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## Actress speaks to Buckhead Business Association

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Staff / Nathan Self

Accomplished actress and dancer Jasmine Guy speaks to the Buckhead Business Association during its weekly morning meeting, discussing how to bring more revenue from the arts to the city of Atlanta.

Atlanta-native actress, dancer and director Jasmine Guy told the Buckhead Business Association the city needs to become more "movie friendly."

"I think we can become the third city," she said addressing the business group at its weekly meeting Thursday. "That's my big dream."

Her address came about a week after the city of Atlanta announced plans to lease a building on the Lakewood fairgrounds to a major film production company.

Ms. Guy cited the disconnection between arts, money and politics as why Atlanta has not yet reached its full entertainment potential.

"We want a celebrity image," said Ms. Guy. "But that image costs money."

A graduate of Northside School of the Arts, Ms. Guy returned to Atlanta 18 months ago after years of working in Hollywood and New York.

"I have not stopped working since I got here," said the 48-year-old who lives in east Atlanta.

For the theater and cultural arts, she said she would not only like to see Atlanta become an attraction but spread its wealth of arts via traveling shows to other cities.

"This should not be the dead end, but the launching pad," said Ms. Guy.

Continuing to make the city and state attractive to production companies using means like tax incentives would help bring more movie productions here as well, she said.

"I think the tax incentives are a big reason why people are coming here," said Ms. Guy. "But we have to stay competitive."

Association President Heather Wright said she agreed with Ms. Guy's message.

"I think it's a good idea to unify arts with the business community to help make the city more attractive," she said.

Ms. Guy got her breakout role in Spike Lee's film "School Daze." She also starred in two television shows, "A Different World" and "Dead Like Me."

Recently, she has been working with Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre. Her one-woman show, "Raisin' Cane," which has traveled across the country, will be performed June 25 through 27 at the Southwest Arts Center in Atlanta. She is also producing a new musical "I Dream" based on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, which will be staged next year.

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