

Southern Growth Policies Board Names the Walton Career Academy 2007 Innovator Award Winner for Georgia

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC - Walton Career Academy was presented with a 2007 Innovator Award from Southern Growth Policies Board on June 3, 2007 in St. Louis, Missouri as part of the *Southern Workforce Summit* conference. Missouri Governor Matt Blunt presented Mark Peavy, CEO of Walton Career Academy with the Innovator award for the state of Georgia at the opening session of the conference. *The Southern Workforce Summit* conference focused on strategies for building a competitive, entrepreneurial workforce to support the South's economic development initiatives in high-wage, high-growth industries.

Each year, Southern Growth Policies Board honors innovative Southern initiatives that are improving the quality of life in the region. The 2007 Innovator Awards were chosen in the context of creating an enterprising and globally competitive workforce in the South. Awards were presented one organization in each of Southern Growth's member states ---Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico--- and were chosen from among more than 200 regional nominations.

Walton Career Academy is a publicly-funded charter school that serves grades 10-12, combining academics with career and technical education. A joint venture among local businesses, the Walton County School System and Athens Technical College, the Academy connects two high schools, Athens technical College and local businesses to create new career options for students. Participating students earn dual-enrollment college certifications through Athens Technical College.

Career Pathways and courses include automotive technology, commercial art, engineering and manufacturing sciences, marketing, business and healthcare science technology, among others. The Academy is also focused on developing the soft skills of students and provides a work ethic grade in every class in addition to a course grade. Students also have access to job-shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships with more than 80 local businesses. Walton Academy also offers courses for adults in the Technical College curriculum and GED-preparatory courses. The Academy is home to Georgia's leading Performance Learning Center and, creates customized adult training for local industries.

About Southern Growth Policies Board

Southern Growth Policies Board is a regional public policy think tank based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Formed by the region's governors in 1971, Southern Growth Policies Board develops and advances visionary economic development policies by providing a forum for collaboration among a diverse cross-section of the region's governors, legislators, business and academic leaders and the economic and community development sectors. Southern Growth provides its members, and the region, with authoritative research, discussion forums and pilot projects in the areas of technology and innovation, globalization, workforce development, community development, civic engagement and leadership. To learn more about Southern Growth Policies Board, visit <http://www.southern.org>.

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ENTERPRISESOUTH.BIZ: THE 2007 REPORT ON THE FUTURE OF THE SOUTH

Southern Growth Policies Board's 2007 Report on the Future of the South, *EnterpriseSouth.biz*, recommends a cultural shift in the South to an enterprise economy, characterized by a workforce that is knowledgeable, entrepreneurial and innovative. *EnterpriseSouth.biz* outlines a three-pronged strategy: CONVENE, CONNECT and COMMIT to create an enterprise economy and workforce. The report includes regional and state-level data on educational attainment and economic achievements as well as profiles of innovative programs. A new website, www.enterprisesouth.biz will chronicle the Southern states' progress in implementing the CONVENE-CONNECT-COMMIT strategy and includes state workforce data, profiles of the report's strategies and a dynamic space for Southern states to track their activities and accomplishments. The *EnterpriseSouth.biz* report, and an accompanying 14-minute DVD on Building the Next Workforce can be ordered through the Southern Growth Policies Board website at <http://www.southern.org/pubs/puborderform.pdf>, or by emailing ngos@southern.org.