

HBSS - First U.S. Law Firm Opens in Georgia

Hall Booth Smith & Slover (HBSS), a full-service law firm headquartered in Atlanta, GA, has announced the opening of its office in Tbilisi, Georgia. Partnering with the Eristavi Law Group, HBSS will be the first U.S. law firm in Georgia.

According to the law firm's officials, HBSS's primary focus of practice will be in International Funding and Financing, International Arbitration and Mediation, Health Care Law, and Corporate Matters. Matthew C. Allen of Atlanta, GA will be the Managing Attorney of the Tbilisi office. Allen has extensive experience working with Georgian companies on international financing and corporate matters. HBSS has strong ties to Georgia through working with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Georgian Supreme and Appellate Courts. HBSS currently represents several Georgian and American companies conducting business within Georgia.

Chairman of the Atlanta Tbilisi Sister City Committee John E. Hall, Jr. who is a Partner at HBSS traveled to Georgia for the opening festivities and shared his excitement regarding the opening: "We are honored to have the opportunity to serve business clients in Georgia. We believe it will be a growing sector of the world economy and look forward to being the leading law firm there."

HBSS is celebrating its 21st year providing the high quality legal services to its clients and maintaining eight regional offices throughout the Southeast. HBSS has been ranked as one of Atlanta's "Best Places to Work for 2010" by the Atlanta Business Chronicle.



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Georgian Health Care 2020 : MEDEA 2011

Georgian Health Care 2020 : MEDEA 2011, The first Georgia-U.S. Conference on Georgian health care, organized by the First Lady of Georgia, the Embassy of Georgia to the United States, and the Ministry of Labour, Health, and Social Affairs, and Georgia to Georgia Foundation took place on February 1-2 2010 in Washington, D.C. Titled "Georgian Health Care 2020: MEDEA 2011", the very successful conference included representatives from U.S. and international organizations, Georgian government officials, non-governmental organizations, and medical and public health professionals.

The conference was designed to seek both ideas and investment from the Georgian and U.S. private, public, and nonprofit sectors. U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen

Sebelius, was the keynote speaker.

The conference generated awareness on the challenges faced by the health care system in Georgia and identified key strategic priorities to strengthen the existing capacities of the system.

The list of participating partners in the MEDEA 2011 conference included, but are not limited to: members of the National Health Authorities and coordination bodies in Georgia, U.S. Government agencies and implementing partners (USAID, CDC), and members from Academic Institutions from GE and the U.S., including representatives from Emory University, Harvard University, Georgetown University, and Tbilisi State Medical University.



Ministry of Health, US Secretary of Health,
First Lady of Georgia &
Georgian Consulate Members

ASCC RECEIVES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ENERGY AWARD 2011

Sister Cities International is pleased to announce that the Atlanta Sister Cities Commission has been selected to receive the Sustainable Development-Energy Award for a population of over 500,000 in the Sister Cities International 2011 Annual Awards Program.

Sister Cities International recognized Atlanta due to its successful conference on Economic Development Forum on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

Recognizing that energy efficiency and renewable energy are fundamental to sustainable development and a critical issue for all local governments in the future, the forum aimed to facilitate an open discussion on how governments can work in partnership with stakeholders to cooperate on research, share best practices, encourage invest-

ment and accelerate the deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy policies and practices.

"The City of Atlanta is committed to investing in clean and renewable energy," said Mayor Kasim Reed. "By focusing on sustainability, we will improve the quality of life for Atlanta residents by enhancing the environment now and for years to come."

"Atlanta's Sister Cities conference continues to build upon Atlanta's legacy as the place to make international business connections," said Sam A. Williams, president of the Metro Atlanta Chamber. "Energy efficiency and renewable energy are vital tools needed for our city's continued economic development and quality of life."

The Sustainable Development-Energy Award is awarded by the

Department of Energy and Sister Cities International. "These awards showcase the impact sister cities programs have in their own city and around the world," said Patrick Madden, president and CEO of Sister Cities International.

Atlanta Tbilisi Sister City Committee wishes to thank its many volunteers for their tireless work efforts, contributions, and dedication that helped foster international cooperation and understanding over the past year and has helped make this award possible.

For more information on Sister Cities please visit:
<http://www.atlantaga.gov/International/SisterCities.aspx>

Clayton State Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Georgia American University of Tbilisi, Georgia

In a luncheon ceremony on Monday, Dec. 28, 2009, Dr. Thomas J. "Tim" Hynes, Jr., interim president of Clayton State University; John Parkerson, director of International Programs at Clayton State University; and Kenneth A. Cutshaw, vice president of Georgian American University (GAU); signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that promises a cooperative relationship between the two universities.

The Georgian American University is located in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia. The MOU provides the framework for Clayton State and GAU to engage in international exchanges of faculty to teach at each other's institutions, attendance of students between the institutions, collaboration in special programs such as research activities or conferences, and exchanges of academic materials. Clayton State University's

first international student from GAU, Mariam Chubinidze, recently finished her semester abroad at Clayton State in December, 2010.

The Republic of Georgia formerly was part of the Soviet Union, regaining its independence in 1991. GAU opened to the public in 2005, and it is located in the country's capital city of Tbilisi. It is a small, modern private institution of approximately 800 students that offers much of its curriculum in the English language. Its expanding Business and Law programs provide progressive educational opportunities for Georgian students, with the Business programs in particular representing potential areas for collaboration between GAU and Clayton State. GAU graduated its first class of students in 2009 with undergraduate degrees in Business and in Law, and graduate degrees in Law.

Georgian American University already has ties to Atlanta. Tbilisi is an international sister city of Atlanta; and Cutshaw, who is also a founding investor and board member of GAU, is executive vice president and general counsel, secretary and chief compliance officer of Cajun Operating Company/Church's Chicken, which has its headquarters in Atlanta. On the sports front, Atlanta Hawks center Zaza Pachulia is a citizen of the Republic of Georgia. Also, Clayton State's first international basketball player, Archil Khelashvili, a power forward/center who played for the Lakers from 1995 to 1997, was also a native of the Republic of Georgia.

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF TEACHING ENGLISH ABROAD

Given the current conditions of the American job market, many young American graduates have decided to take their talents abroad. One such person is Amberly Zamzow, a recent Georgia State University graduate and Atlanta-Tbilisi Sister City Committee volunteer, who has just returned from a four and a half month teaching assignment in Batoumi, Georgia.

Teaching English is just one of the many ways someone can gain valuable job and life experience abroad, but it is quickly becoming one of the most popular, made easier by a variety of organizations that aim to certify, place or connect potential teachers to schools in almost every region of the world.

In Amberly's case, the opportunity came to her through e-mail. "I had always wanted to teach English abroad and I have an interest in post-Soviet politics. The opportunity seemed fitting and came to me in my Inbox. I applied and was soon on my way to sunny, and sometimes rainy, Batumi."

The benefits of such an experience are endless, but anyone considering this alternative line of work should be warned: it's not a vacation. "Class started at 9AM. I attended 4 to

6 classes per day on average, and, depending on the teacher, I either taught the class by myself, co-taught the class with a Georgian English teacher or said only a few words to correct pronunciation. After school on Mondays and Wednesdays, I organized a conversational English club and on Tuesdays and Thursdays I taught a beginner English class. My days normally ended by 5PM." While the hours may categorize it as an ordinary full-time job, life before and after class undoubtedly proves otherwise. Consider the way Amberly got around town: "No one will ever admit this, but I enjoyed riding the marshrutka (the minibuses which can be seen on busy Georgian streets).

There is never a dull moment on a 'marsh'. It goes against everything American: the driver smokes, there are no set stops, it picks you up and drops you off anywhere, 25 people will be squashed in a 15 passenger van, the driver will drive on the sidewalk to avoid rough road, chats with locals...the list keeps going. If you're having a bad day it's best to avoid the marshrutka, but if you want a good laugh and to experience Georgian culture, it's a must do." Her commute was just one of the cultural experiences Amberly experi-

enced that made her job enjoyable and unique. Often times, teachers live with a host family in the city where he/she teaches, providing them with a support system as well as a chance to make life-long friends. In Amberly's spare time, she was able to take Georgian dancing classes and learn folk songs from her Georgian host family.

While the job may only be temporary, the lessons learned from such an adventure last forever. Consider Amberly's advice: "Do not pass up an opportunity to teach abroad and help others. If you are up for great culture, wonderful people and a serious teaching challenge: go to the Republic of Georgia."



Amberly featured with her Georgian Friends

W. SCOTT HENWOOD TEACHING IN GEORGIA

Scott Henwood has been invited once again to teach at the Ilia State University in Tbilisi, as well as at the Justice Department.

Scott plans to return to Georgia in early April and teach American Legal History and Legal Writing courses. He is very excited to have a continues

opportunity to interact with students and build relationships.

Georgian students are eager to have their American Professor back at school. This is truly a great opportunity for students to embrace legal studies from a professional like Scott Henwood. We all wish him well and we

hope to hear more wonderful stories when he returns back to the U.S.

ATSCC will host its meeting on March 22 at the office of HBSS at 191 Peachtree Street, suite 2900. Atlanta, Georgia 30303 Please RSVP to Ninat@hbss.net. www.atscc.org

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