

IMPACT ACTION



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

Summer '09

VOL. 02 NO. 03

ON OUR WAY TO THE TOP

*The good news: We have a plan
to grow jobs in our community
through IMPACT 2012*

GUARDIAN BANK BUSINESS PLAN WINNER
SEGA Medical Research

"IT'S THE MIX THAT MATTERS"
Chamber gets good news/bad news report

FOREVER YOUNG
Valdosta featured in retirement magazine

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
Coward Electric and Industrial Contractors
Culbreth, Minick & Associates, PC
Cypress Lakes Development / Teamtemps Personnel Staffing
Darby Bank
Fred DeLoach (P)

Elliott, Blackburn, Barnes & Gooding
Ellis, Rickett 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
Nexstep 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:



Last quarter I reported that even in a tough economy, the initiatives of IMPACT 2012 are moving forward and our investors continue to support these initiatives by honoring their generous pledges. That support continues.

Our mid-year meeting in June at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts was well attended and guest speaker Curtis Fowler (Fowler, Holley, Rambo & Stalvey, PC) shared his thoughts on how our community has progressed in the ten years since he was Chairman of the Chamber Board of Directors in 1998. Dr. Patrick Schloss, president of VSU, also shared his thoughts of our community from a newcomer's perspective and his vision for VSU and how it relates to our community.

As we move into the second half of the year it is important that our IMPACT 2012 Oversight Committee, through the Chamber, continues to keep you, the invest-

tor, informed as to how your investment is being spent and the progress of our five major initiatives. With your ongoing support, we will continue to put the pieces of the puzzle together, creating an even better community as a result.

Hopefully we have seen the worst of the recession in our community. We are fortunate to live in a community with excellent leadership and a community that believes in moving forward even in tough economic times. On behalf of the Oversight Committee and participants of IMPACT 2012, thank you for your confidence and continued support.

Bill DeCoudres, Chairman
2009 IMPACT 2012 Oversight Committee

2009 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE:

Bill DeCoudres
Guardian Bank

Jeff Hanson
The 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
Citizens Community 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).

ENTREPRENEURIAL & SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS

2009 Goal: Enhance and strengthen the S.E.E.D.S. Center for entrepreneurial development



The entire community is rooting for the winner of the 2009 Guardian Bank Business Plan Competition! Pictured with **Robbin Miller**, SEGA Medical Research, are two of the Angel Sponsors who have committed their time and resources to helping this new company succeed. In addition to the \$15,000 cash prize from Guardian Bank, Miller also won approximately \$50,000 in services from many Chamber supporters, such as Web site design and hosting from **Baha Zeidan** (Azalea Health Innovations), and radio advertising from **Scott James** (Talk 92.1).



South Georgia has many very creative people. For example, did you know that there are 100+ patent holders in the Valdosta area? One of the S.E.E.D.S. Center's goals for 2009 is to identify who among these very creative people wants to commercialize their inventions, and provide them with the resources they need to take the next steps to success.

The Chamber, in partnership with Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute, presented the Inventors Workshops on June 17 and 24 at the LaQuinta Inn & Suites as an opportunity for innovative entre-

preneurs who are unsure about the next steps toward creating or marketing an invention.

William H. Needle, Georgia State University and Emory University professor, and one of Georgia Trend magazine's Legal Elite since 2003, spoke at the first session, "Understanding Patents and Licensing." Needle is one of Georgia's leading intellectual property attorneys and has practiced patent trademark, copyright and trade secret law for 37 years.

Session two featured three successful in-

ventors. **Cecil Holt**, founder and president of Holt's Nut Wizard, Inc., **Laddie Dardon**, developer of Peripheral Mowers, Inc. and **Jay Mullis**, founder and president of Green Dragon Pest Solutions, Inc. shared their personal experiences with workshop participants.

Thanks to the financial support of IMPACT 2012, these workshops provided 40 would-be entrepreneurs with the tools they need to take their dreams to the next level.

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

"It's the mix that matters."

Chris Miller, Creative Cities Consulting

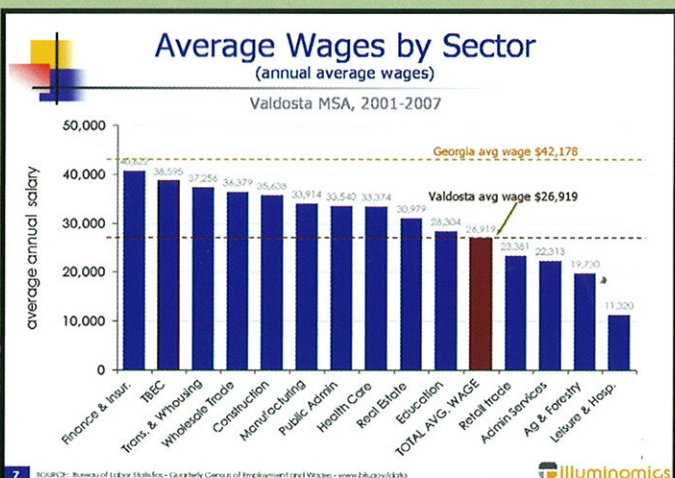
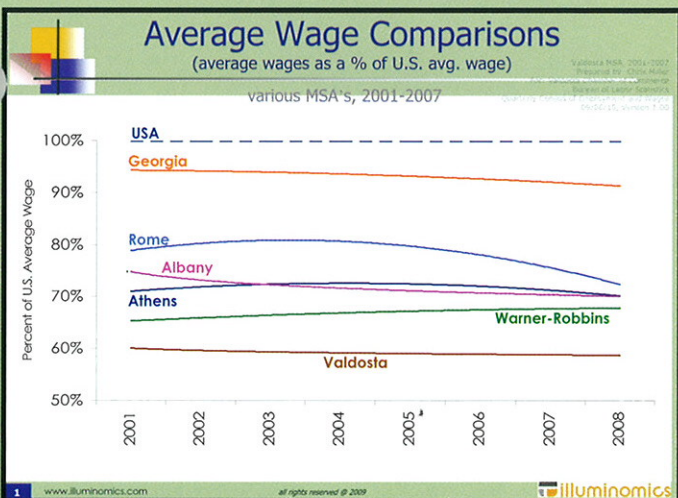
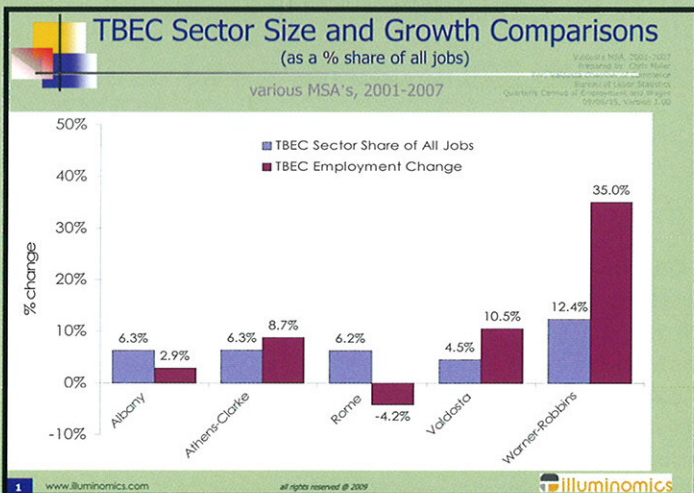
Chamber Board members received an education in community economics at their June meeting, with Chamber consultant **Chris Miller** providing a "good news/bad news" report in his analysis of the Greater Valdosta economy.

The bad news is: We are lagging behind peer communities in Georgia on average wages, partly because we also are lagging behind in the percentage of our workforce employed by knowledge-based businesses.

However, the good news is this: Our community has a plan to address this community challenge, and after working the plan for the past four years, we expect to see improvement in the health of our local economy within the next four years.

"Your community is ahead of the curve," Miller told the Chamber Board. "Thanks to the proactive approach of the Chamber, and the financial support of the community through IMPACT 2012, I am confident that Greater Valdosta will begin to see a steady increase in knowledge-based jobs, which will eventually result in higher average wages."

Miller stressed the fact that Greater Valdosta should be commended for the large number of new jobs created since 1990. "These are good jobs in manufacturing and retail. But every local economy needs a mix of jobs....a ladder that includes jobs for high school grads and college students, but also includes some rungs at the top for college and university grads. It's the mix that matters," Miller added.



KNOWLEDGE-BASED JOBS

Information Technology

- Publishing industries (including software)
- Motion picture and sound recording industries
- Broadcasting, except Internet
- Internet publishing and broadcasting
- Telecommunications
- Data processing, hosting and related services
- Other information services

Environmental Technology

- Professional and technical services
- Management of companies and enterprises

Medical Services & Support

- Ambulatory health care services
- Hospitals

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

2009 Goal: Host a regular forum among elected officials, education leaders and other economic development partners regarding business issues and initiatives



Mike Gaymon, president and CEO of the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce shared his perspectives on regionalism at the April meeting of the South Georgia Partnership for Regional Development. Gaymon described the regional economic development partnership in the Columbus area, The Valley Partnership. "It's not easy, and it's not always fun, but communities working together in partnership can accomplish so much more together than we can on our own," Gaymon told the group.

We are blessed in Valdosta-Lowndes County with a number of well organized and highly efficient economic development groups. In addition to the Chamber's S.E.E.D.S. Center, there are the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority, the City of Valdosta's Main Street Program and Economic Development Program, the Small Business Development Center, local governments, the South Georgia Regional Library, South Georgia RDC, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Valdosta State and Valdosta Tech – all working together in partnership to create the most pro-business environment possible in our community.

An important goal of IMPACT 2012 is to ensure that each economic development organization is fully aware of the resources each partner brings to the table, helping to avoid unnecessary duplication of services, but perhaps more important, making certain that prospective new business start-ups and existing business expansions receive all the assistance they need, as trouble-free as possible. With support from IMPACT 2012, the Chamber coordinates this group of economic development professionals in a group they call VALET – the Valdosta And Lowndes Expansion



Team. And like a traditional valet, they aim to be of service...to the business community!

Regardless which door the prospective new business owner walks through to begin his or her journey in Valdosta-Lowndes County, VALET wants to ensure that, in our community, there is "No Wrong Door."

Pictured above: **Steven Heddton** (Fusion Creative Marketing) and graphic artist, **Jason Stewart** work on creating the logo for VALET's No Wrong Door project.

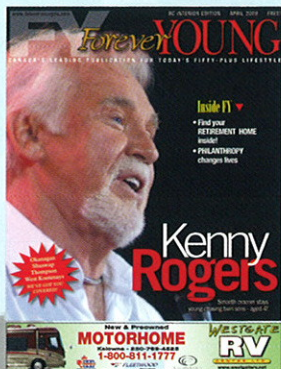
ATTRACTION OF AMENITY-SEEKING RETIREES

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



Perhaps we should amend this goal to read "...INTERnational advertising for retirees!"

Valdosta was featured in the April 2009 issue of Forever Young magazine, Canada's leading publication for today's 50+ lifestyle. The magazine's circulation is 23,000 and is distributed to selected high traffic sites – and to our target market. Approximately half the magazine's readers have at least a college or university degree. Over-50s have about 55 percent of all the discretionary dollars in Canada. That's money to spend on FUN – on non-essentials like travel, luxury cars, gourmet foods, interior decorating, home renovations, appliances, and home entertainment.



In addition to the great free publicity in this Canadian magazine, our community will also be featured as a great place to retire on two Triple Crown Hometowns billboards on I-75 in July and August, thanks to the generosity of our IMPACT 2012 investors. The current traffic count on I-75 at Exit 18 is 46,000 vehicles per day – now that's a lot of exposure!

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

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

Michael Di Tomasso, a supervisor at Ray & Son Heating and Air Conditioning, is a firm believer in Boot Camp for Supervisors. "I would recommend Boot Camp training to anyone who would like to improve his or her leadership skills," said Di Tomasso. "The training focuses on organization of oneself, but more importantly, organization within a company. It reminded us all that a good leader is a good listener, and that the relationship a manager builds with his or her employees is essential for any business to run smoothly and productively. This training inspired me to re-evaluate my own skills as a supervisor and to strive daily to effectively delegate, motivate, and communicate with all employees here at Ray & Son." Di Tomasso is pictured with another Ray & Son supervisor, Scott King.

Gregg Ray, owner of Ray & Son, shares, "We are committed to offering our team members educational opportunities for their benefit as well as the company's bottom line. We are a factory authorized dealer for Carrier and have been recognized as the #1 trainer for their technical services on numerous occasions. Having technically trained supervisors is critical, but we were also in search of opportunities to enhance their soft skills. Boot Camp was a perfect fit for our needs. We see the quarterly half-day sessions as a valuable investment in our employees. They come away energized, informed and ready to implement what they learned. I would recommend this



professional development opportunity to all supervisors, managers and business owners."

As of June 30, Boot Camp has helped 49 supervisors in Valdosta-Lowndes County this year improve their skills, thanks to the support of IMPACT 2012 investors.

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Valdosta, GA 31603

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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.

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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.™

