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The Gem of The Southeast Georgia

A central geographic location, highly skilled workforce, warm climate, and business-friendly environment make the state sparkle. **But it's Georgia's logistical advantages that are the jewel in the crown.**

March 2016 • Inbound Logistics 59

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In his annual State of the State address in January 2016, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal acknowledged that the “Ship of State” has weathered its share of storms. But, he added, “Now we are ready to unfurl our sails and set forth on the ocean of opportunity that lies before us as we lead the way for others to follow, with number one proudly emblazoned on our mast.”

Given Georgia’s leadership by every mode and measure of moving product, the governor may well have set a theme involving land and air, as well as sea. But for logistics professionals, the nautical theme was particularly apt. A recent wave of developments has the state sailing on the right course to greater success.

Nature and Nurture

When it comes to logistics, there is no doubt about it—the Peach State is growing. Robert Morris, senior director of corporate communications for the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA), reports that in the past year the authority has:

- Completed a \$27-million truck gate, which will help Garden City Terminal avoid congestion while completing 10,000 truck moves per day.

- Paved five acres at Savannah’s Ocean Terminal, which handles breakbulk and auto-machinery cargo. The terminal’s area for roll-on/roll-off cargo now spans 40 acres. Automobiles are being undercoated at a temporary on-site facility until a permanent structure is built.

- Allotted \$3.7 million for earthwork to prepare 50 acres on Colonel’s Island at the Port of Brunswick for potential customers.

- Added two storage rail tracks, each about 4,200 feet, at Anguilla Rail Yard in Brunswick—a \$2.7-million project.

You might say that nature laid the groundwork for this waterway success. Georgia sits precisely at the right spot on the U.S. map.

“An important facet of the GPA’s success is our geographical advantage,” Morris says. “The Port of Savannah’s location as the most westerly of the Atlantic Coast ports makes it a hub for exporting American-made products from cities such as Atlanta, Birmingham, Memphis, Louisville, Charlotte, and beyond.”

Savannah is the fastest-growing port in the nation, 100 miles closer to Atlanta than any other port, and the fourth-busiest U.S. container terminal. Savannah is centrally located to serve the entire U.S. Southeast—the nation’s fastest-growing demographic region. “With 38 weekly vessel calls, Savannah customers

have more choices to more destinations,” Morris says.

And the seeds are planted for future growth as well.

“We have room to expand,” Morris says. “On terminal, we currently handle about three million 20-foot equivalent container units (TEUs) per year. Our strategic plans allow us to handle 6.5 million TEUs without increasing our physical footprint.

“Off terminal, a wealth of industrial real estate that is near the port and major interstates is available for development,” he adds.

Lost in Space

Not surprisingly, Savannah is a distribution center (DC) hub. It features 44 million square feet of DC space—including all major big-box retailers—within minutes of Garden City Terminal, reducing drive time and increasing efficiency.

Additional competitive assets include Georgia’s enviable interstate access, two Class I rail lines, and the largest number of containership services in the U.S.

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Southeast. Immediate access from the Port of Savannah to I-16 (east/west) and I-95 (north/south) means key cities and manufacturing points throughout the country's Southeast and Midwest can be reached within a one- to two-day drive.

"On-terminal rail yards mean cargo shipped by rail is not limited by highway weight restrictions," Morris notes. "Service from both Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation delivers more choices for reaching the hinterlands."

At 1,200 acres, the Port of Savannah's Garden City Terminal is the largest container facility in the nation. Because the entire terminal is owner-operated, using the port is much more streamlined for customers.

For example, at some other ports, truckers must check in to one shipping line's leased terminal to drop off an export box, and then repeat that check-in process at another line's terminal to pick up an import box. At Garden City Terminal, however, truckers check in once, navigate to drop-off and pick-up points, and enjoy much quicker turn times.

By the same token, Garden City

features nearly 10,000 feet of berth space that is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Ships don't have to wait on a limited number of berths leased to a specific company. This way, both maritime and landside port users can get cargo moving more quickly and efficiently.

Directing the Traffic

Helping to navigate all these advantages is the GPA, a quasi-state agency with a 13-member board of directors that governs its activities. The governor appoints board members to serve staggered four-year terms.

As one of the state's largest public employers, the GPA directly employs nearly 1,000 trained logistics professionals. GPA operations—together with private sector, port-related operations—account for some 369,000 jobs statewide, \$84.1 billion in sales, and income exceeding \$20.4 billion annually.

GPA's most important improvement is the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has awarded the contract to deepen the river channel's outer harbor. A

future contract will cover the inner harbor. The deepening will allow Savannah to better accommodate today's megaships.

GPA soon will receive four new ship-to-shore cranes, which will bring the total number of electric-powered container cranes to 26. The recent purchase of four more cranes will bring that number to 30 by 2018—the most ship-to-shore cranes of any single terminal in the United States. Meanwhile, the Port of Savannah is adding 30 electric rubber-tired gantry cranes (RTGs), continuing GPA's transition of its container handlers to electric power.

Also doing its part to spur continued growth is the Georgia Department of Transportation. Completion of the Jimmy Deloach Parkway extension this year will provide a direct truck route between I-95 and Savannah's Garden City Terminal.

"Georgia's logistics infrastructure saves time and money by seamlessly connecting air, sea, and land transportation," Morris says.

The effects are impressive:

- Georgia has been rated the top state for business-based criteria such as cost of doing business, economy, infrastructure and transportation, workforce, and access to capital. Georgia offers a business-friendly tax structure and targeted workforce training.

- The state is home to 20 Fortune 500 companies, including UPS, Coca-Cola, and Delta Air Lines.

- Georgia has an outstanding pool of skilled talent, including access to the number one workforce-training program in the United States—Georgia Quick Start—as well as talent from top state universities.

Uniquely Complete

"Logistics is at the heart of everything that makes a business run," says Jannine Miller, director of the Georgia Center of Innovation for Logistics. "And the logistics that companies need are at the heart of why Georgia is the best state for business.

"Georgia's logistics offerings are uniquely complete," Miller says. "We



Atlanta Bonded Warehouse's main metro Atlanta campus, in Kennesaw, Ga., is convenient to major interstate highways and is rail-served.

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have everything companies need—all the options for efficiency and profitability today and for growth over time.”

The first component of Georgia’s complete logistics offerings is its unprecedented transportation infrastructure, Miller says. The Port of Savannah handled 12 percent more TEU containers in 2015 than the previous year. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is the world’s most traveled passenger airport. Georgia businesses also find connections to the world from the state’s surface infrastructure, with access to more rail miles than any other state in the Southeast.

Additionally, five major interstates flowing throughout the state allow products to reach 80 percent of the U.S. population within a two-day truck drive. It is predicted that the state’s \$1-billion-plus investment in its roadway network over the past four years will more than double, with Governor Deal and the

Georgia Department of Transportation announcing that a freight-hauling grid will be completed, adding more than 300 new lane miles throughout the state.

As part of the 10-year plan, Georgia’s interstates—including 45 miles of new truck lanes—will be expanded in Savannah and in metro Atlanta. “All these investments will make incredible improvements in freight flows at pinch points and for longer, efficient movement of freight throughout the state’s unparalleled network,” Miller says.

The Network Georgia Connection

Among other logistics improvements on the horizon, Miller cites the Network Georgia initiative, an effort that the Georgia Ports Authority is undertaking. “It is designed to connect shippers more directly to the Port of Savannah, and reduce companies’ trucking requirements by 350 miles per haul to the Georgia coast,” she explains.

Yet another highly impressive component of the state’s uniquely complete place in the logistics marketplace is its vast DC and warehouse capabilities. The state is home to more than 245 million square feet of DCs and warehouses.

In addition to an optimal set of all the transportation mode and distribution center options companies need, Georgia also is home to a robust and world-class industry of logistics providers that ensure companies can take full advantage of infrastructure investments. Georgia’s logistics services cover everything from core transportation and facilities to third-party logistics and software providers. Georgia ranks as the fifth-largest overall logistics employer in the nation.

The state is home to nearly 12,000 logistics providers, giving credence to the uniquely complete claim. “The competition is here, the expertise is here,” Miller says. “Whether to serve



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business-to-business or business-to-consumer, we cover it all.”

As important as the state’s roads, rails, waterways, and airways are to the business of logistics, technology is yet another key to the state’s logistics success. “The technology that it takes to run all these logistics operations is a substantial sub sector,” says Sandy Lake, the Center’s associate director.

Among Georgia’s robust logistics services and offerings is the Georgia Center of Innovation for Logistics, the key that can unlock the state’s logistics opportunities for shippers. As an industry-focused component of the Georgia Department of Economic Development, the center is the leading statewide resource for fueling logistics industry growth and global competitiveness.

The Center’s expert staff works with Georgia’s cargo owners to find logistics solutions that overcome their challenges



Construction is underway on a new 315,000-square-foot building in the CenterPoint Intermodal Center-Savannah, located just four miles from the Georgia Ports Authority. The facility provides shippers with the ultimate location advantage for goods distribution.

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and capitalize on opportunities. The staff accomplishes this by helping shippers evaluate their logistics options; connecting shippers to Georgia's robust ecosystem of logistics providers; and informing Georgia companies about logistics trends and data-driven projections.

"We provide a broad spectrum of services—whether a company wants to grow here or is thinking of locating here, we help them by working together," says Miller. "We offer everything shippers may need—from the details of day-to-day operations to grand scale sharing of logistics best practices and networking with providers at regular events around the state."

Summing Up the Summit

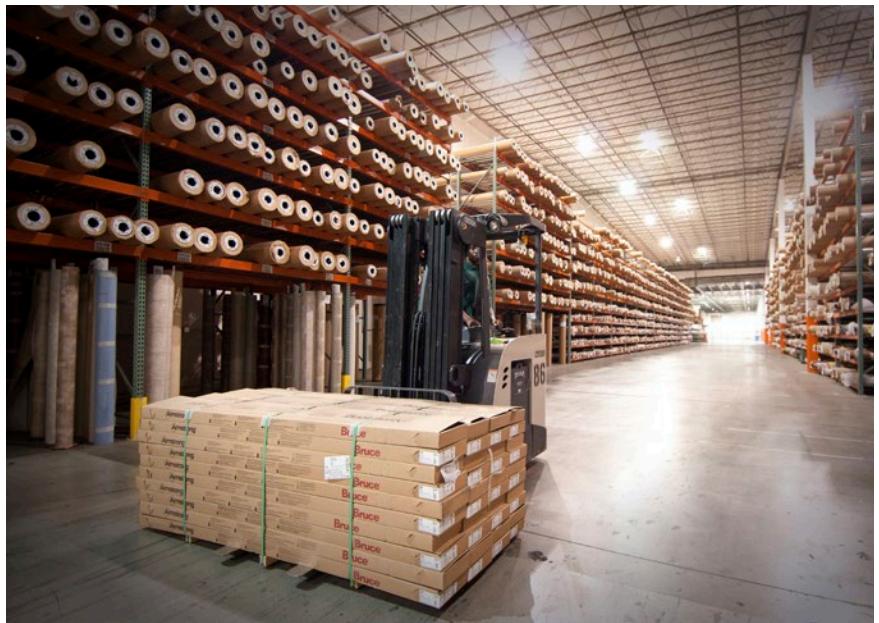
Since 2009, the Center of Innovation for Logistics has presented the annual Georgia Logistics Summit; the 2015 event attracted 2,000 participants. The 2016 event will be held April 19-20 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

New features of the Summit include a shippers-only networking session, as well as interactive roundtable sessions that focus on logistics success stories. "We hope to ignite collaboration and provide more meaningful networking time for participants to share their experiences," Miller says. "Logistics is a social industry. It requires dialogue to find solutions."

The Summit is also introducing two new panels. One focuses on the national and global economic landscape within which Georgia companies operate; the other provides tips to survive the regulatory tidal wave.

Keynote speaker at the 2016 Summit is Frank Crespo, vice president and chief procurement officer for Caterpillar. From CAT's vantage point, Crespo shares his unique perspectives on global conditions in energy, construction, manufacturing, and the logistics marketplace.

"The Summit also includes a technology focus," says Lake, explaining that technology disruptors share insights into what technological innovations will affect logistics in the future.



TranSouth Logistics' third party warehousing packages include material handling, pick-pack operations, light assembly, product storage, and consignment for both domestic and international suppliers.

It's all part of Georgia's ongoing efforts to maintain—and grow—its logistics leadership status.

One big fan of the Georgia Logistics Summit is Mike Owens, president of Atlanta-based HWC Logistics, a long-time sponsor of the event. "The Summit draws a big crowd we can sell our services to, and describe what differentiates us from other logistics companies," he says. "We also get a chance to tell attendees why Georgia is such a great place to do business."

More companies look to Georgia for their Southeast hub operations due to the increasing number of consumers moving to the South. Also, the state supports two-day service by truck to 80 percent of the population, and offers competitive pricing, a great climate, and a growing labor force. The growth of the Port of Savannah, and the state's infrastructure, have been geared to support higher freight volumes resulting from shippers using the state as an alternative to congested West Coast ports.

HWC Logistics is a single-source provider of distribution, warehousing, transportation, and import/export services with warehouses based in Atlanta, Savannah, and Charlotte.

"We have more than 35 years of

experience in the logistics field, and bring innovative and cost-effective solutions to shippers looking to establish operations in growing southeastern markets," Owens says.

Over the past two years, the company has enhanced its Warehouse Management System (WMS) to offer an RF and barcode technology solution that boosts accuracy and increases order output activity. The company has also improved its Transportation Management System (TMS) and integrated it into an all-mobile application. Drivers use the app to enter all pickup and delivery information, which is then relayed to the customer in real time.

Companies that partner with HWC benefit from its 35 years of logistics experience, a team dedicated to providing great service, and a culture based on understanding customer needs. HWC Logistics delivers on time and accurately, and constantly works to improve its processes.

Port Progress

As port cities along the East Coast prepare for the completion of the Panama Canal expansion, the city of Savannah finds itself perfectly positioned to take full

A man in a dark pinstriped suit, white shirt, and striped tie stands with his arms outstretched, holding two dark green circles. The circle on the left contains the text '10% LTL RATE DISCOUNT' and the circle on the right contains '85% LTL RATE DISCOUNT'. The background is a solid green color.

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advantage of expected benefits. The Port of Savannah's historic role as a gateway of commerce will become more important than ever.

The city's industrial property is at a premium. "We're at a three-percent vacancy rate," says David Sink, principal, Colliers International-Savannah. "That's the lowest it has been since we began tracking the market in 1999."

Despite the city's illustrious history, industrial real estate was a sleeper for many years. "National and regional real estate players discovered this market in 2004," he says. "That's when industrial and commercial real estate started to build some successes. The market has greatly improved since then."

Sink, who has two decades of experience in the commercial real estate industry, joined Colliers International-Savannah in 1999 and became a partner in 2007. He is active in all areas of commercial brokerage, including both landlord and tenant representation, and has brokered a number of multi-million-dollar investment projects. Before joining Colliers, he spent four years in the Atlanta commercial and industrial real estate market.

"It's great to have low vacancy rates," Sink says, but those seeking to expand in or relocate to Savannah should take heart. "Help is on the way in the form of new construction," he says. "We're starting to see speculative construction again, as well as build-to-suits. We have some ready-to-go industrial sites. The market is well-positioned to grow again."

The city is in its advantageous position to greet post-Panamax vessels thanks to good planning. "Savannah has followed a master plan to build efficient access into and out of the port," Sink says.

Cooperation and collaboration among the area's various economic development authorities, local and state governments, and the private sector is also a driving force for success. "They have collectively embraced the port to help the community grow," Sink says, adding that the port is ideally situated for optimal logistics.

"The Savannah Harbor is in the process of being deepened, and the port is upriver

from the historic district on the I-95 side of downtown," he explains. "That means trucks don't have to navigate through the historic district. It is easy to get in and out at the intersection of two interstates—I-95, going north-south, and I-16, going east-west to Atlanta. And 20 percent of offloaded containers never hit the road as they move from ship to rail, and then immediately to Atlanta and beyond."

The city has used tax dollars to improve transportation infrastructure, with local citizens repeatedly voting for a Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, or T-SPLOST, to tax themselves an additional one percent.



Atlanta Bonded Warehouse's facilities provide public and contract food-grade, temperature-controlled distribution services.

"All the stakeholders share a spirit of cooperation," Sink says. "As the market has evolved and grown, the quality of the area's warehousing facilities has improved, and overall real estate and operating costs in the area have remained competitive."

Sunny Skies Ahead

"There is no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather," said John Ruskin, a 19th century British writer for whom a Georgia settlement was once named. We don't know if Ruskin was

referring to Georgia when he made his famous pronouncement, but he certainly could have been.

Favorable weather is among the reasons that Georgia's Department of Economic Development is able to boast that tourism—a \$57.1-billion industry for the state—drives significant business growth for companies operating in the "gem of the Southeast."

"We have great weather," agrees Winston White, vice president of operations for TranSouth Logistics. He cites climate as a major advantage for his company and for his customers. "Even though we offer service all the way to Maine, the weather has rarely shut down our facilities."

With headquarters in Charleston, S.C., TranSouth counts two Georgia locations among its 10 southern sites. The company's Kennesaw branch is in Marietta, and it maintains its front office and pickup/delivery center in Braselton.

A Distribution Hotbed

"We have taken advantage of Georgia's assets by positioning ourselves in the I-85 corridor just northeast of Atlanta," says White. "This is a hotbed for distribution."

Since 2003, TranSouth has specialized in trucking, deliveries, and warehousing. The company's distribution centers are strategically located near ports of call and major hubs in the Southeast, moving full truckloads and LTL throughout South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, and, of course, Georgia.

TranSouth's third-party warehousing services include materials handling, pick-pack operations, light assembly, product storage, and consignment for both domestic and international suppliers. The company is proficient in warehousing products requiring special handling.

"Many companies offer national coverage out of two distribution centers, one in California and one in Georgia," says White. "Because we are in Georgia, we can respond faster to customers' needs than companies that are located outside of Georgia."

White describes TranSouth as a

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“boutique logistics partner of choice, offering crafted solutions to customers’ warehousing and transportation needs.”

The Port of Savannah provides a particular strategic advantage, along with Georgia’s interstate infrastructure that puts it at the crossroads of I-85, I-75, and I-20. Georgia’s logistical advantages continually grow, and TranSouth is growing along with the state.

“We continue to expand our warehousing footprint in Georgia,” he says. “We currently operate 300,000 square feet of warehouse space in Georgia, and we plan to add another 160,000 square feet in 2016 to offer 3PL warehousing services.”

Capital Gains

In Georgia’s capital city, the leaders of logistics feel right at home.

More than 40 percent of manufacturing, distribution, logistics, and supply chain solutions buyers are located within a 500-mile radius of Atlanta, according to data

from Supply Chain and Transportation USA, Atlanta’s trade event and educational program. The city ranks fourth in the United States for Fortune 500 headquarters, which include Delta Air Lines, Coca-Cola, and Gulfstream, as well as logistics powerhouse Saia.

Officials at Saia say that operating in Georgia offers tremendous advantages to both carriers and shippers, not only because the state offers an extensive rail system and access to four major interstate highways, but also because of its large, professional workforce; relatively low cost of living; high quality of life; typically favorable weather; and a world-class airport that offers direct service to all major domestic and international metro areas.

With three service groups, Saia has grown to become one of the largest transportation companies operating in the country. Headquartered in the Atlanta suburb of Johns Creek, the company

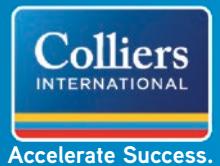
provides regional and inter-regional less-than-truckload services in 34 states, as well as non-asset-based truckload and third-party logistics services. Through a network of partners, Saia also serves the balance of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, plus Canada, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. With revenues of \$1.2 billion, Saia employs 9,000 people nationwide.

Customers Come First

Along with its headquarters, Saia’s operations in Georgia include terminals in Athens, Augusta, Ellenwood, and Savannah. The company has nearly 1,000 employees working at these five facilities. The many advantages of its location facilitate Saia’s focus on customer satisfaction, says Ray Ramu, the company’s chief customer officer.

“We put our customers first,” Ramu says. “My goal is to make certain we are aligned as a company—leveraging our technology, executing our processes, and,

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“TranSouth has added value to the Safelite Autoglass Georgia operation over the last two years in terms of flexibility and adaptability. They have done this in two significant ways: first, adjusting the size of the fleet to help meet our transportation needs, and second, creating crafted warehousing solutions to meet our immediate needs in the Georgia market.”

– John Kemp, Logistics Manager, Safelite Autoglass



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most importantly, making sure our team members understand that the decisions we all make each day shape our customers' perception of us. It is every employee's goal to create a positive experience for our shippers."

From one- and two-day delivery to multi-regional and truckload service, expedited shipping, consolidation, DC management, and managed appointments, Saia offers the gamut of products and services shippers seek.

"We are proud to call Georgia home," Ramu says. "Not only does Saia provide excellent employment opportunities that elevate the state's standard of living, it also pumps millions of dollars into Georgia and its communities, and provides customers with quality service by taking advantage of all the state has to offer."

An Ideal Combination

Three key assets set Georgia apart in the U.S. logistics superstructure: its ports, its interstates, and a workforce well trained in materials movement, according to Hal Justice, vice president of sales and operations for Atlanta Bonded Warehouse (ABW). And, he says, ABW—a leading provider of temperature-controlled warehousing and LTL transportation services in the Southeast—takes full advantage of each of these assets.

Since its inception in 1948, ABW has offered multi-client/public warehousing services to its customers. Originally founded to serve the confectionery industry, ABW now provides distribution for a number of food and food-compatible products.

"We have worked hard to develop distribution programs that link products coming through the Port of Savannah into our LTL consolidation program for 'mid-temp' products—those needing to be moved at 50 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit," Justice says.

"From our Atlanta campus, we distribute, on a weekly schedule, to every major retailer in the Southeast, Southwest, Midwest, and Great Plains to the Rocky Mountains," he says. "This service area

allows customers to eliminate redundant inventories in the Southwest or Midwest, yet still maintain scheduled weekly deliveries to the retail trade."

ABW's main metro Atlanta campus is in Kennesaw, convenient to major interstate highways and served by CSX rail service. Overall, the company offers more than 2 million square feet of modern, secure, high-cube storage capacity.

The 68-year-old company has received numerous awards for operational excellence. It has been Hershey's DC Operator of the Year for five consecutive years, has received the Wrigley Lifetime Achievement Award, and was awarded Barilla's Warehouse of the Year for 2015.

ABW's operations routinely score best-in-network across a wide array of key performance metrics. The company is not interested in second place: "If we are not first in every published scorecard measuring lowest cost and highest service, we know we have to improve," according to its website.

ABW has years of experience in public and contract warehouse services, LTL, contract transportation services, and co-packaging. "Our best solutions tie together two or all three of these services into one integrated offering," Justice says. "The more integrated the offering, the more competitive the cost and the higher the service level."

The company also offers consolidated order picking for bulk pool shipments, labeling, repacking, and co-packing.

To retain its cutting-edge services and prepare for the future, ABW implemented a tier-one Warehouse Management System. The investment represents the company's confidence that its own growth will mirror growth in the state.

"We are looking at expanding our footprint in Georgia in 2016 and 2017 to keep up with the demand for our services, both from the advantages provided by the Port of Savannah, and the advantages provided by our transportation programs and cost-effective warehouse services," Justice says. "Over the past four years, we have grown our footprint more than 30 percent."

Echoing the sentiments of other leading logistics providers throughout the state, Justice says the quality of Georgia's workforce provides a solid underpinning for growth. "Our people are our greatest asset," he says. "How many multi-state 3PLs have less than 12-percent turnover annually in their warehouse workforce?"

The Three Ls

Georgia has all three ingredients vital to excellent logistics: location, location, location. "This is the Southeast hub of the population explosion," says Ben Goldberg, president of JIT Warehousing & Logistics. JIT's Savannah headquarters puts the company in precisely the right location.

JIT, which operates throughout the United States, handles numerous commodities in addition to steel products and palletized cargo. The company is located about one half-mile from the Georgia Ports Authority's Ocean Terminal, and about 3.5 miles from the container port.

With more than two decades of experience in the import/export industry, JIT provides warehousing, trucking, shipside delivery, port pickup, container drayage, stripping, stuffing, cross-docking, and over-dimensional/crane services. The over-dimensional division has expanded to include road escort, rigging, and additional trailers for heavy haul.

JIT operates facilities on both the CSX and Norfolk Southern rail lines, in addition to two other Savannah locations offering more than 750,000 square feet of warehouse space. The company is currently installing more rail on the Norfolk Southern line in order to expand its rail business. The expansion will allow JIT 16 additional rail spots per day.

While Goldberg joins in the excitement of others who look forward to post-Panamax vessels making their way to the Port of Savannah, he believes that Georgia's record of attracting new businesses and residents is just as important.

Of course, it's also about the cargo coming in—and out. "The logistics advantages of the Port of Savannah work both ways, inbound and outbound, as

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countries become, in effect, closer to home,” Goldberg says. “We are in their backyard, or they are in our backyard, depending on how you look at it.”

Goldberg credits the many exciting innovations and improvements in Georgia’s logistics sector—and in his company—to the agency governing the ports. “The Georgia Ports Authority is in touch with us daily about potential business,” he says. “We work as a team. They do a lot to help us be successful.

“If it weren’t for the support of the GPA, we wouldn’t be here,” he adds.

“Our growth has been amazing,” adds his daughter, Evelyn Goldberg-Davis, who

“We support the LTL transportation marketplace—and by marketplace, I mean carriers, shippers, 3PLs, and technology providers,” says Brad Gregory, the company’s senior vice president for marketing and software alliances.

Thousands of North American carriers, shippers, and logistics and technology service providers rely on SMC³ for educational events, technology products, and services to provide strategic insights into technological and business advances. In addition to its headquarters in the Atlanta suburb of Peachtree City, the company maintains offices in Louisville, Ky., and Rockville, Md.

About 85 of the company’s 110 employees work out of the Georgia headquarters.

“We are both a technology/service provider and an industry association,” Gregory says. “In both roles, we make it our business to understand our industry’s evolving role in national and global supply chains.”

In addition, he says, SMC³ helps its members and customers manage delivery and pricing risk, provide superb customer service, collaborate with their best partners, and thrive in a time of increased regulation and technological sophistication.

“We strive to guide—and even model and create—industry best practices and benchmarks,” he says. “We continually develop new products, delivery systems, and services.”

Conference Calls

The company operates two industry-leading conferences every year—JumpStart, held in Atlanta in January, and Connections, which will be held in June 2016 in Chicago. Speakers at the 2016 JumpStart conference updated attendees on the current state of the industry, including the new opportunities for shippers that will result from the Panama Canal expansion project.

The company’s long history and broad reach put SMC³ in an ideal position at the cutting edge of logistics developments.

“We’ve stood the test of time,” Gregory notes. “We deal with a lot of confidential information and we’re known for our integrity. Our executive leadership team has carefully and strategically navigated SMC³ through years of industry change and steady corporate growth.”

The company recently launched a project to analyze today’s LTL marketplace and changing freight flows, taking into account 117 million LTL freight bills covering more than \$25 billion in charges. The resulting solution, CzarLite XL, provides customers with a rating tariff that has been re-indexed to reflect modern market conditions, while adding in the capacity for density rating.



Located in a bustling poultry-industry region of north Georgia, Syfan Logistics is well-versed in hauling deadline-sensitive, perishable food products.

is vice president of the company. “We have enjoyed 10- to 20-percent growth over the past three years, and we had 30 percent growth this past year.”

Sifting the Data

Freight-pricing software firm SMC³ views the logistics landscape not only from a Georgia perspective, but also from its perch as an information provider for leading technology and manufacturing powerhouses around the country and beyond. Its client list includes Oracle, MercuryGate, and McLeod Software, along with the world-class alphabet soup of JDA, SAP, CLI, and TMW.

“We help develop the rates and the technology that all parties in the marketplace use,” Gregory explains. “It’s not specific to Georgia—we serve the whole country, including all the commerce moving into and out of Georgia.”

That said, Gregory notes that Georgia’s assets are undeniably also assets for SMC³. In particular, he says, the company benefits from a highly educated logistics workforce. “Atlanta offers an environment that allows us to attract the workforce we need,” he says, citing the array of universities and technical schools that support the logistics sector and serve the supply chain.



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Solutions that have both density rating and the traditional classification capabilities give industry stakeholders more choices, Gregory says. Besides, he adds, the rest of the world works off density rates, so CzarLite XL allows importers to work with one rating system throughout the shipment.

He calls the transition an “evolution, not a revolution,” but says such analytical tools are vital to stay ahead of the curve.

“As the Panama Canal widens, and more traffic moves into the East Coast, we want to be prepared to move to a density-based rating,” he says. “The approach will enable global entities to simplify their transportation processes.”

The Long View

Jim Syfan, CEO of Syfan Logistics, has watched Georgia’s place in the logistics arena mature and grow over many years. The company started in the poultry business where, Syfan says, executives and employees learned the importance of communication and punctuality.

The Syfan family—Jim Syfan and his two sons, Greg and Steve—now own and operate Syfan Logistics, a full-scale, asset-based logistics management company based in Gainesville, Ga., just north of Atlanta. “We operate like a large successful corporation with the heart of a family business,” says Syfan, who worked in the transportation brokerage industry for nearly one decade before launching his original company in 1984 along with his wife, Gloria, and two sons.

With a professional staff of more than 150 employees, Syfan Logistics serves high-demand shipping needs for temperature-controlled, dry or flatbed loads with on-time pickup and delivery throughout the continental United States, Mexico, and Canada.

With its long history of professional involvement in business and trade associations such as the Transportation Intermediaries Association, Syfan Logistics is recognized as “An American Tradition in Transportation.” The company maintains its own fleet of Syfan Transport trucks, providing shippers

with flexible and convenient equipment options and availability.

Armed with the insights drawn from his history in the industry, Syfan recites Georgia’s long litany of logistics advantages:

- Georgia has a high availability of freight coming into and out of the state, providing tremendous opportunities for transportation logistics companies. Many other states do not have as much opportunity. Georgia is strategically located as a crossroads for all major transportation corridors—land, air, rail, and sea.

- Atlanta’s Hartsfield Jackson International Airport provides air service to six continents and has nearly two million square feet of cargo handling space.

- The state’s two deepwater ports,

the poultry, seafood, confectionary, cereal, and soft drinks industries.

The company also serves the largest package-delivery companies in the world, along with all expedited divisions of America’s major automotive manufacturers. UPS recognized Syfan Logistics as one of its top partners during the past two Christmas seasons.

Syfan Transport has four specialized divisions for hauling dry, refrigerated, expedited, and dedicated freight. The company’s Freight Management Services (FMS) provides a new pathway to cost savings for its clients. “Our sophisticated McLeod software and training can help customers trim upwards of 10 percent off their freight costs,” Syfan says.

The company operates web portals that customers can access to track the status of their freight. All Syfan trucks have

“Georgia’s logistics infrastructure saves time and money by seamlessly connecting air, sea, and land transportation.”

—ROBERT MORRIS, Senior Director, Corporate Communications, Georgia Ports Authority

the Port of Savannah and the Port of Brunswick, make the most of Georgia’s waterway advantage.

- Georgia’s highly developed highway system provides nearly 1,200 miles of interstate highways, as well as an intricate state highway system.

- Georgia has nearly 5,000 miles of railway tracks, allowing freight to be moved easily throughout the state.

“This combination of transportation avenues makes Georgia a major market for intermodal service,” Syfan says, adding that Syfan Logistics is strategically located to take advantage of the airport in Atlanta and the ports in Savannah and Brunswick, as well as the major rail and highway systems.

With its strategic location and familiar access to major transportation corridors, the company works extensively with the nation’s largest foodstuffs companies in

GPS and the company can track brokered trucks with Macro Point technology on the trucker’s smartphone. In 2016, Syfan Logistics is investing in additional equipment and expanding its over-the-road fleet of Syfan Transport trucks.

Right Place, Right Time

“We couldn’t be in Georgia at a better time,” says Jeff Lantz, president of C.L. Services, Inc. (CLS). The Atlanta-based company moves shipments both nationally and internationally, and specializes in dry van, flatbed, and temperature-controlled truckload services throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Georgia’s ongoing logistics enhancements, especially the airport community and port expansions, open up a huge gateway for easier and more cost-effective transportation solutions.

“We take advantage of these

A large warehouse with high ceilings and blue metal shelving units filled with boxes and pallets. In the foreground, a blue forklift with "HWC LOGISTICS" and "www.hwlogistics.com" on its side is being driven by a man in a dark uniform. The forklift is carrying a wooden pallet stacked with several white bags, each with a yellow label. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a clean and organized industrial environment.

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enhancements by strengthening our relationships locally, and by offering more regional transportation services,” Lantz says. “That means everything from moving regular truckloads to intermodal to containers to warehousing.”

Georgia’s ideal location put the company on the road to success from the start. “Our average length of haul is 750 miles,” says Russ Caudell, the company’s chief financial officer, who co-founded CLS with Lantz in 1997.

“Our vision was to create a financially sound company built around taking care of our clients and our employees,” says

the company’s 54 employees. “We pride ourselves on providing our shippers and carriers with a high level of service and communication,” Caudell says. “We like to say that we are large enough to serve you and small enough to know you.”

That translates into a Prospanse® company culture. CLS trademarked the term to describe its “proactive and responsive” approach to clients, carriers, and employees. Atlanta-based CCA and B—the Elf on the Shelf® company—is one CLS client who enthusiastically testifies that the approach works.

“We operate in a seasonal market,” says

process,” Lantz says. “In return, the chosen carriers receive a valued brokerage partner that can keep trucks loaded and rolling in the specific lanes they request.”

Numerous freight opportunities are available for everyone from single owner-operators to mega carriers. The company offers LTL and full truckload services, including temperature-controlled and expedited. It also offers intermodal and drayage, warehousing and transloading, real-time updates, and container tracking. Equipment types include standard flatbeds, step decks, lowboys, removable goosenecks, and extendable trailers.

“We are built on a strong foundation and we are set for growth,” says Lantz. “As owners, we have the flexibility to deal directly with clients. As private owners, we are accessible and flexible. We’ve also introduced new management software to make our external processes more collaborative with vendors and clients.”

Tapping into Technology

CLS operates in a debt-free environment, allowing the company to continually upgrade its technology, says Caudell. Its technology innovations are yet another outgrowth of the state’s logistics assets. “Georgia offers a number of incentives for companies to take advantage of new technology,” he says.

Shippers can track their shipments and carriers can see available shipments, upload available equipment, and check status of payment.

Lantz and Caudell see more growth ahead, pointing to Georgia’s job-creation incentives, especially employment opportunities for veterans, as prominent signposts for continued success.

“These are exciting times in Georgia,” says Lantz. “When you look forward to the next 10 years, and factor in all the companies and corporations moving back to the United States, and specifically to Georgia, many exciting opportunities are yet to come.” ■

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C.L. Services uses its trademarked term Prospanse to describe its “proactive and responsive” approach to clients, carriers, and employees.

Lantz. The co-founders say they have been able to attract and retain outstanding employees, thanks in part to the advantages provided by superior logistics education opportunities in the region.

Caudell cites Georgia’s major universities as important assets of the state because of the highly acclaimed transportation programs they offer. Among them, he cites Georgia Southern University, University of Georgia, Clayton State University, Kennesaw State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and the University of West Georgia.

An extensive carrier network augments

Oy McPeters, CCA and B’s logistics manager. “We have one shot to get it right. We have to work with a broker that knows our needs, and can gear up with our seasonal volume. CLS does the job for us.”

For carriers, the CLS approach means timely payments. As a member of the Transportation Intermediaries Association, the company has a \$100,000 TIA surety bond in place. Lantz and Caudell say they are continually looking to grow the company’s carrier network.

“We are always looking to establish long-term relationships with carriers that can pass our rigorous due diligence

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