

BUSINESS 2.0

ATLANTA LEADS THE NATION IN ATTRACTING THE LABOR MARKET'S MOST COVETED DEMOGRAPHIC: college-educated workers ages 25 to 34. Among the key reasons is that the region offers an irresistible arbitrage opportunity for homeowners arriving from pricier cities. Housing costs have stayed dramatically lower here than in inflated coastal markets like Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. Katrina spillover has brought other transplants, helping to seed new jobs and businesses. Ironically, some of the traditional pillars of the local job market are starting to sag. Atlanta is home base for Delta Air Lines, a carrier just emerging from bankruptcy. Another local giant, BellSouth, merged with AT&T, and the consolidation may still cost jobs. But small and medium-size businesses are picking up the slack. One driver: Midtown Mile, a 14-block complex, opens its first phase next year with dozens of new hotels, shops, and offices. Another is Technology Enterprise Park, a bioscience research center. "Most of the growth is coming from small firms that hire a dozen workers," says Rajeev Dhawan, director of Georgia State University's Economic Forecasting Center.

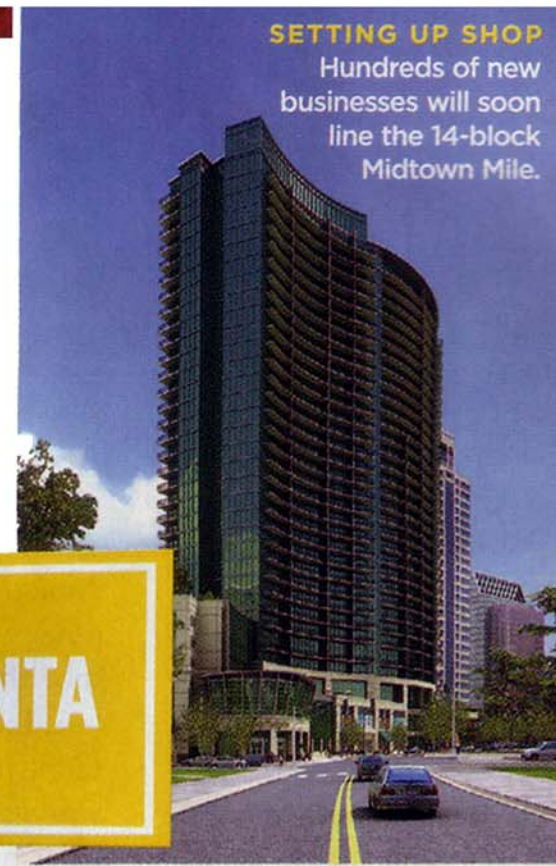
WHO'S HIRING NOW: AGL Resources, Home Depot, Newell Rubbermaid

HOTTEST JOBS: Regional sales manager (\$86,400), senior software developer (\$84,900), IT project manager (\$83,000), business process/management consultant (\$76,500), senior financial analyst (\$72,100), construction project manager (\$70,300)

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SETTING UP SHOP

Hundreds of new businesses will soon line the 14-block Midtown Mile.



2-YEAR JOB-GROWTH FORECAST	4.6%
METROPOLITAN-AREA POPULATION	5.1 million
COST-OF-LIVING RANK	104
INCOME-GROWTH RANK	58

