** Jered, a PAR Systems company, proudly announced the groundbreaking ceremony for its highly anticipated 100,000 square foot expansion in GIDA's McBride Industrial Park on March 26, 2024. The partnership between GIDA and Jered, Inc., has been a cornerstone in their expansion. GIDA agreed to issue taxable revenue bonds to finance the \$45,000,000 investment. This monumental addition marks a significant milestone for Jered, solidifying its commitment to enhancing manufacturing capacity for military-grade marine systems utilized by the U.S. Navy, while fostering substantial growth for both the business and the Golden Isles community.

**Hillpointe Announces Development Plans:** The GIDA Board of Governors approved a sale and lease agreement with Hillpointe, LLC in January of 2024. This agreement, finalized during GIDA's monthly board meeting, marks a pivotal step for the Tradewinds Technology Park, with Hillpointe, LLC planning to develop a 55-acre site into a state-of-the-art warehouse and office facility, totaling approximately 502,500 square feet. This will be the first building to rise in the park, located off Exit 42 near Interstate 95. The project is expected to be a catalyst for growth, bringing new jobs and businesses to the area, and is seen as a strategic investment in the future prosperity of the Golden Isles region.

**Buc-ee's Celebrates Groundbreaking:** In February 2024, Buc-ee's broke ground on a new 74,000 sq/ft facility at Exit 42 in Glynn County, creating over 200 full-time jobs with competitive benefits, including above-minimum-wage pay, a 401K, and three weeks of paid vacation. In partnership with the Golden Isles Development Authority (GIDA), Glynn County committed \$3 million for Exit 42 improvements, including upgrades to Highway 99, traffic signalization at ramps, and new intersections. These enhancements will benefit the entire Exit 42 interchange and support Buc-ee's and future businesses in the area.

**Innovation Isles Aerospace Park GRAD Certified:** The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) and GIDA announced in May of 2024 that the Innovation Isles Aerospace Park has earned a "GRAD Select" certification, marking it as highly attractive for industrial development. This 650-acre site, located in Brunswick near the Brunswick Golden Isles Airport and the Port of Brunswick, is ideal for aerospace manufacturers and service companies due to its strategic location and rapid market access. The GRAD Select status indicates that the site has met rigorous certification standards, enhancing its appeal to potential investors.

**America's Second Harvest Ribbon Cutting:** Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia, a volunteer-run organization dedicated to ending hunger and improving lives in the region, celebrated the opening of its new \$6 million facility on February 12, 2024. Located at 2591 Sidney Lanier Drive, the 55,000-square-foot building is significantly larger than the previous Brunswick warehouse. The grand opening event was attended by food bank staff, community members, and state leaders. Second Harvest operates a main branch in Savannah and encourages the community to support its mission through food drives, donations, and spreading awareness.

**New Collaborative Space for GIDA and the Lucas Center for Entrepreneurship:** The Golden Isles Development Authority (GIDA) and the College of Coastal Georgia (CCGA) announced in January of 2024 GIDA's move to a new space with CCGA's Lucas Center for Entrepreneurship in Downtown Brunswick. The move reflected GIDA's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and economic growth in Glynn County. The new space offers resources such as mentorship, workshops, and funding opportunities, all aimed at supporting local businesses. This partnership was seen as a key step in building a thriving community.

# Your Progress explained...

**Brunswick Cellulose is named Intl Business of the Year:** World Trade Center Savannah (WTCSav) held its fifth annual Prosperity Through Trade Luncheon on May 2, during World Trade Month. At the event, WTCSav awarded the World Trade Center Savannah International Business of the Year Award to Georgia-Pacific's Brunswick Cellulose pulp and paper mill. The mill, a major employer in Glynn County since 1937, employs 650 people and is the county's largest taxpayer, paying over \$3.7 million in the current tax year. Georgia-Pacific, headquartered in Atlanta, is one of the world's largest recyclers and operates more than 150 facilities, employing approximately 30,000 people and creating over 80,000 indirect jobs.

**Talent Development Strategy:** The Golden Isles Talent Development Strategy annual action items are executed by GIDA and the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce (BGICOC). This year the Strategy delivered on two major initiatives: the Connect Glynn Educator Externship Academy and The Book Space. The Externship Academy offered Glynn County educators a four-day program to engage with local employers, providing real-world industry experience to enrich classroom learning. The Book Space, a repurposed school bus turned bookmobile, was launched to promote literacy and provide accessible books to the community. Both initiatives aimed to enhance education and community engagement in Glynn County.

**Pinova Employees Secure Careers:** In response to the closure of Pinova, GIDA and BGICOC partnered with Pinova to launch a support initiative for affected employees. This included creating a local job portal on GIDA's KeepGlynnRunning.com and hosting a job fair with 40 local businesses. The event facilitated immediate interviews, resulting in 25 former Pinova employees securing new positions during the event. Overall, all 200 employees have been placed in careers throughout the county and region, with significant assistance from GIDA.

**Keep Glynn Running:** GIDA has always emphasized the importance of Glynn County's manufacturing industry for economic resilience, job creation, and innovation. To support this sector, in 2020 GIDA launched the "Keep Glynn Running" (KGR) campaign, reaching 10,000 residents with its message just this past year. The KGR website provides resources on the benefits of working in the local manufacturing and engineering sectors, including on-the-job training, higher wages, and career advancement. It also features a job portal pulling from nearly 30,000 job boards, helping local residents explore career opportunities in Glynn County.

**2nd Annual Manufacturing Appreciation Dinner:** GIDA is proud to host this annual Appreciation Dinner to recognize the significant impact of the local manufacturing industry. The local industry employs 2,776 individuals with an average wage of \$75,019, contributing \$400 million to the county's GDP in 2022. Despite industrial acreage making up only 2.4% of the county, it accounts for 11.7% of the tax digest value. Awards were presented, including the Innovation Excellence Award to Recovery Solutions Worldwide and Manufacturer of the Year to Jered LLC, and the Dave Smith Award for outstanding service went to Woody Woodside for outstanding service acknowledging Dave Smith's lasting influence on the community.

**Small Business Rockstar:** Each year, GDEcD and the Georgia Economic Developers Association recognize exceptional small businesses as "Small Business ROCK STARS" for their innovation, outreach, and impact on the state. In May of 2024, Downtown Brunswick's Grace Graffiti won this year's prestigious award. "We're honored to receive the Small Business Rock Star award and consider it not just ours, but a testament to the Brunswick community that has supported us so strongly." Whiney Herndon, Owner, Grace Graffiti

# Looking Ahead

## Strategic Vision 2024-2026

The GIDA team uses OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) as a goal-setting framework that helps our organization define measurable goals and track outcomes. In August of 2023, the GIDA Board of Governors and staff met to review the strategic vision for fiscal years 2021-2023 and determine priorities for fiscal years 2024-2026. Here are some highlights of what will be included in our Strategic Vision for fiscal years 2024-2026.

### Talent Attraction

Talent attraction is vital for economic development because it forms the foundation for business attraction and growth, innovation, and economic prosperity. The 2021 American Community Survey states that Glynn County has a prime-age labor force (ages 25-52) of 24,652. It is one of our top initiatives to increase this number by 2% each year through the development of a Talent Attraction Strategy in partnership with our educational and community partners. This priority will be executed in conjunction with our annual goal to reach 10,000 Glynn County residents through our Keep Glynn Running (KeepGlynnRunning.com) message to spread awareness of the abundant career opportunities within the Golden Isles.

### Site Development

GIDA must have sites to offer industries looking to expand and locate their respective facilities. The GIDA is currently undergoing the GRAD Certification (Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development) process for over 1,400 acres at Georgia Breakbulk Logistics Park located adjacent to US Highway 82 off of Exit 29 to stay competitive in attracting businesses.

### Industry and Leadership Roundtables

Industry roundtables are important for fostering collaboration, problem-solving, and growth within a specific industry. GIDA will hold quarterly industry roundtables for existing industries in the Golden Isles to bring together key stakeholders to help create an environment conducive to innovation, economic development, and long-term prosperity.



# WE INVEST in our community

It has been a tremendous professional privilege to serve as the Chair of the Board of Governors for GIDA over the past year. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Board and GIDA staff for their vision and leadership, which have been instrumental in laying the groundwork for our region's economic growth, stability, and prosperity.

It has become increasingly evident that our success hinges on collaboration. This year, we partnered closely with local elected officials and industry partners on several key projects, working alongside the State Department of Economic Development and national Site Consultants. Our efforts resulted in two ribbon-cutting ceremonies with \$15 million in investment and 20 new jobs, two groundbreaking events with \$90 million in investment and 250 jobs, and contracts for two projects expected to bring \$75 million in investment and 100 new jobs.

The dedication of my fellow board members to the GIDA mission has been remarkable.

Their leadership has equipped the GIDA staff with the resources necessary to implement our vision and the insight to continue these efforts.

As we look forward into our next fiscal year, I am confident that the GIDA Board and staff will continue to deliver sustainable results that positively impact our community. Their dedication to expanding and attracting new and existing industries has demonstrated that GIDA is well-equipped to secure significant new projects, further bolstering the vibrant economy of the Golden Isles.

Respectfully,

Christy Jordan  
2023-2024 Chairperson  
GIDA Board of Governors



Thank you.

We invite you to stay connected.



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