

# Ga. Secretary of State in town

## Kemp talks about proposal to shorten early voting period

**BY KARA RAMOS**  
THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

VALDOSTA — Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp visited Valdosta Thursday to discuss election procedures, small businesses and other issues facing the state.

While visiting the Lowndes County Board of Elections, Kemp provided information on a bill being looked into which would reduce early voting days to “help reduce costs” during elections.

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**Brian Kemp**  
Georgia Secretary of State

Currently, early voting begins 45 days prior to election day, he said. However, not many people are voting early.

“We’re not changing our commitment to getting military and overseas ballots out ...” Kemp said.

Kemp is also working on creating an elections advisory council, which will include town hall meetings to get community feedback and looking into state elections.

“We want everybody to participate,” he said. “If anybody’s got a good idea, big or small, we want to hear it.”

Following his visit to the Lowndes County Board of Elections, Kemp met with members of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce at the Valdosta City Hall Annex to discuss his plans and ideas for helping the small business community.

Handling 200 different types of business licenses, Kemp said, “We deal with a lot of working people getting licenses and (having) boards regulate them.”

He feels the state needs to be “all hands-on with job growth” and review regulations facing small business owners.

In order to help poten-



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**Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp talks about the upcoming elections during his visit to the Lowndes County Board of Elections Thursday afternoon.**

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# **KEMP:** Heading to Adel, Tifton today

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future small business owners can go to receive all the information they need to open a new business.

"The real strength of our economy is small business," Tom Gooding, Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce chairman, said. "... (The chamber) works really hard to support small business."

During both meetings Thursday, Kemp also touched on his office's budget, stating how it has decreased \$3 million, going from \$25 million to \$22 million. In order to cut costs, he said his office has become more efficient by consolidating and becoming more technologically friendly.

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## **ON THE WEB**

[www.kempmeansbusiness.com](http://www.kempmeansbusiness.com)  
[www.sos.ga.gov](http://www.sos.ga.gov)

"It's going to be a real tough year this year, but we've got to buckle down," he said. "We'll be leaner and meaner when we come out of it."

Today, Kemp will spend time in Adel and Tifton, continuing his talks with South Georgia's citizens before heading back to Atlanta.

"There's just so many great towns around the state that have a lot to offer," he said. "... I just think it's important for us to get out and talk to people and learn what's going on."

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