



## Another View: Atlanta's Startups give hope

By Thomas E. Noonan and John C. Yates



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Atlanta's startup technology community is alive and hopeful. There are good reasons to be optimistic about our future in attracting, growing and funding tech businesses.

We are expanding our base of serial entrepreneurs, those tech executives who successfully start and grow businesses. These executives repeat the process by starting and funding other companies in Atlanta.

Atlanta is an attractive location for venture capitalists. Our infrastructure accommodates out-of-town venture investors through direct flights almost anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, we do have a shortage of venture capital in Atlanta. But let's face it, there's a worldwide funding shortage today.

One way we are addressing this challenge is by creating new forums for venture capitalists to invest in our technology companies. Venture Atlanta is one example. It was the largest such forum in Georgia's history for the past two years. Last week, the event surpassed all expectations, attracting more than 550 attendees and venture capitalists from around the United States.

With the growing number of successful entrepreneurs, Atlanta has an expanding network of angel investors. Many of these early-stage investors are quietly surveying the halls of Georgia Tech, local incubators and technology organizations searching for the next successful startup.

Another key to success lies with entrepreneurs being embedded in Atlanta. The model is simple -- a bright young student graduates from college, moves to Atlanta, joins a growing company to acquire executive skills and then launches a new business.

There remain significant challenges. Business and government leaders must address these constraints head on Our transportation system, educational standards and incentives for new company growth.

Compared to other U.S. cities, Atlanta has the opportunity to build on its success and expand its business platform to attract entrepreneurs and grow our country's most successful startup companies.

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