



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 1, 2008
Contact: Mary Williams
919-941-5145

SOUTHERN GROWTH HIRES TED ABERNATHY AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Southern Growth Policies Board announced today that it has hired Ted Abernathy, currently Executive Vice President and COO of the Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP), as the new Executive Director for the organization. Abernathy succeeds Jim Clinton, who served as Executive Director from 1990 until his resignation last month.

Mr. Abernathy has been in his current position at the Research Triangle Regional Partnership since 2001. During his years at RTRP, he has been responsible for all administration and operations including: strategic plan development, external marketing, leadership development, and international branding activities for a 13-county, public-private economic development organization. He developed, wrote and implemented nationally recognized strategic competitiveness plans. Mr. Abernathy supervised staff, contracts, fundraising and extensive collaborative networks. He created profitable special events and fee-for-service activities. He helped to expand RTRP's budget from \$800,000 to \$2.9 million over 8 years.

Mr. Clinton said, "I am especially pleased to have Ted Abernathy take this leadership role at Southern Growth. I have had the chance to work with him in the region and believe him to be an inspired, creative and most capable leader. He will lead Southern Growth into a new era of relevant and useful economic development research and policy."

Of his new position, Mr. Abernathy said "At this time in my career, I believe this offers a tremendous opportunity for me to be involved in making the South more economically competitive. As a life-long Southerner, I have seen my grandparents work in the textile

mills and on the farm, and I have been a part of the technological growth in the Research Triangle. The Southern Growth Policies Board can help our Southern states and communities convert knowledge into the actions that will yield a better quality of life for all our citizens.”

Southern Growth Policies Board is a thirteen state, public-private partnership that acts as a think tank on economic and community policies for the South. The Board is composed of Southern governors, legislators and civic and business leaders. It is widely known for its influential “Report on the Future of the South” publication series.

Mr. Abernathy begins his new duties at Southern Growth on November 3.

Mr. Clinton is now Chief Operating Officer for the Cenla Advantage Partnership, a regional economic development organization dedicated to building economic opportunities in central Louisiana. He will remain active as a volunteer with Southern Growth Policies Board.