

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.

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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.

