

# IMPACT ACTION

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

Spring 2010

VOL. 03 NO. 02



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

*"Good is the enemy of great." That is the first sentence of Good To Great by Jim Collins. His contention is that the main reason we don't have great schools, great chambers of commerce,*

*great businesses and great communities is because we have good schools, good chambers, good businesses and good communities. He says, "Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life."*

When we began the planning process for IMPACT 2012, we had a good community. We had a good chamber. But communities and chambers with great leadership like ours aren't satisfied with "good enough." Great leaders pat each other on the back and celebrate their successes. But then they ask, "What's next? How can we build an even better community?"

That's exactly what the leadership of the Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber did in 2006 and 2007. We assembled 72 of our community's top business, government, education and community leaders to ask them: "What's next? How can this Chamber help to build an even better Valdosta-Lowndes County within the next five years?" The five major initiatives of IMPACT 2012 are the results of these important and very inclusive discussions.

Convening stakeholders and building consensus on important community issues is one of the most important functions of a great chamber. IMPACT 2012 is proof that our community can do great things, when we are unified.

*Curtis S. Fowler*

Curtis Fowler, 2010 Chairman  
IMPACT 2012 Oversight Committee

## The mid-year IMPACT 2012 Shareholders Lunch

*Monday, July 12*

*11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.*

*Turner Center for the Arts*

*An invitation is forthcoming.  
All investors are encouraged to attend.*

## 2010 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE:

David Durland  
First State Bank  
and Trust Company

Mike Godwin  
Ambling Companies

Terri Lupo  
Georgia Power  
Company

Curtis Fowler  
Fowler, Holley, Rambo  
& Stalvey, PC

Jeff Hanson  
The Park Avenue  
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James McGahee  
South Georgia  
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Walter Hobgood  
Express Employment  
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Nexxtep Technology  
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Walt Gill  
GPM (Gill Property  
Management, LLC)

Tim Jones  
Citizens Community  
Bank

*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 132 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 Curtis Fowler (cfowler@valdostacpa.com).*

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

*Improving the skills of managers, and working with local school systems to identify and recruit new sources of qualified labor*



78 students from Lowndes County High School participated in this year's Job Shadow Day. 18 businesses hosted the students, providing them with a realistic look at the world of work.

Learning CAN be fun! Twenty supervisors participated in the first Boot Camp for Supervisors of 2010 on March 18 at the Georgia Department of Labor. Participants had an opportunity to learn more about their important roles as supervisors from a variety of professionals and experts in the community. These quarterly half-day "boot camps" provide supervisors with what they need to know in a bottom-line format. Our goal is to serve



## ATTRACTION OF AMENITY-SEEKING RETIREES

*Attracting amenity-seeking retirees through targeted national advertising and the marketing efforts of Triple Crown Hometowns*



Three hundred retiree households have been relocated to the South Georgia region thanks to Triple Crown Hometowns Retirement Development Partnership, a regional partnership among Quitman-Brooks, Lakeland-Lanier and Valdosta-Lowndes County Chambers of Commerce. Since the partnership's inception in 2001, it has developed prospect leads from 47 states and three countries and has received national and international recognition.

**The economic impact of 300 retiree households:**

- \$10 million in annual spending
- \$1 billion in liquid assets
- Indirect creation of more than 600 jobs

## PRO-BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

*Hosting regular opportunities for business leaders and others to discuss business issues and initiatives*



The annual Business Outlook Breakfast is sponsored by Ameris Bank in February each year. As Ameris' Market President, **Austen Carroll** noted, "Staying abreast of the state and national economy aids in better business decision making. We take pride in stepping up and supporting events that can further educate our community and continue the prosperous trends our region has enjoyed." Keynote speaker **Dr. Jeffrey M. Humphreys**, Director of the Selig Center in the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia was introduced by **Bill Osborn** of Ameris Bank.



# ENTREPRENEUR & SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

*Enhancing and strengthening local resources for entrepreneur development*



In spite of a sputtering economy, "business" at the S.E.E.D.S. Center continues to be brisk. During the first quarter of 2010, 98 clients took advantage of the many services available without cost through the S.E.E.D.S. Center, thanks to investments by IMPACT 2012. Five new businesses have begun operation in 2010 with assistance from the S.E.E.D.S. Center. A marketing workshop entitled "How to Stand Out in a Crowd" was coordinated by the S.E.E.D.S. Center for existing small businesses. Presenters for the workshop were **Marcie Dennard** (The Park Avenue Bank), **Joyce Aigen** (JL Concepts), **Kerry Laster** (Phantom Media Productions), **Julie Killion** (the Valdosta Daily Times) and **Steven Heddon** (Fusion Creative Marketing).



Our volunteer Professional Consultants Program has provided 10 hours of free professional consultation this year. **Phyllis Royal**, owner of Full Circle Marketing & Advertising, is one of our most popular consultants. "Virtually every new or expanding business wants to maximize their exposure," said Royal. "It's gratifying to be able to help new businesses get started in the right direction to accomplish that."



SPROUTS, an e-publication made possible through IMPACT 2012, is distributed monthly to 519 entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs. The newsletter provides information on resources available locally and beyond to those who want to start a new business or expand an existing one.

## EXPANSION OF TARGETED BUSINESSES

*Facilitating the creation of jobs for college and university graduates in knowledge-based businesses, and encouraging young professionals to live and work in Valdosta-Lowndes County after completing their college or university education*



MetroOne introduced a new program called "CEOs Unplugged", which is designed to give future entrepreneurs, executives, and CEOs the opportunity to interact with and learn from those who have already experienced professional success in their fields. **Deidre White**, a "serial entrepreneur" in Downtown Valdosta and a member of Valdosta City Council, was the inaugural speaker.



The IT Professionals Network meets quarterly to share information and ideas. The first quarter meeting was hosted by **Pat Sullivan** at his high tech business in Downtown Valdosta, ClientTell. "Visiting local businesses' IT departments keeps me in the loop about the information technologies that local businesses are using," said **Lynn Bowen**, Dean of Academic Affairs for Business Education and Computer Information Systems Programs at Valdosta Technical College. "That is especially helpful to me as I prepare students for the workforce."

**IMPACT**

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# LIST OF INVESTORS

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

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