



For Immediate Release

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**Southern Growth Policies Board Names
NEXT Innovation Center
2010 Innovator Award Winner from South Carolina**

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC – Southern Growth Policies Board is pleased to announce **NEXT Innovation Center** as the recipient of its *2010 Innovator Award from South Carolina*. Formed in 2006, **NEXT** is a collaborative of regional organizations dedicated to attracting and promoting the growth of high-impact knowledge-based companies, as well as accelerating the entrepreneurial culture in Upstate South Carolina.

NEXT offers entrepreneurs a single-point of access to support organizations and also fosters the development of the regional infrastructure critical to entrepreneurial success. The collaborative has played a leading role in launching a regional network of investors, initiating the creation of incentives such as a business license abatement fee, and organizing peer mentoring networks where like-minded groups can come together and bounce ideas off one another. **NEXT** partners worked with the Hughes Development Corporation to create the **NEXT Innovation Center** in Greenville in 2009, providing space for emerging companies to interact and grow, as well as a venue for **NEXT's** educational and networking programs and services. The Innovation Center is also home to support organizations such as the Upstate Carolina Angel Network and Michelin Development Upstate, an economic development program that provides funding and business expertise to socially and economically disadvantaged small- and medium-sized businesses.

The **NEXT** collaborative, which was launched with eight partner organizations, including the City of Greenville, Greenville Chamber, InnoVenture, GTC Buck Mickel Center, FastTrac, Spiro Institute of Entrepreneurial Leadership at Clemson University, Clemson University Research Foundation, and the Greenville Spartanburg Anderson Technology Center, has since grown to 12 partners and nearly 50 member companies. In addition, since its inception, **NEXT** has seen more than 20 innovative and entrepreneurial companies relocate to the Upstate region.

Innovator Awards are presented annually to one organization in each of Southern Growth's 13 member states in recognition of initiatives that are improving economic opportunities and quality of life in the region. The *2010 Innovator Awards* were chosen from creative initiatives in the region that aim to help communities recover from the recession. One award winner per week will be announced in Southern Growth's e-newsletter, Southern Compass, leading up to an official recognition of all awardees at [**Southern Growth's Chairman's Conference, June 7-8, 2010 in Lexington, Kentucky**](#). For more information on Southern Growth's Innovator Awards program or Chairman's Conference, contact Ted Abernathy, Executive Director, Southern Growth Policies Board, at (919) 941-5145 or tabernathy@southern.org.

About Southern Growth Policies Board

Southern Growth Policies Board is a regional public policy think tank based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Formed by the region's governors in 1971, Southern Growth Policies Board develops and advances visionary economic development policies by providing a forum for collaboration among a diverse cross-section of the region's governors, legislators, business and academic leaders and the economic and community development sectors. Southern Growth provides its members, and the region, with authoritative research, discussion forums and pilot projects in the areas of technology and innovation, globalization, workforce development, community development, civic engagement and leadership. To learn more about Southern Growth Policies Board, visit www.southern.org.