

BUSINESS BRIEF



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Seated Left to Right: Jay Prince (Prince Automotive of Valdosta, Inc.), Terri Lupo (Georgia Power Company), Myrna Ballard (Chamber President), Megan Smith (SmithBarnas & Associates, Inc.), Tim Jones, Chairman of the Board (Citizens Community Bank), Tom Carroll (Sunset Farm Foods, Inc.), Baha Zeidan (Azalea Health Innovations, Inc.), Jeff Fulp (Erco Worldwide, Inc.), Greg Reid (Edward Jones Investments), Carl Holley (Fowler, Holley, Rambo & Stalvey, PC), Bill Simmons (Archer Daniels Midland Co.) and Mike Hill (Mike Hill Real Estate). Not pictured: Clinton Beeland (CJB Industries, Inc.) and Tom Gooding (Elliott, Blackburn & Gooding, P.C.)

Chamber approves ambitious plans for 2012 at their 100th annual planning meeting

The Chamber Board of Directors, committee chairmen and Chamber staff spent half a day at Country Inn & Suites for their 100th Annual Planning Meeting on Jan. 24.

Chamber leaders summarized progress in 2011, and laid out an ambitious plan for the Chamber seven work Divisions in 2012. Among the "Top 20" highlights of 2011 were:

1. 558 clients assisted in the SEEDS Business Resource Center
2. \$10,000 grant from Georgia Power Foundation for business incubator study
3. 11 new retiree households
4. CHOICES workshop to 729 8th graders
5. Supervisor Essentials Workshops for 107 supervisors
6. 209 parents reached through "Helping Your Child Succeed"

7. DRUGS DON'T WORK membership increased to 269
8. DDW saved employers \$250,000 in Workers Comp premiums
9. Exceeded membership recruitment goal by 29% (202 new members)
10. Reduced write-offs by 11%
11. 88 Ribbon Cuttings and 5 Groundbreakings
12. 4 Business After Hours
13. 370 members have Traffic Catcher Websites
14. Annual Washington, DC Fly-In
15. Annual Economic Summit
16. Annual Business Outlook Breakfast
17. 500+ MetroOne young professionals
18. \$15,000 awarded in the Guardian Bank Business Plan Competition
19. \$6,000 awarded in the World Class Employee Recognition Program

20. 350 in attendance for Chamber Choice Awards
- 2012 Chairman of the Board Tim Jones, president of Citizens Community Bank, reminded Board members that the Chamber membership is largely small businesses.
- At the top of Jones' to-do list for 2012 is ensure the Chamber's Accreditation by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce at the 5-Star level. Also on the 2012 Business Plan is completion of a feasibility study for a small business incubator, as well completing a number of other important initiatives in the IMPACT 2012 Business Action Plan.
- The Chamber plans to plant 100 trees in our community's gateways during the course of 2012.
- Details of the 2012 Business Plan may be viewed on the Chamber website, www.valdostachamber.com.