

BUSINESS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE SEVEN

Jones branch offices. The survey identified Reid and Gross as providing some of the most exemplary client service within the firm.

Edward Jones provides financial services for individual investors in the United States and, through its affiliate, in Canada. Every aspect of the firm's business, from the types of investment options offered to the location of branch offices, is designed to cater to individual investors in the communities in which they live and work. The firm's 12,000-plus financial advisors work directly with nearly 7 million clients to understand their personal goals and create long-term investment solutions that emphasize a well-balanced portfolio and a buy-and-hold strategy.

Edward Jones, which ranked No. 11 on FORTUNE magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For" in 2011, is headquartered in St. Louis.

Rastegar promotion announced

Ray Chitty, president of Guardian Bank, announced the recent promotion of Shirin Rastegar to loan operations officer.



Rastegar

A Valdosta native and alumnus of Lowndes High School, Rastegar received her BBA in Finance from Valdosta State University in 2003 and began her banking career with Guardian Bank in 2004. Subsequently, she completed Consumer Lending School through Community Bankers Association of Georgia in 2008 and has most recently finished her second year of Georgia Banking School at the University of Georgia in Athens.

Active in the community, Rastegar serves on the Haven Board of Directors as Treasurer.

Nominations accepted

The Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber is now accepting nominations for Metro Valdosta's "4 under 40", formerly known as "Emerging Leaders."

"4 under 40" recognizes outstanding young professionals in the Valdosta-Lowndes County community. Candidates are selected based on professional accomplishments, experience, community involvement, leadership qualities, entrepreneurial spirit, professional and community impact. Winners will be announced during the "4 under 40"

reception on Sept. 20 at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

The deadline to submit nominations is Aug. 15 and ballots are available online at www.MetroOneValdosta.com.

Ballard elected as GACCE Chair

The Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (GACCE) elected Myrna Ballard, president of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce, as chair for 2011-2012.

Ballard has been the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber president since Jan. 1997. Before serving as president, she was the vice president for economic development for the chamber, economic developer for Quitman-Brooks County (Georgia), and director of economic development for the Brazos Valley Development Council (Texas).



Ballard

Ballard is active in several community and professional organizations. She serves on the South Georgia Workforce Investment Board, the Valdosta Early College Academy Board, is a director and president designee of the Valdosta Rotary Club, former president of the Civic Roundtable, and former member of the Valdosta Technical College Board of Directors.

One of Ballard's biggest accomplishments was the Chamber's 20 year reaccreditation with the US Chamber of Commerce in 2008. The Chamber was also certified as one of 44 5-star chambers in the United States.

GACCE exists to provide exceptional services to Chambers of Commerce across Georgia in the areas of professional development, information, and networking opportunities, and to advocate the local Chamber's role in economic and community development. The focus of GACCE is to assist chamber executives and their staffs in becoming more effective in leading their local communities while serving their membership as well.

Lowndes County employee Duncan receives state recognition

Lowndes County announces that on July 14, 2011, Lowndes County Public Works employee, April Duncan, was awarded "2011 Employee of the Year" for the State of Georgia, by the American Public Works Association (APWA). Duncan nominated for the award by Lowndes County Public Works Director, Robin English.