

# IMPACT ACTION

Quarterly newsletter for IMPACT 2012, a business action plan led by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce

Spring '09

VOL. 02 NO. 02

## PIECE BY PIECE

*Building a stronger community  
through IMPACT 2012*



### METRO IN MOTION

*Do we have what it takes to be a 'cool' community?*

### S.E.E.D.S. CENTER SUCCESS

*Flavor of New Orleans*

### VALET

*How can we be of service?*

# LIST OF INVESTORS

*We are grateful to these corporate and community leaders for making IMPACT 2012 a success!*

Aaron's Rental Purchase  
 ACE Electric  
 Advanced Hearing Solutions  
 Alert-Tech Systems  
 Allan Dear Real Estate  
 Ambling Companies  
 American Classifieds  
 Ameris Bank  
 ASA Engineering & Surveying, Inc.  
 Astro Exterminating Services  
 AT&T  
 Atlantic Southern Bank  
 Chet & Myrna Ballard (P)  
 Bank of Valdosta  
 Barnes Drug Stores of Valdosta  
 BB&T  
 Bemiss Citizens Bank  
 Black Crow Media  
 Blanton and Griffin Insurance  
 Brandon, Rackley & Dukes, P.C.  
 James Bridges (P)  
 Bush Investment Group, LLC  
 Carson McLane Funeral Home  
 Cauthan Construction Company  
 Citizens Community Bank  
 City of Hahira  
 City of Lake Park  
 City of Remerton  
 City of Valdosta  
 CJB Industries, Inc.  
 Classic Art & Frame Company  
 Coldwell Banker Premier Real Estate  
 Coleman Talley LLP  
 Colony Bank  
 Colquitt EMC  
 Colson Printing Company  
 Coombs Heating & Air Conditioning  
 Covington's Dining & Catering / 306 North  
 Cowart Electric and Industrial Contractors  
 Culbreth, Minick & Associates, PC  
 Cypress Lakes Development / Teamtemps Personnel Staffing  
 Darby Bank  
 Fred DeLoach (P)

Elliott, Blackburn, Barnes & Gooding  
 Ellis, Ricket and Associates Architects  
 ERCO Worldwide, Inc.  
 Express Employment Professionals  
 Eye Associates of South Georgia LLC  
 Family Health Care  
 Farmers & Merchants Bank  
 Farmers Home Furniture Company  
 First State Bank & Trust Company  
 Fowler, Holley, Rambo & Stalvey, P.C.  
 Friendly Financial Services, Inc.  
 Full Circle Marketing & Advertising  
 Fusion Creative Marketing  
 Gary Minchew Realty  
 Genesis Christian School  
 Georgia Power Company  
 Mary & Tom Gooding (P)  
 Great Southern Yellow Pages  
 J. Glenn Gregory Architects  
 Griffin Corporation  
 Griner Automotive Group  
 Guardian Bank  
 H & S Supply Company  
 Henderson & Godbee  
 The Herndon Company  
 Holiday Inn/Comfort Suites/ Days Inn  
 Home Builders Association of South Georgia  
 Home Instead Senior Care  
 Jodi's Accessories  
 Johnson Distributing Company  
 Keeman Petroleum Company, Inc.  
 Kentucky Fried Chicken  
 Lamar Advertising  
 Landis International, Inc.  
 Lovell Engineering Associates  
 Lowndes County  
 Lowndes County Farm Bureau  
 James McGahee (P)  
 Magic Media, Inc.  
 Mediacom

Mike Hill Real Estate  
 Miller Hardware Company  
 Moore, Clarke, Duvall & Rodgers, P.C.  
 Music Funeral Services  
 Nexxtep Technology Services  
 Packaging Corporation of America  
 Park Avenue Bank  
 Pinnacle Prime Contractors / GPM  
 Presser Productions, Inc.  
 D/B/A Fox's Pizza @ Funstreet  
 Prince Automotive of Valdosta  
 Prudential ACS Real Estate  
 Quillian Powell Construction  
 Radiology Associates of Valdosta, PC  
 Regal Marine  
 Regions Bank  
 Regulatory Compliance Services  
 Richard Hill & Associates  
 Riley Church Pew Company  
 Ron Borders GMAC Real Estate  
 Larry Rodgers (P)  
 SAFT America  
 S. C. Barker Construction  
 The Scruggs Company  
 Scruggs Concrete Company  
 C. Byrd Simmons, P. C.  
 SMITH Northview Hospital  
 South Georgia Medical Center  
 South Georgia Vein Center  
 South Georgia Travel  
 Southeastern Capital Management Group, LLC  
 Southeastern Federal Credit Union  
 Southeastern Freight Lines  
 Sunset Farm Foods  
 Talk 92.1  
 U.S. Press  
 Valdosta Daily Times  
 Valdosta Electric Company  
 Valdosta Insurance Services, Inc.  
 Valdosta Magazine  
 Valenti, Rackley & Associates, LLC  
 WALB TV10  
 Waller Heating & Air Conditioning Company  
 Wetherington Farms

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN

## DEAR IMPACT 2012 INVESTOR:



It's a tough economy, but that makes the initiatives of IMPACT 2012 even more relevant and important for our community. Clearly, we can't just sit back and see what happens...communities with good leadership (and that certainly applies to Valdosta-Lowndes County) MAKE good things happen for their communities. IMPACT 2012 is all about creating the kind of environment where good things CAN happen.

2008 was a great year for IMPACT 2012, with virtually every goal we set for ourselves accomplished. James McGahee was an outstanding leader, ensuring the 129 investors in IMPACT 2012 that their money is being invested in the programs and initiatives that will achieve the \$95 million/year annual economic impact that Dr. Cynthia Tori has projected.

In 2009, we will continue to push ourselves and each other to make IMPACT 2012 even more effective and relevant to our changing economic picture. We pledge to you, the investors, that we will continue to:

- Establish programs with quantifiable results that improve workforce development and education.
- Create initiatives that grow jobs in targeted businesses

for college and university graduates, and help build the kind of community where young professionals want to live.

- Develop a team of economic development professionals that can create the most business-friendly community in Georgia.
- Provide the high-tech and 'high-touch' tools that can help entrepreneurs be successful.
- Promote our community as the best place in Georgia for amenity-seeking retirees.

IMPACT 2012's five initiatives are like puzzle pieces – each is equally important to the finished product, and each must be in exactly the right place to create a meaningful picture. Connected, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The pieces of IMPACT 2012 are beginning to fit together to create a meaningful picture of our community. Thank you for your continued support

Bill DeCoudres, Chairman  
2009 IMPACT 2012 Oversight Committee

## 2009 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE:

**Bill DeCoudres**  
Guardian Bank

**Jeff Hanson**  
Park Avenue Bank

**James McGahee**  
South Georgia Medical Center

**Curtis Fowler**  
Fowler, Holley, Rambo & Stalvey, PC

**Walter Hobgood**  
Express Employment Professionals

**Paul Nichols**  
Nexxtep Technology Services, Inc.

**Walt Gill**  
GPM (Gill Property Management, LLC)

**Tim Jones**  
Ameris Bank

**Mike Godwin**  
Ambling Companies

**Terri Lupo**  
Georgia Power Company

IMPACT 2012 includes a number of initiatives designed to work together to enhance Valdosta-Lowndes County's position as the business, educational, social and cultural center of excellence for South Georgia. Funded by 129 community-minded investors, IMPACT 2012 is a five-year, \$2.3 million business action plan, led by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber, with measurable goals and outcomes. Shareholders receive regular progress reports from the Chamber. Questions or comments are welcome. Please contact IMPACT 2012 Oversight Committee Chairman Bill DeCoudres (bdecoudres@guardianbankonline.com).

# EXPANSION OF TARGETED BUSINESSES

**2009 Goal: Facilitate the creation of 200 new jobs for college and university graduates in information technology, environmental technology, medical services and support, and other knowledge-based businesses**

**2009 Goal: Create a marketing outreach program to encourage young professionals to live and work in Valdosta-Lowndes County after completing their university or technical college education**



**MetroOne Network**  
 Metro Valdosta Young Professionals  
 One Voice • One Vision • One Community  
*The place to be for Young Professionals!*  
 www.metroonevaldosta.com (229) 247-8100

MetroOne is more than a young professionals' social network. "MetroOne is as much about community development as it is personal professional development," said MetroOne coordinator **Melissa Wheeler**. Pictured are members of the planning task force for MetroOne as they developed their 2009 Business Plan. Included in that plan are a number of initiatives that will help to build an energized and exciting community with the amenities and qualities young professionals seek.

**Chris Miller**, president of Creative Cities Consulting and Illuminomics, thinks Greater Valdosta 'has what it takes' to attract well educated young professionals to live and work here. Miller shared his experiences in Savannah, where he helped more than 20 knowledge-based businesses get started, with local business and education leaders at the Spring 'Metro In Motion Speaker Series' on VSU's campus. He reminded our community that young professionals often choose a 'cool' place to live, and then begin their search for suitable employment.

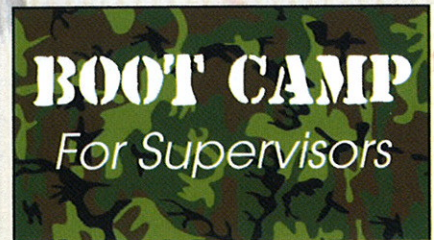


**Bill DeCoudres** (Guardian Bank) chairs the Targeted Business Expansion Committee, whose mission is to facilitate the creation of 200 jobs for college and university graduates. DeCoudres welcomed business, government, and education leaders to the 'Metro In Motion Speaker Series', and introduced guest speaker Chris Miller.

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

**2009 Goal: Establish a 'Boot Camp' to develop better managers and supervisors; serve 100 supervisors in 2009.**

**2009 Goal: Encourage parents to become more involved with their children's education.**



"Monday Morning Leadership" is the topic of one of **Walter Hobgood's** presentations for Boot Camp for Supervisors. Boot Camps are designed to provide real-world wisdom for today's supervisors – in a four-hour format! Four Boot Camps are scheduled in 2009.



City of Valdosta employees received some great tips on how to help their children be successful in school. Thanks to a generous grant from Regal Marine, 'Helping Your Child Succeed' will reach 400 parents in their places of work in 2009. "We know that most working parents want to be more involved in their kids' education, but have difficulty getting off work to participate," explained Regal Marine plant manager **Greg Justice**. "With this program, we can reach parents with a free lunch and an important message in their place of work, in less than an hour."



# ENHANCEMENT OF PRO-BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

**2009 Goal: Advocate for pro-business permitting regulations and practices, and formalize a 'rapid response team' to respond to business and industry needs**



Members of VALET (Valdosta And Lowndes Expansion Team) act as a 'rapid response team' to address business development issues that could hinder our community's pro-business attitude. VALET includes every local government and every economic development organization in Lowndes County, all working together to ensure that our "Entrepreneur-Friendly" designation continues to be well deserved.

# ENTREPRENEURIAL & SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS

**2009 Goal: Serve 500 clients in the S.E.E.D.S. Center**



A real entrepreneur success story, **Bryan Antoine** left New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, started his new business in Downtown Valdosta and began to live his lifelong dream of owning his own business. "I credit **Scott Manley** at the SBDC, who really made me work to develop my business plan, and the S.E.E.D.S. Center at the Chamber, where I received lots of help with market research and lots of encouragement." Antoine is pictured left with his friend **Michael Anderson** with Express Employment Professionals at the Chamber's Salute to Minority-Owned Businesses at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center in February.

Bryan Antoine, owner of Flavor of New Orleans restaurant in Downtown Valdosta, is a prime example of an entrepreneur who 'made all the right moves' – and it is paying off! Antoine fully utilized every entrepreneur resource available to him – the S.E.E.D.S. Center, the Small Business Development Center, the

Professional Consultants Program, etc. "I didn't leave any stone unturned, because I fully intended to do everything in my power to make my new business a success," Antoine told the audience upon winning the 2009 Chamber of Commerce Minority-Owned Business of the Year Award in February. "When I took my business plan to three banks for financing, I was told by one bank that mine was the most thorough business plan the banker had ever seen. My advice to other entrepreneurs is – do your homework!"



# ATTRACTION OF AMENITY-SEEKING RETIREES

2009 Goal: Develop and implement targeted national advertising for retiree recruitment and expand the marketing efforts of the Triple Crown Hometowns Program



An e-newsletter is distributed monthly to 1,400 retirees throughout Lowndes County, and throughout the U.S. "The idea is to keep retirees who already have moved to South Georgia informed about what's going on in the community, and to keep Valdosta-Lowndes County on the minds of those who are considering retirement," said Triple Crown Hometowns Director **Alison Stokes**. "When we ask our newly-relocated retirees how they heard about us, more than 70 percent say they found Valdosta through the internet. It helps that our Web address is [www.georgiaretire.com](http://www.georgiaretire.com)!"

Triple Crown Hometowns Director Alison Stokes and Member Services Assistant **Sandy Prentiss** assist prospective retiree newcomers with information about Valdosta-Lowndes County. "We are working with nearly 100 active prospects at this time, many of whom would relocate to South Georgia almost immediately if they could sell their homes in Florida," said Stokes.

Eight retiree households have relocated to Valdosta-Lowndes County during the first quarter of 2009. "With the economic turnaround we're expecting later this year, and the addition of two Triple Crown Hometowns billboards to be placed on I-75 in June and July, we expect to see a dramatic increase in interest in the second half of 2009."



**IMPACT**

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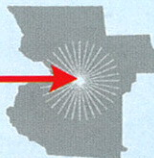
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By the year 2012, Valdosta–Lowndes County will enhance its position as the business, educational, social and cultural center of excellence for South Georgia. Recognized nationally as a “Smart Community” that uses technology effectively and provides career opportunities for its technical college and university graduates, Valdosta–Lowndes County will be a forward thinking place to live, learn, work and play. Boasting a business-ready environment with a progressive school system, excellent health care, affordable housing and a quality of life second to none, Valdosta– Lowndes County will attract entrepreneurs and a diversity of new business and industry. Young professionals will come to Valdosta–Lowndes County to start a career, raise a family and then join a growing retirement community. With the support of its corporate and elected officials working together, Valdosta–Lowndes County will enhance its standard of living and continue to be a model for progressive communities throughout Georgia and the Southeastern United States.

**IMPACT**

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**A BUSINESS ACTION PLAN**

Led By The Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce

**VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Leading Businesses.  
Leading Communities.™

