

# CAPITOL UPDATE

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## Crossover Day Determines Fate of Bills

The General Assembly convened for Crossover Day on Friday, March 29. Crossover Day is the final day for bills to cross from one chamber to another. Any bills that fail to cross over are dead. Historically, Crossover Day is a legislative marathon: many lawmakers work from morning to midnight to ensure important policy is heard, debated and voted on. Crossover Day is Day 30 of the session, giving the Assembly ten more legislative days to debate and pass the bills that will make their way to the Governor's desk in 2010.

TAG continues to monitor dead bills for language that could be amended for germane bills. Read below for a dead-or-alive update on bills pertinent to the technology community.

### Still Alive and Kicking

There is still hope for the following high-tech legislation.

**HB 983** is sponsored by Allen Peake (R-Macon). Among other things, this bill seeks to prohibit texting while driving. Would also prohibit wireless communication in any form for drivers who have an instruction permit or a Class D license and are under 18 years old.

**SB 374**, sponsored by **Sen. Chip Pearson** (R-Dawsonville), seeks to create the Legislative Economic Development Council. Duties of the council include facilitating job creation, reviewing tax exemptions and credits, and analyzing legislative proposals regarding economic development.

**SB 432**, known as the Advanced Broadband Collocation Act, is sponsored by **Sen. Lee Hawkins** (R-Gainesville). This bill proposes streamlining the placement of new or additional wireless facilities on existing wireless support structures, to ensure the safe and efficient integration of facilities necessary for broadband and other wireless communication services. This bill is currently in the House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications.

### Dead as a Doornail

Some of the top issues that fell to the wayside this session.

#### *Tax Credits and Exemptions*

**HB 946** would have allowed new business owners to exclude \$50,000 from the net income of their new business, for the first two taxable years. This bill was sponsored by **Rep. Melvin Everson** (R-Snellville).

**HB 1204**, sponsored by **Rep. Ron Stephens** (R-Savannah), attempted a tax credit for an employer for each new job created after 1/1/2010 and before 1/1/2012. Credit was set at 2% of the wages paid or up to \$700 per new employee.

**HB 1247**, sponsored by Rep. Ron Stephens (R-Savannah), would have created a tax credit for production companies that invested in a state certified production (includes feature films, TV series, commercials, music videos, sound recordings, etc.), if the investment was at least \$500,000. Credit will be equal to 20% of that investment.

#### *Electronics and Driving*

**HB 944**, sponsored by **Rep. Amos Amerson** (R-Dahlonega), and **SB 327**, sponsored by **Sen. Steve Thompson** (D-Marietta), both proposed prohibited texting while driving.

**SB 306**, sponsored by **Sen. Bill Heath** (R-Bremen), sought to prohibit driving while wearing a headset or headphone that would impair a driver's ability to hear.

**HB 945**, sponsored by **Rep. Amos Amerson** (R-Dahlonega), sought to comprehensively ban communicating via a wireless device in any form.

#### *New Technology Policy*

**HB 1290**—**Rep. Rob Teilhet** (D-Smyrna)

Would have authorized the GBI to provide information on sexual offenders to the owners of social networking sites, so that those owners could prescreen or remove registered sex offenders from social networking communities.

**HB 1336** was sponsored by **Rep. Barry Loudermilk** (R-Cassville) and proposed updating and revising Georgia Technology Authority's statutes to remove obsolete language and modernize GTA's responsibilities. Among other things, the bill put new emphasis on project management, enhanced the IT enterprise in state government, and gave GTA authority to develop a strategic plan for broadband access in Georgia.

**SB 412**, sponsored by **Sen. Greg Goggans** (R-Douglas), would have created the Georgia eHealth Advisory Council to oversee the adoption of telemedicine programs, and the implementation of electronic health record development.

