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CLASSIFIED 32A



The Insider

Dick Cheney at the
Conference of the
Secretaries of Defense.
8A

Coca-Cola eyes big move downtown



SunTrust Plaza: Coke could make up to a 10-year commitment and lease at least 250,000 square feet.

By Douglas Sams
STAFF WRITER

The Coca-Cola Co. is about to take a big gulp of downtown Atlanta. Coke (NYSE: KO) has entered final negotiations for new office space with the ownership of the 60-story SunTrust Plaza, one of Atlanta's iconic skyscrapers. Coke would move about 1,000 jobs, many of them IT workers from suburban Atlanta, to SunTrust

Plaza and its Garden Offices. Coke would make up to a 10-year commitment and lease at least 250,000 square feet. SunTrust Plaza has been a fixture on the skyline since the 1990s and was developed by internationally renowned architect John Portman Jr. It helps anchor a downtown business district bounded by Peachtree Center Avenue, and Peachtree, Baker and Courtland streets.

➤ See **COCA-COLA, 23A**

Emory University launches business and terrorism class



By Amy Wenk
STAFF WRITER

Emorey University wants to help future executives prepare for violent attacks such as the recent Boston Marathon bombing. The college has launched a course to teach students the economic harm that political violence and terrorism can cause companies. "The Business, Economics and Psychology of Organized Violence and Terrorism" maybe the first

of its kind, a business course far from the norm. It brought together professors from business, economics and psychology backgrounds — Gregory Berns, professor of neuroeconomics and head of Emory's Center for Neuropolicy; Michael Prietula, a Goizueta Business School professor of information systems and operations management; and Tony Lemieux, a visiting social psychologist and investigator with the National Center for the

➤ See **TERRORISM, 27A**



Falcons CEO: Atlanta needs MLS team

By Amy Wenk and Maria Saporta
STAFF WRITER AND CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Conversation is kicking around again about scoring a **Major League Soccer** team for Atlanta.

Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur Blank has long wanted to bring an MLS franchise to the city.

Now, he's got another chance.

A deal is done for a new \$1 billion Falcons stadium that could also house a soccer team when it opens in 2017. Plans are to build the retractable-roof stadium to accommodate a MLS team, as well as host major soccer events such as the FIFA World Cup.

➤ See **MLS TEAM, 23A**

da Vinci surgical training center set for Atlanta

By Urvaksh Karkaria
STAFF WRITER

Sunnyvale, Calif.-based **Intuitive Surgical Inc.**, the maker of the da Vinci robotic surgical system, plans to open a high-tech training center in metro Atlanta.

The approximately 50,000-square-foot development in Norcross will be used to train surgeons on the company's robotic systems, sources said. The \$5 million-plus center is expected to draw surgeons from around the Southeast.

Robotic surgery allows a surgeon to perform a procedure — such as cardiac and urologic surgeries — remotely using a robot. The technology is minimally invasive and reduces scarring and recovery time for patients. The da Vinci robotic surgical system, which sells for an average of about \$1.5 million, is operated by a surgeon sitting a few feet away from the patient at a console. Using a high-powered camera, the surgeon guides the arms of the robot that holds surgical tools, which are inserted into the patient through one- to two-centimeter incisions.

Intuitive's Atlanta training center will provide basic and advanced training on the

➤ See **DA VINCI, 22A**

THOMAS GRILLO/BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

SHUTTERSTOCK

FILE/SHUTTERSTOCK

New portal hopes to jump-start crowdfunding

By **Ruchika Tulshyan**
STAFF WRITER

Georgia last year passed a rule letting local businesses raise capital through crowdfunding. Georgia companies can raise up to \$10,000 in equity from each non-accredited investor who's a local resident, and up to \$1 million a year.

So far, no companies have taken advantage of the opportunity.

David Lilenfeld, co-founder and president of **SterlingFunder.com**, hopes to change that.

SterlingFunder.com, a crowdfunding portal, is expected to go "live" within a month, allowing Georgia startups that sign up to launch capital-raising campaigns.

"Last year crowdfunding raised \$2.7 billion, mostly in parts of Europe where equity crowdfunding is allowed," Lilenfeld said. "Georgia could lead the nation by being the first U.S. state to take advantage of intra-state crowdfunding."

He believes Georgia residents haven't taken advantage of the new rule for two reasons — lack of education and the absence of a crowdfunding portal. SterlingFunder nets between 3 percent and 5 percent of the amount raised by a company through the portal.

Up until now, crowdfunding has been largely limited to Kickstarter.com and IndieGogo.com. Both portals allow companies to raise funds for donations-based or rewards-based ventures. The public cannot invest in these projects to make money. They can only back projects in exchange for a tangible reward or one-of-a-kind



David Lilenfeld: SterlingFunder.com will go live soon.

experience. Investing to get a stake in a company is only available to accredited investors, to date.

Georgia's new rule, known as the Invest Georgia Exemption, or IGE, fills a so-called "death valley" in lack of investors for small companies, said Knox Massey, an active angel investor who has worked toward raising the profile of angel and venture capital investing in Georgia.

"Fifteen years ago, people didn't know about angel investing. Through education, the term 'angel investing' is now recognized by most people.

Equity crowdfunding needs the same," Massey said.

Worldwide crowdfunding has grown much faster than venture capital and angel investing, Massey said. Massolution, a crowdfunding research firm, expects global crowdfunding to reach \$5.1 billion in 2013.

"There's a lot less fraud in crowdfunding than penny stocks," said Jonathan Wilson, partner with law firm **Taylor English Duma LLP**. "The Internet is self-policing," he said. Equity crowdfunding portals give early-stage companies a platform to connect with investors. "For crowdfunding to work, you need a crowd. Most startup websites don't have a crowd."

Under the IGE, funds must be deposited in a financial institution that is authorized to do business in Georgia. Having Georgia investors funding local companies using banks based here will be a vital contributor to the state's economy, Lilenfeld said.

"People would be remiss to overlook the benefit of IGE done right and legally," said Jeff Bekiaries, a securities lawyer with **Smith, Gambrell & Russell LLP** and co-founder of Spark Market Georgia, another portal for equity crowdfunding expected to go live this year.

One Georgia company evaluating equity crowdfunding under the IGE is **Bohemian Guitars LLC**. The startup creates custom, one-of-a-kind guitars from vintage oil cans and raised just under \$55,000, surpassing its initial goal of \$32,000, from a month-long reward-based crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter.com, where investors would receive guitars pre-sale.

"Fifteen years ago, people didn't know about angel investing. Through education, the term 'angel investing' is now recognized by most people. Equity crowdfunding needs the same."



Knox Massey
Keith-Massey Family Partners LLLP

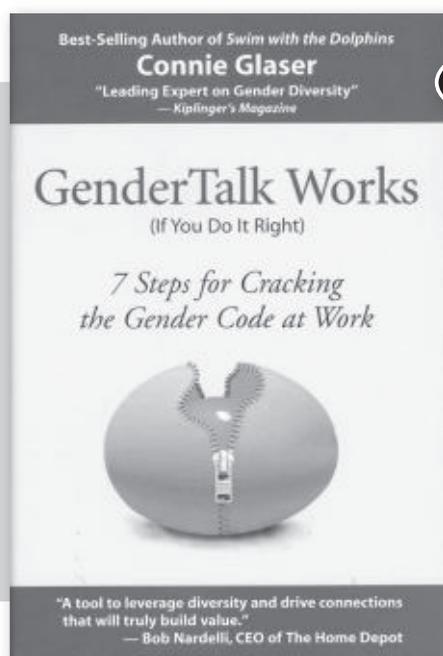
"We're trying to open up a small round of funding now and we think equity crowdfunding is an interesting option to raise between \$75,000 and \$110,000," said Adam Lee, co-founder and CEO of Bohemian Guitars. "For the initial round, we're looking at equity crowdfunding, which will set us up nicely for angel investing in our next round."

It remains to be seen how many investors and companies take advantage of the IGE. "The exemption could help certain types of local businesses with local patrons looking to raise capital, like restaurants and bars," said Doug Spear, a partner with **Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP**. "But once the federal exemption comes into effect, it may obviate the need for the IGE."

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GenderTalk Works

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