



# Georgia is on their minds

## CEOs rank Peach State 4th for doing business

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With companies throughout the world re-evaluating everything from which products to manufacture to where to locate offices to changes in corporate structure, doing business in the right place is more important than ever.

An industry magazine on Wednesday released survey results that measured executive opinions on the best and worst places for

jobs and business growth.

In its fifth year, Chief Executive magazine's "Best & Worst States" survey asked 543 CEOs to evaluate their states on a broad range of issues, including proximity to resources, regulation, tax policies, education, quality of living and infrastructure. Providing additional insight to the evaluations, CEOs were also asked to grade each state based on taxation and regulation, work force quality and living environment.

Georgia had its best showing yet

with a fourth-place ranking. For the fourth year in a row, Texas was ranked the No. 1 state to do business and California was the worst.

"Our survey, year-over-year, proves that those states with the worst records continue to practice the same policies that alienate businesses," said JP Donlon, editor-in-chief of Chief Executive magazine, a controlled circulation publication with 220,000 readers.

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### TOP 5 STATES

	2008	2007	2006
1. Texas .....	1	1	1
2. North Carolina .....	3	4	3
3. Florida .....	10	3	4
4. Georgia .....	7	6	5
5. Tennessee .....	6	7	11

### INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES FOR GEORGIA

Subcategory	Rank	Subcategory	Rank
Cost of business .....	16	Work force .....	3
Technology and innovation .....	16	Economy .....	31
Transportation .....	2	Education .....	32
Business friendliness	14	Quality of life .....	42
		Access to capital .....	14

Source: Chief Executive magazine 2009 U.S. Best and Worst States survey



# Savannah Morning News March 19, 2009

## Georgia

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With that in mind, economic development officials representing the state as a whole and Savannah specifically were glad to hear the good news.

"We're very pleased that Chief Executive magazine has ranked Georgia's business environment as the fourth-best in the country. The ranking validates the efforts we all make to improve our business environment, and it verifies what we and our businesses in Georgia already know," said Ken Stewart, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

Lynn Pitts, senior vice president of the Savannah Economic Development Authority, agreed.

"We're a marketing organization, and when we see significant news like this we grab ahold of it and send to about 700 to 800 individuals that we do business with," he said.

Besides coming in fourth overall, Georgia was ranked second for transportation and third for its work force. But some of the subcategories don't necessarily show the

state in a favorable light.

Georgia's economy was rated 31. In terms of education, Georgia was ranked 32nd, and for quality of life the state came in at 42.

Alison Tyrer, a spokeswoman for the state department of economic development, said she wasn't able to reach the publication and doesn't know enough about how the individual rankings were arrived at to be able to comment on them. So it was a mystery to her why Georgia rated a "42" in quality of life.

"That's a broad term, and I'd like to know more about what factors led to Georgia's ranking versus, for instance, New Jersey's No. 1 ranking in that category," she said. "Georgia has also been ranked (by the Pew Center) as the third 'stickiest' state in the U.S., so clearly the quality of life is attractive enough that almost 70 percent of the people born here like it enough to stay."

If nothing else, the survey shows that Georgia is on the minds of business executives, Pitts said.

"Throughout this recession we've had a steady stream of projects in Savannah. It's not like the pipeline has dried up."