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Growing opportunities for graduates

VALDOSTA, Ga.—Each year around August, students enter Valdosta-Lowndes County through the doors of our local colleges and the university. Many hail from the Metro Atlanta area, others from surrounding communities and some from other states and foreign countries, so full of talent and ideas they are practically bursting at the seams. They come here intending to spend a few years getting their degrees and certifications, but in the process of pursuing their education, fall in love with our community. The vibrant downtown area, the numerous recreational opportunities and desirable climate entice them to stay, but they find that there are more graduates and highly-qualified applicants than there are jobs available.

The Chamber recognizes the importance of retaining this talent and has developed an initiative to address this trend. The highly-educated are a proven economic driver. Increasing the amount of jobs available in the knowledge-based sectors— jobs for college and university graduates—will increase the quality of life for all Metro Valdosta residents. If Metro Valdosta is positioned as the center of opportunity for businesses to grow and thrive, with opportunities for young professionals and opportunities for cultural interests and active lifestyles, it will retain more graduates.

The Chamber is working to position Metro Valdosta as “Opportunity Central,” the Chamber’s smart community initiative that focuses on three main areas: facilitating the growth of jobs, connecting the business community to talent in our local colleges and university and cultivating a community where the highly-educated want to live.

Everyone can be involved in the Opportunity Central efforts and not only reap the benefits of its results, but also help keep Metro Valdosta moving forward. Businesses, young professionals, entrepreneurs, college and university students, community leaders and interested citizens should all visit www.OpportunityCentral.net to take advantage of the resources available. The community can also join the Opportunity Central mailing list and subscribe to the Opportunity Central blog by visiting the website.

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