



Georgia

Breaking barriers in tech education

Home to a range of innovative payment processors and financial technology companies, the Peach State has made itself a significant player in entertainment, manufacturing and technology. The Georgia Department of Economic Development maintains six Centers of Innovation, institutions unlike any others across the country, which support aerospace, agribusiness, energy technology, information technology, logistics and manufacturing businesses in the state. These centers maintain a tech ecosystem built on partnerships between private, state and federal institutions.

Georgia is now one of the top states in the country for drone businesses, and tax credits give drone startups there even more opportunities.

The state also has a long history of supporting tech education and, most recently, developed a program to increase the number of women and minority students earning STEM degrees at state universities by cultivating potential applicants before college. Gwinnett County, Georgia's largest public school district, established an after-school program for middle school girls interested in STEM fields, which provides a supportive community and access to STEM classes. These efforts, in conjunction with continued support from the Board of Education and college professors, are helping Georgia overcome the gender gap in engineering.

Georgia's high-tech workforce and thriving technology ecosystem will continue to support innovation there for years to come.

Sources: (CBS) (Business Facilities) (AJC) (Augusta Chronicle) (Center for Digital Ed.)

WHAT DID WE DO RIGHT?

Georgia received a 'B' in Tech Workforce, once again ranking in the top 15 states for tech jobs, reaching 371,730 in 2016. Georgia also earned an 'A' in Open Roads & Skies, after Gov. Nathan Deal vetoed HB 779, allowing the FAA to create federal rules on drones.

WHAT HAVE WE MOST IMPROVED?

Georgia earned a 'C' in Entrepreneurial Activity, up from a 'C-' in 2015, as the state created over 198,000 jobs from 2010-2014. This earns Georgia a rank of 9th in the nation for net jobs created.

WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER NEXT YEAR?

Georgia fell to a 'B' in Welcomes New Business Models. Homesharing companies like airbnb are operating, but Savannah and Atlanta have instituted onerous regulations, and homeowners are fighting for the right to rent their spaces as many days per year as they would like.

Best & Brightest	B
Fast Internet	B
Grants STEM Degrees	C
Tech Workforce	B
Tax Friendliness	C
Attracts Investment	C+
Entrepreneurial Activity	C
Welcomes New Business Models	B
Sustainable Policies	B
Open Roads & Skies	A



Best & Brightest

Though Georgia does not have a state law protecting against LGBTQ discrimination, it does have a Right to Work law in place, earning it a 'B.'

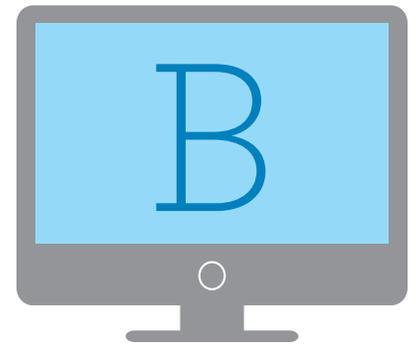
Entrepreneurial Activity

From 2010 to 2014, Georgia saw 198,702 new jobs and 110,376 new startups (firms of under 50 employees) created, earning it a grade of 'C'.

Open Roads & Skies

Georgia got an 'A' in self-driving cars and a 'A' in drones, after passing a state law preempting municipalities from regulating drones, earning a total grade of 'A'.

Tech Workforce



Georgia ranked 10th in the nation in 2016 for tech jobs, which increased by more than 20,000 to 371,730, earning the state a grade of 'B'.

HERE IS WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY

Consumers are now able to collect a seemingly infinite amount of data about every aspect of their daily lives, from how many steps they walk to how many hours they spent in REM sleep. But for the founders of Responsive Surface Technology (ReST), data is only part of the equation.

“Our take is that it has to be actionable,” said Lloyd Sommers, general manager, the ReST Bed – the only mattress on the market that automatically responds and adjusts firmness based on how the user is sleeping.

“One reason people toss and turn and don’t sleep well is because pressure builds up between their body and the surface of the mattress,” said Sommers. The ReST Bed uses a patented fabric that monitors over 2,000 pressure points and changes firmness in real-time based on the position of the sleeper. Users can also manually set support levels in different areas of the bed for their specific needs, whether they’re dealing with a back injury, training for a triathlon or trying to find the most comfortable position while pregnant.

Atlanta, home to several traditional bedding companies, a thriving tech scene and strong engineering programs at universities such as Georgia Tech, was a natural choice for ReST to headquarter.

Sommers envisions a country where consumers use the ReST bed along with other smart home sensors and connected devices to seamlessly trigger their ideal sleep conditions from the mattress and air quality to light and temperature – anywhere they lay their heads. “Our vision is to be a platform for the perfect sleep environment,” he says.

