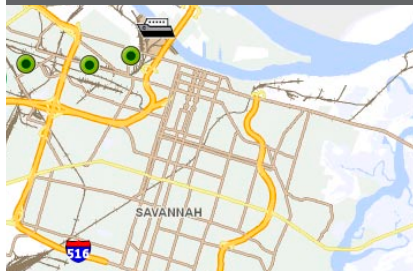




# Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)

ESRI GIS software enables SEDA to attract new business to Savannah

## CASE STUDY



### CHALLENGE

SEDA needed a Web presence that would compel businesses to relocate to or grow in Savannah

### RESULTS

- Clients can browse available properties, select a property, and perform demographic and business analysis.
- Up-to-date site information is delivered in minutes instead of hours.
- Both employees and clients increase their efficiency, accuracy, and productivity.
- Web page is intuitive to use by site location consultants and businesses.

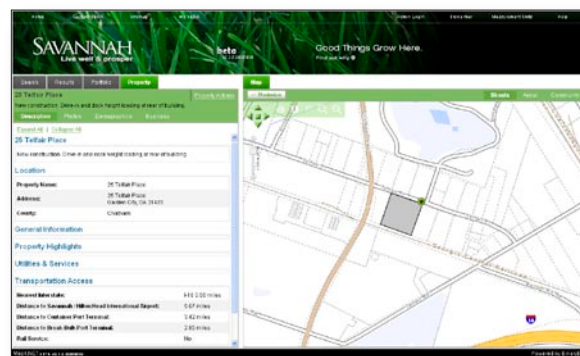
*"Like many industries, in economic development, it's innovate or die. Everyone goes online to do their searching first. GIS is exactly what the client needs to see a property on a map, assess demographics, and complete a business analysis in the nearby area. People can research the business opportunities in the area before coming to Savannah."*

*Amanda Taylor,  
Project Manager  
SEDA*

The Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA) is an independently funded organization whose mission is to improve the standard of living in Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia. Through the attraction of new business investments, creation of jobs, and support of established businesses, SEDA works with clients and the community to increase the region's tax base. SEDA manages an active database of industrial and office buildings and land sites ranging from 5,000 square feet to 1,400 acres. At any one time, the database has more than 150 active properties. Prospective clients can visit the SEDA Website to determine whether Savannah meets their needs.

### The Challenge

SEDA needs to show businesses and site location consultants that Savannah is the place to invest. In an increasingly competitive market, simply offering a list of available properties with square footage or acreage is not enough. "Before, GIS [geographic information system] clients could not visualize Savannah or see it on a map or in relation to the port, which is a huge part of Savannah's economy, or the interstate or airport—none of the demographic and infrastructure information important when making location decisions," explains Amanda Taylor, project manager at SEDA. When Taylor saw that other communities' economic development organizations were working with GIS, she showed her managers these examples, convincing them that a geospatial approach was necessary to being more dynamic. The desired solution had to allow prospective and existing businesses to view available properties and perform business and demographic analysis online, before even arriving in Savannah. This online mapping application needed to be fast and user-friendly, because if the client cannot find the information it needs, it may move on to another community.



*SEDA's GIS-enabled Web site provides visitors with images of available properties and highlights of each property and displays the property in relationship to transportation access, utilities, and other services.*

### The Solution

After researching its options, SEDA chose to work with ESRI business partner BinaryBus, which specializes in working with small- to medium-size local governments and businesses. BinaryBus created and hosts SEDA's Property Search function through MapIT.NET, a browser-based solution running on ESRI's ArcGIS® Server. The end product is an online mapping property analysis tool. GIS connects spatial and non-spatial data to create a more efficient geodatabase for managing resources and significantly reducing search time. Clients can browse available properties, select a property, and perform demographic and business analysis at various proximities around the site. For example, a query can be set up for a property of a certain size within a specified distance to an airport, port, or interstate, and all types of surrounding businesses can be located. Using infoUSA® dataset, past, present, and future demographic characteristics of the surrounding locale are also available. A portfolio

# Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)

## ESRI SOFTWARE USED

ArcGIS Server

## OTHER SOFTWARE USED

MapIT.NET from BinaryBus

## DATA USED

ESRI® Demographic Data  
infoUSA

## HARDWARE

Multiple virtualized Dell® 2950 servers, hosted and managed at secure, high-availability Tier 1 facility

## FOR MORE INFORMATION



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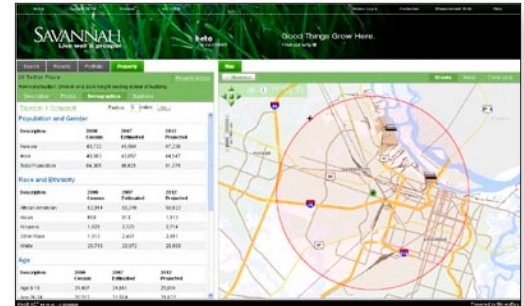
function allows viewers to save their searches as a Microsoft® Excel® or Adobe® PDF file. When project managers at SEDA upload new properties, geoprocessing predetermines demographic and business results at various radii around the property. Automatic caching of these results increases the speed of online map retrieval by end users.

## The Results

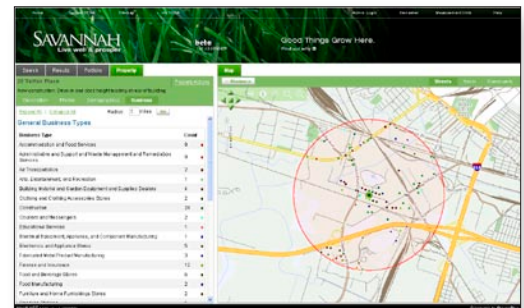
SEDA's GIS website is delivering positive returns in terms of time savings for employees and clients as well as increasing efficiency, accuracy, productivity, and communication. Rick Winger, president and CEO of SEDA, said the software is aimed at making sure businesses don't scratch Savannah off their lists. "They expect information that's accurate, timely, and easy to get to, and if you don't have it, you can be eliminated and not even know that you were under consideration. You can't go visit every place, and you want to have all the facts in hand."

Internally, project managers use the portfolio feature to create and save multiple property searches for different clients. Clients receive an e-mail, then open the link to their customized portfolio. "Now, in minutes, I can create a portfolio for a client who calls me, whereas before it would be a long turnaround, taking hours," describes Taylor. "The look and feel of the maps are also more intuitive—more what clients who do not use GIS are seeing on the Web—so it makes searching faster for them as well." The new property search allows clients to search on their own without needing as much input from managers at SEDA. Using ArcGIS Server also saves project managers time in other ways claims Taylor. "It allows us to work on other important tasks such as making sure the data we provide on our Web site is up-to-date and that clients will have all the information they need to find on our site."

Also, when it has clients in town, SEDA can give them an interactive community overview presentation. Using interactive maps allows it to tell prospective businesses about the local economy and other opportunities in the area. SEDA will continue to increase the robustness of this tool with updates such as moving from points to polygons for properties, so clients can see the size of a property and draw in possible floor plans for new buildings.



Within a buffered area (e.g., 1 mile, 10 miles) determined by the user, data such as housing and employment is available with past, current, and projected values.



Querying by buffered areas, clients can also view all surrounding businesses, such as construction or chemical manufacturing, listed and color-coded based on their standard industrial classification code (SIC Code).