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STRATEGIES SECTION B

ATLANTA BUSINESS CHRONICLE

▶ Senator demands exposure of Grady contracts **4A**



Future on the line

As workforce ages, succession planning takes on significant role

HUMAN RESOURCES & EMPLOYMENT

INDUSTRY FOCUS SECTION SECTION C

August 31-September 6, 2007

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INSIDE



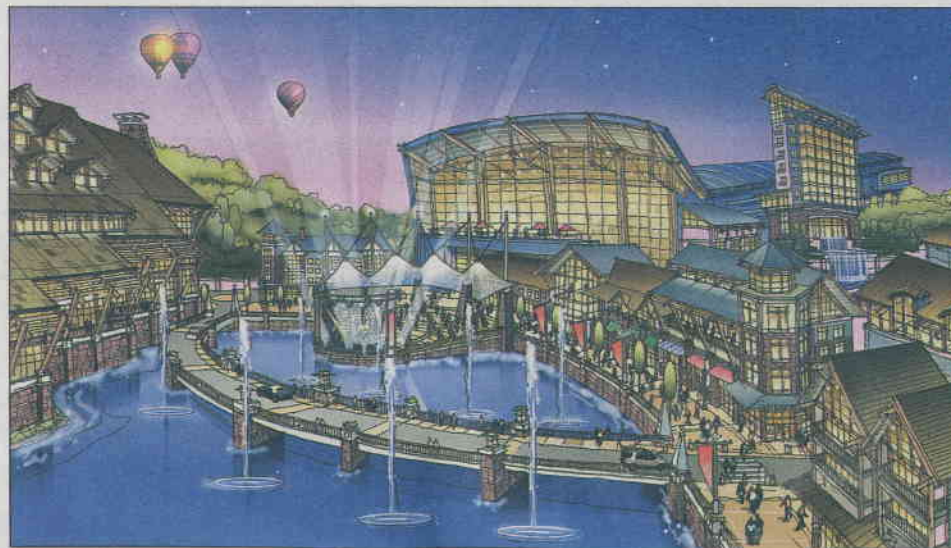
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Sacha Taylor and Oscar de la Renta attend the Jeffrey Fashion Cares 2007 fundraiser

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\$1B ski resort proposed



Dawsonville: State officials are interested in developer Steve Winters' project, known as Mount Pegasus.

By Rachel Tobin Ramos
STAFF WRITER

An Atlanta developer wants to build the longest and highest indoor ski dome in the world just off Georgia 400 on the shore of Lake Lanier.

The \$1 billion indoor winter wonderland would have three indoor hockey rinks, five half-mile ski runs, a half-pipe for snowboarding, a one-mile track for snowmobiles, four hotels, 30 restaurants and 800,000 square feet

▶ See **RESORT, 22A**

Technology exec tackles fantasy ball

By Justin Rubner
STAFF WRITER

When Atlanta technology entrepreneur Alec Peters was looking for his third startup opportunity last year, he discovered a booming multibillion-dollar market — fantasy sports.

After a year of testing, and just in time for the **National Football League** season, Peters is launching **Screaming Sports Inc.**, a Web service that will go after a market that's been historically dominated by large media companies. He says more tech companies are needed to provide innovation in the fantasy sports industry, which has 19 million players in North America.

In fantasy sports leagues, gamers

▶ See **FANTASY, 25A**

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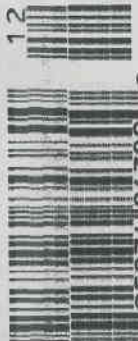
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Farming coastal breezes

By Justin Rubner

STAFF WRITER

Faced with rising fuel costs and the public's increasing demand for environmentally friendly power, Southern Co. is considering harnessing the wind — a move that could blow the energy giant into a national race to find cheaper energy sources.

For two years, Southern Co. and Georgia Tech have studied the feasibility of having a wind farm somewhere in Georgia. The research is promising, showing that a wind

► See **WIND, 23A**

Fuel-free:

Southern Co. and Georgia Tech have studied the feasibility of having a wind farm somewhere in Georgia.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/SHUTTERSTOCK



JOANN VITELLI

Alec Peters: The technology entrepreneur wants to bring innovation to media-dominated fantasy sports through Screaming Sports Inc.

Diaz tosses Lime in the mix

By Rachel Tobin Ramos

STAFF WRITER

René Diaz, the indefatigable restaurant and grocer supplier who has parlayed Latin American products into big business in Atlanta, is ready to try his hand at being a restaurateur in his own right.

Diaz and Eric Newberg, the CFO of **Diaz Foods**, and another

dozen investors are opening **Lime Taqueria & Tequila Bar** in a new mixed-use project called the West Village in Smyrna, where Atlanta Road meets Interstate 285.

"I never really thought of having a restaurant," said Diaz. "But the timing was right and the location just felt right."

► See **LIME, 25A**



BYRON E. SMALL

Lime time:

René Diaz and Eric Newberg of Diaz Foods want their new eatery, Lime, to capture Smyrna's tastebuds.

Opinion

A great city needs a great bookstore

It has been 10 years since the closing of Oxford Books, the sprawling store that provided so much of Atlanta with leisurely afternoons browsing through its aisles. The cosmopolitan and erudite nature of Oxford Books contributed much toward Atlanta's standing among the world's greatest cities. The store still merits a brief mention in The Economist's City Guide to Atlanta even today.



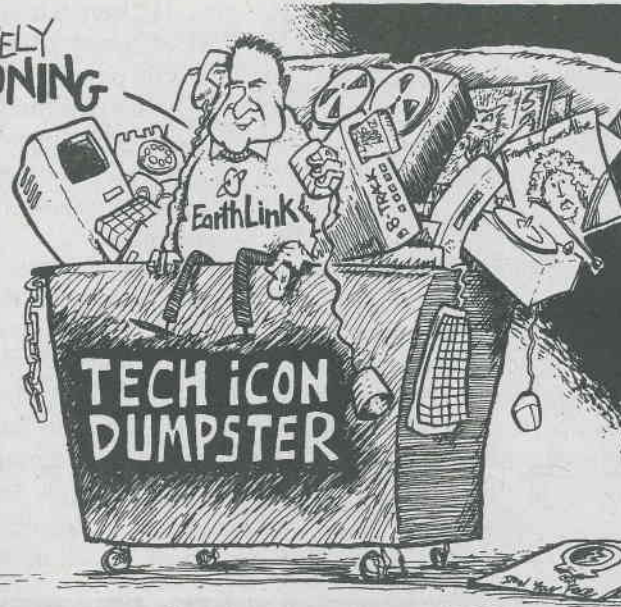
VIEWPOINT

Tony Polito

How is it then that one of Atlanta's most venerable institutions found itself out of business? And what market forces continue to prevent Atlanta from having a major independent bookstore a decade later? At the time, its failure was attributed to 'predatory' Wall Street financiers and 'cutthroat' pricing by an array of nimble competitors ("Oxford Books' story didn't have to end the way it did," Atlanta Business Chronicle, May 23,

How is it then that one of Atlanta's most venerable institutions found itself out of business? And what market forces continue to prevent Atlanta

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A \$37 million soaking

For all that has been written and said about Grady Hospital, one document seems to be the smoking gun for change.

It was contained in a recent report by consultants but drew little attention. That's about to change.

The spread sheet reveals a scandal well beyond another report that a former board member says was suppressed at the urging of Emory Univer-

total "open account" of \$37.3 million.

This resident of DeKalb County has no desire to be the financial life vest for a hospital that is serving a state-wide patient base. If the numbers for 2006 are typical of the last 20 years, the taxpayers of just two counties are paying for the indigent health care of an entire state.

Now those taxpayers are being asked by the Grady board to guarantee a bailout



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1997). However, in hindsight, it seems much more related to routine business problems such as unaddressed inventory costs and lack of adaptation to new market conditions.

The majority of its inventory idled, raising inventory costs. The chains stocked only high inventory-turn items. Non-mass-market books began to find a far more efficient marketplace, a better channel, in the Internet. Customers simply shifted their purchasing patterns.

Yet many revered independent bookstores in other cities successfully addressed these issues and survived: Tattered Cover (Denver), Schwartz (Milwaukee), Prairie Lights (Iowa City) and Politics & Prose (Washington) are but a few examples. They moved to vending their full inventory on the Web, increasing focus on face-to-face traffic-generating readings/events, turning their cafés and bistro fare into full-fledged profit centers.

Hopefully Atlanta's business community will recognize that a for-profit independent bookstore of character, managed well, will return its investment not only in its ledgers, but even more so in its enhancement of the stature of Atlanta. Atlanta should once again be host to an iconic and enviable major independent bookstore ... as all great cities should.

Polito is an associate professor in the College of Business at East Carolina University.

sity. It goes beyond the past shenanigans with contracts. The numbers are staggering in light of Grady's estimated \$120 million shortfall for 2007.

The spreadsheet documents all the uninsured patients at the hospital for 2006 who were not residents of Fulton and DeKalb counties, the bodies that subsidize Grady.

Every county in the state is listed as having residents treated at Grady, from a \$143 uncollected bill from a resident of Tattnall County to — get this — \$11,871,364 in care for residents of Clayton County. Those Clayton residents paid \$134,226 for their care, a pittance on the total. After payments and adjustments for government social programs Grady lists Clayton County residents as owing \$5,827,780.

Gwinnett County residents were close to Clayton on the roll call of deadbeats, uninsured, illegal immigrants, emergency cases, etc. They received \$10,225,437 in care and the hospital shows \$4,474,102 unpaid and uncollectible.

For Cobb County residents, \$8,799,777 was given in care. The "open account" as it is called is \$4.2 million.

The report's bottom line for 2006? Some \$68.5 million in care went to patients from outside Fulton and DeKalb counties while they and insurers paid some \$8 million. The hospital wrote off \$21 million and is left with a



RIGHT WORD Dick Williams

has no legal meaning. Any patient failing to pay a bill is therefore "certified." With only 8 percent of Grady's patients having medical insurance, it's a wonder the hospital collects any other money at all.

One wonders why a succession of Grady administrators hasn't made this specific case before. Is it because they knew that state aid wasn't forthcoming and they didn't want to risk losing the support of local politicians and taxpayers?

Clearly a state solution is justified by the numbers alone. Having read the numbers county by county it seems the simpler solutions — state aid for the Grady trauma center, burn center and the like — is but a Band-Aid. Grady is the state's indigent-care facility, dwarfing all others.

The taxpayers of Fulton and DeKalb counties have gotten the shaft.

Williams is publisher of the Crier Newspapers and host of "The Georgia Gang" on WAGA-TV (Channel 5). Contact him at (770) 849-2425; or e-mail thecrier@mindspring.com.

loan of \$100 million. And presumably those same taxpayers will be asked to back the bonds for needed equipment and the like.

Part of the problem lies in the Grady contract with the two counties. The hospital "certifies" patients as indigent. That word from the contract

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