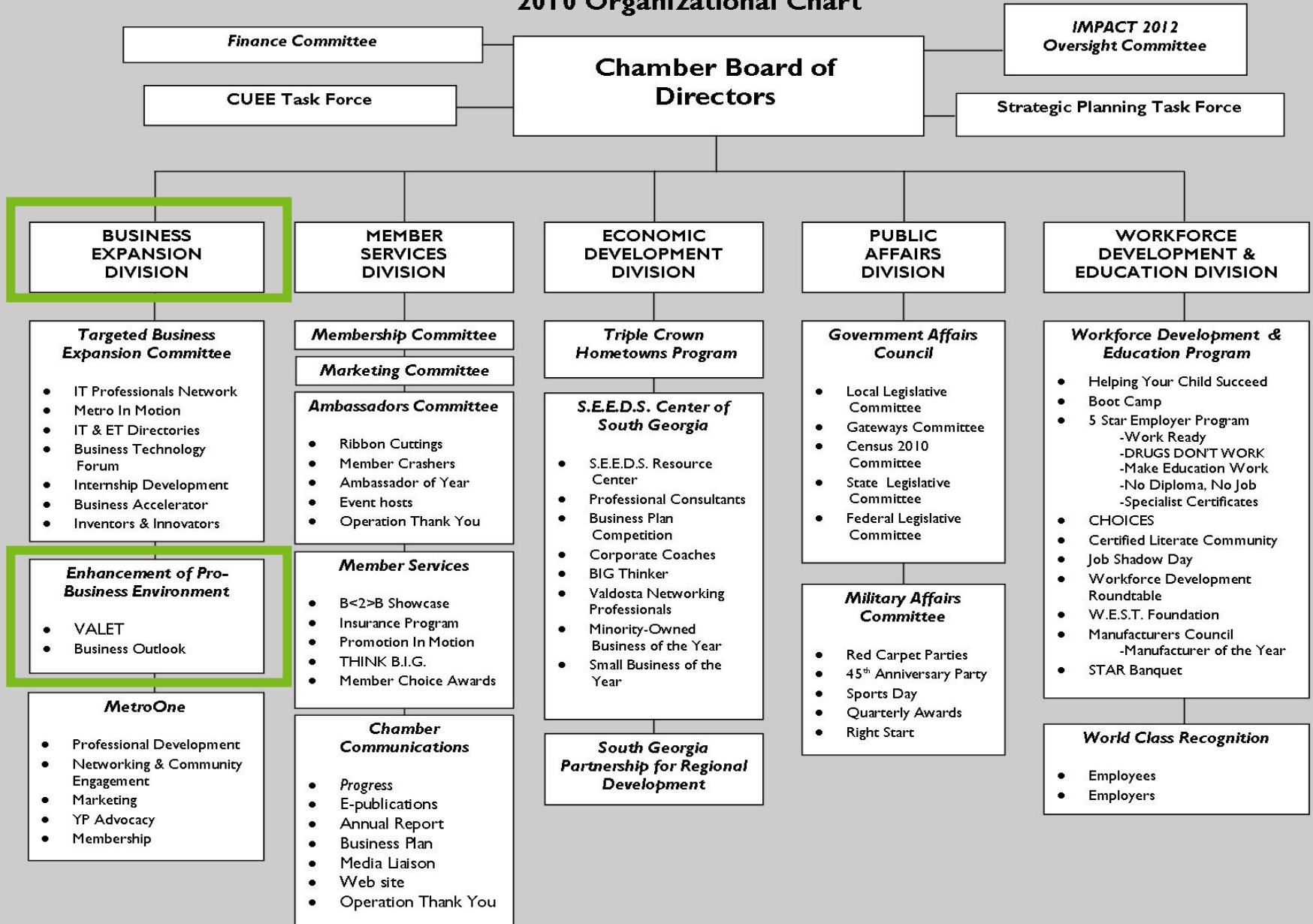


Business Expansion Division



Enhancement of a Pro-Business Environment

Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce 2010 Organizational Chart



Business Expansion Division

BUSINESS EXPANSION DIVISION

Targeted Business Expansion Committee

- IT Professionals Network
- Metro In Motion
- IT & ET Directories
- Business Technology Forum
- Internship Development
- Business Accelerator
- Inventors & Innovators

Enhancement of Pro- Business Environment

- VALET
- Business Outlook

Business Outlook Breakfast

- **2005 - Pancakes & Portfolios Breakfast**

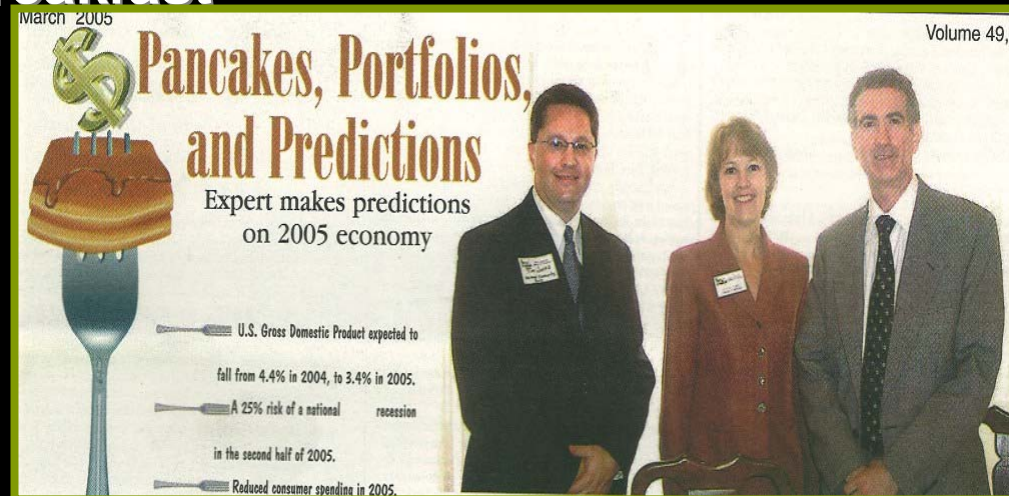
- UGA expert economist, Jeff Humphreys, Director of the Selig Center for Economic Growth
- Provided an economic forecast for the state and national economy

- **2006 – Economic Outlook Breakfast**

- Jeff Humphreys returns

- **2007- Economic Outlook Breakfast**

- Sponsored by Ameris Bank



Business Outlook Breakfast



- Sponsored by Ameris Bank
- Host regular opportunities for **business leaders and executives** to discuss business issues and initiatives
- Provide expert educational events alerting businesses about economic trends allowing them to make informed decisions

Business Outlook Breakfast

B.O.B

- **2008 – Ameris Bank Business Outlook Breakfast**
 - Dr. Cynthia Tori, Associate Professor
 - Local and regional economic forecast
- **2009-2010 – Ameris Bank Business Outlook Breakfast**
 - Dr. Cliff Lipscomb, Director, The Center for Business and Economic Research
 - Local land use and housing market trends



Enhancement of a Pro-Business Environment

• Valdosta And Lowndes Expansion Team

- “No Wrong Door” Services
- “No Wrong Door” Resource Guide
- Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT)

(VALET)

What does VALET stand for?

Valdosta

And

Lowndes

Expansion

Team

AT YOUR SERVICE

VALET Then

- **1998 – Realtor Scott Alderman, Chairman of the Existing Industry Committee**

Mission

The Valdosta and Lowndes Expansion Team is the Chamber's means of assisting local industries considering an expansion of employees and/or facilities.

VALET Then

- **1999 Governor's Service to Existing Industries Award winner**



VALET Then

- **1998-2003- Expansion assistance**

 - Regal Marine

 - Maax Southeast

 - US Press

- **2003 – Major changes in manufacturing**

 - Fewer expansions

 - Industrial Authority

Members

City and County Managers

Georgia Department of Labor

Industrial Authority Director

Georgia Tech Industrial Research Engineer

Georgia Department of Economic Development

Regional Development Center

Valdosta Tech & Valdosta State University training experts

IMPACT 2012 Goal

- Advocate for Pro-Business permitting regulations and practices.
- Formalize a Valdosta-Lowndes County Rapid Response Team to respond to business and industry needs.



VALET renewed

•2008- Jodi Doss, Chairman

- ✓ Build relationships
- ✓ Create pro-business practices
- ✓ Advocate for **ALL** business sectors
- ✓ Create a “No Wrong Door” atmosphere



The Team

Monica Page – Small Business Development Center

Michelle Shaw - GA Department of Economic Development

Rich McDonell - Georgia Power Company

Tara Nichols – Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber Vice President

Rebecca Shirley -Valdosta Main Street Director

Emily Newkirk - Hahira Downtown Development Director

Ruby Riesinger – Valdosta Economic Development Office

Jason Davenport –Lowndes County Planning and Zoning

Matt Martin –City of Valdosta Planning and Zoning

Gary LeBranch – South Ga. Regional Library

Vickie Hughes - Valdosta-Lowndes Industrial Authority

Jessica Freeman – City of Remerton



The Team, cont.

Rhonda Barnes - Lowndes County

Richard Welch – Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Angela Crance –Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

Richard Ramsey - Georgia Department of Labor

Scott Purvis -Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Art Ford - Region Representative, Georgia Tech

Dixie Lightfoot - Georgia/Colquitt EMC

Michelle Mullins – Lake Park Area Chamber of Commerce

Anne Peterson –City of Lake Park

Mark Wisenbaker – REMAX realty

Tim Mabe–Conference Center & Tourism Authority



VALET Now

Mission:

To foster and assist business development in Lowndes County, by bringing together all professionals and organizations who provide direct service to businesses, industries, and entrepreneurs in order to provide resources that will create successful businesses.

Continue to enhance the pro-business environment of our community through the Valdosta–Lowndes County "rapid response team" to respond to business and industry needs.



Understanding local business concerns

- ✓ Met with local government departments
- ✓ Met with business owners
- ✓ Surveyed businesses
- ✓ Rallied the partners

300+ businesses surveyed

38 responded

75% rated the service of departments fair or better



Survey Results-Business Owner

- Miscommunication between business owner and officials
- Lack of details regarding entire planning process
- Lack of communication from Cities' and County departments
- Perceived lack of understand of codes and regulations
- Perceived lack of assistance from Cities' and County planning and inspections departments
- Interpretation variances of codes by inspectors
- Delayed responses for Cities' and County departments



Meeting results – City of Valdosta and Lowndes County Planning and Zoning Departments

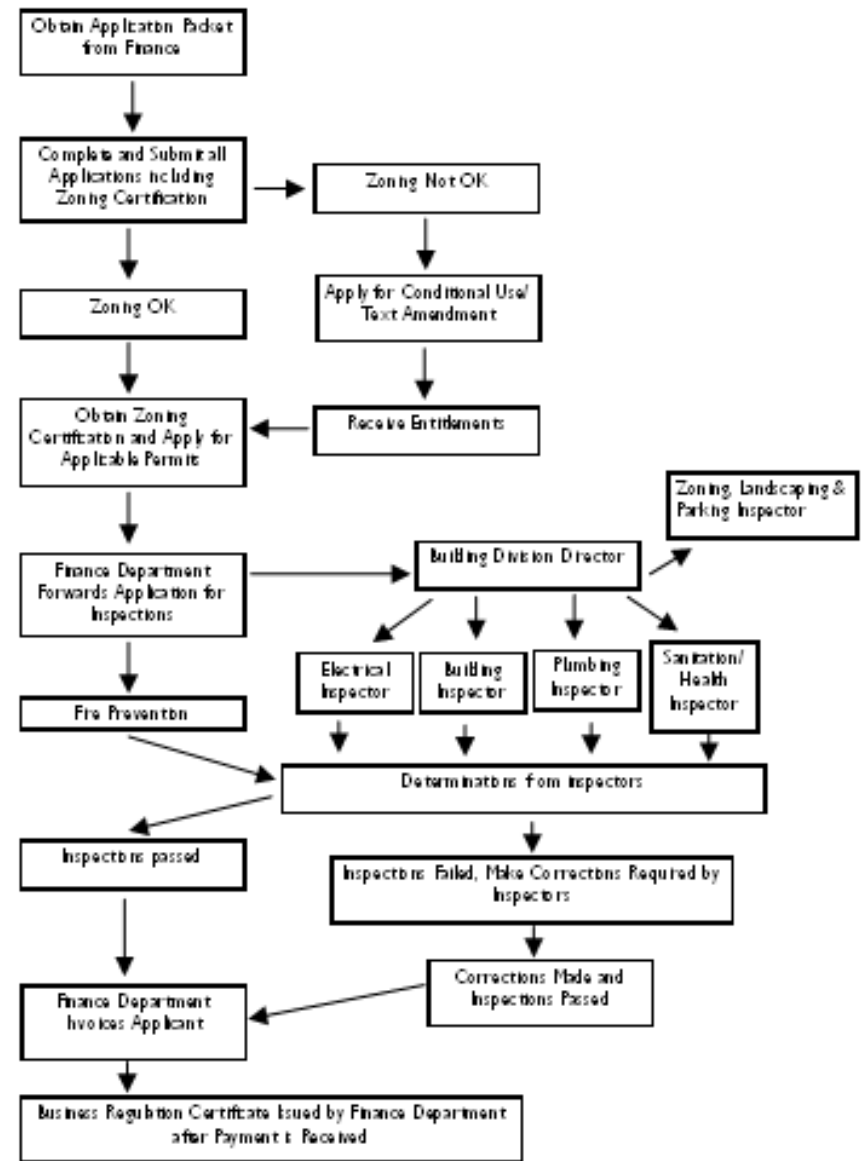
- Lack of details regarding building use
- Lack of communication from the business owner
- Underuse of available resources
- Business owner scared or intimidated by process
- Businesses proceed before knowing details
- Misinterpretation of business owners' needs



Why “No Wrong Door”

- Identify issues, develop plans and implement strategies to create a **“No Wrong Door” philosophy** when assisting with the needs of the local business community.

Planning, zoning, inspections & occupancy process



Planning, zoning, inspections & occupancy departments

- Lowndes County
- City of Valdosta
- Cities of Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, Dasher

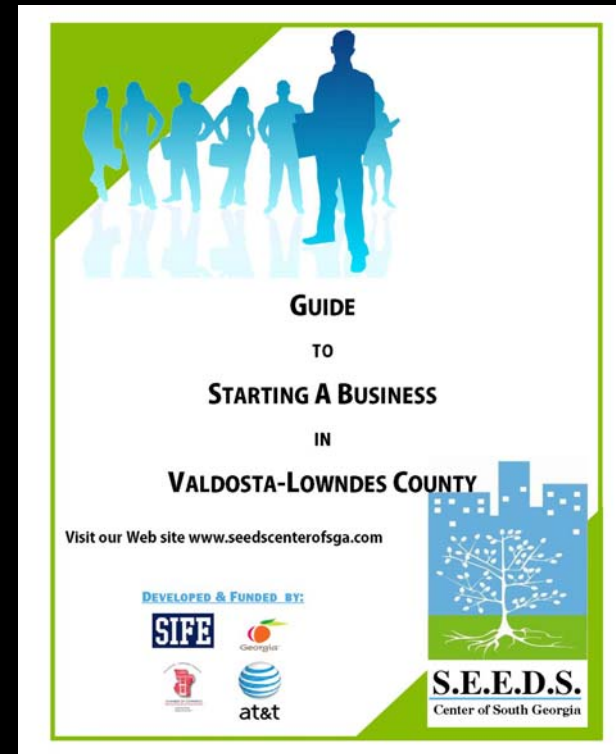
= 18 + possible steps

VALET Now

• *What it takes to open a business*

- Business Plan development
- Financing
- Legal Structure
- **Location - Considerations**
 - **Building or renovation cost**
 - **Where is my target market**
 - **Number of patrons**
 - **Space requirements**
 - **Parking**
 - **Signage and more...**

- Financing
- Inventory
- Set-up
- Marketing



Case study

- **S.E.E.D.S. Center client**
 - Expanding durable medical equipment business from Tallahassee, FL
 - Contacted local commercial Realtor for available property – (area near hospital)
 - Visited the S.E.E.D.S. Center for information
 - VALET consultation
 - Interception of zoning complications

Case study

- VALET assistance provided
 - VALOR search for land plot information
 - Call made to the City zoning
 - www.valdostacity.com
 - Land Development Regulations – Title 2 - Chapter 218- (82 pages) for definition of zoning code
 - Meeting with City Zoning office

When issues cause delay

- Additional cost incurred due to changes - reduces operating capital or cash reserves
- Lost revenue/sales
- Lost production
- Inventory ages
- Customers become weary



VALET Now

- 2009 – Creating a “No Wrong Door” atmosphere
 - FAQ
 - Process road map
 - Fact sheet – must have’s
 - Physical location planning questionnaire
 - Educate business community about local resources



Available Resources

- Search for available property www.industrialauthority.com (live links)
- Commercial Realtors list - Chamber www.valdostachamber.com
- Property information locator www.valorgis.com
- City of Valdosta Land Development Regulations
 - First Step meeting
 - Pre-Applications meeting
- Lowndes County Unified Land Development Code
 - Technical Review Committee

2010 VALET Goals

Sue Cox – Chairman

1. Strengthen the relationships among VALET members in order to effectively work together to identify issues, develop plans and implement strategies to create a **“No Wrong Door” philosophy** when assisting with the needs of the local business community.

Meeting

- **March 17- 2010 Goals, organization updates and internal promotions**
- **June 8 – Organization updates and community promotions**



2010 VALET Goals

2. Establish a marketing strategy to best deliver availability of VALET's "response team" services to businesses in the community through:

- **The S.E.E.D.S. Center Web site and SPROUTS newsletter**
- **Valdosta-Lowndes public agency newsletters**
- **Small Business Development Center**
- **Distribute and deliver presentations regarding educational materials and resources to various community organizations**

2010 VALET Goals

VALET Resources materials are available:

- The S.E.E.D.S. Center Web site
- The Chamber of Commerce Web site

VALET Resources materials will be added to:

- SBDC Starting Your Own Business class presentation
- Department of Labor-Veterans presentation
- VTC-Entrepreneurship class presentation

VALET Resources materials will be presented to:

- Home Builders Association
- Board of Realtors
- Association of General Contractors

2010 VALET Goals

3. Appoint a “response team” that will assist in the resolution of dispute of issues causing delay with the planning, zoning, inspections and occupation process of starting or expanding business or industry in Valdosta or Lowndes County.



3. Special Ombudsmen Response Team

(SORT)

Proposed Mission

To act as an ombudsman between business owners and local governments to enhance the pro-business environment of Valdosta-Lowndes County.



Special Ombudsmen Response Team

Proposed Goals:

Establish a standard procedure for sorting out issues inhibiting the start-up or expansion of a business or industry.

Facilitate communication among local governments and the business community.

Propose improvements to the planning, zoning, inspections and occupancy approval process of the local governments.

Propose improvements to codes and regulations to local governments when deemed appropriate.



SORT – Proposed members

- **Sue Cox**, Covington's Dinning and Catering
- **Al Turner**, William A. Turner, Jr., Attorney
- **Richard Hill**, Richard Hill & Associates
- **Clinton Beeland**, CJB Industries Inc.
- **Allan Dear**, Allan Dear Real Estate

2010 VALET Goals

4. **Develop a standard evaluation tool for measuring effectiveness of local business resources to be used by all organizations.**



Talking Points

- **What role should local/state government play in creating a pro-business environment?**

Talking Points

- If you had to name one thing that would improve our local business environment, what would it be?

