

Retiree Attraction



2008 Goal: Attract 80 amenity-seeking retiree households to the area

The Triple Crown Hometowns Program has recruited 7 retiree households to the Lowndes County area since January. In the February edition of *Georgia Trend* magazine Valdosta was sited along with only three other communities in Georgia as a great place to retire. Triple Crown Hometowns has been chosen as one of the "Top Small Towns to Operate a Business and Retire" by Southern Business and Retirement Magazine. Plans for International advertising are underway as Triple Crown Hometowns teamed up with V.S.U., South Georgia Medical Center, The Industrial Authority, The City of Valdosta, and Lowndes County to promote South Georgia via Television Advertising on the Golf Channel during the South Georgia Classic, PGA TOUR'S Nationwide Tour at Kinderlou Forest.



IMPACT ACTION Spring 2008

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this issue

- Workforce Development & Education
- Retiree Attraction
- Expansion of Targeted Businesses
- Entrepreneurial and Small Business Development

Spring 2008



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

2008 Goal: To improve the management skills of 100 employees.

Boot Camp for First Time Supervisors was held on March 7th at the Georgia Department of Labor. There was a record number of 36 participants. Our first Boot Camp for Experienced Supervisors will be held May 20th.

"As business owners, we invest in hardware, machines and tangibles but often fail to invest in our greatest and typically most expensive asset - our people. Through programs like Boot Camp, the Chamber provides businesses with tools to be better employers which equates into a stronger local economy, a stronger community."

Anne Barnas, SmithBarnas & Associates

2008 Goal: An independent study will be conducted to determine the impact of school system organization on economic development and quality job growth with appropriate action taken once the study is completed.

The following people have agreed to serve on the Task Force to Study the Impact of School System Organization on Economic Development in Our Community: Rusty Griffin, Chairman, Minister Leroy Butler, Carolyn Eager, Roy Copeland, Rev. John Manning, Joe Cordova, Walter Hobgood and J.C. Riley.

The Chamber has contracted with the Carl Vinson Institute and Fanning Institute of the University of Georgia to conduct the study. Completion is anticipated by the end of summer 2008. The Task Force will make their recommendation to the Chamber Board of Directors, which will take appropriate action at that time.



"It is not our mission to make a decision, render an opinion or influence the citizenry with respect to issues involving the structure of our local school systems. Our mission is to facilitate a study to determine the impact of school system organization on economic development. To this end, our operations will be transparent, our approach balanced and our members will be accessible to the public."

School System Study Task Force



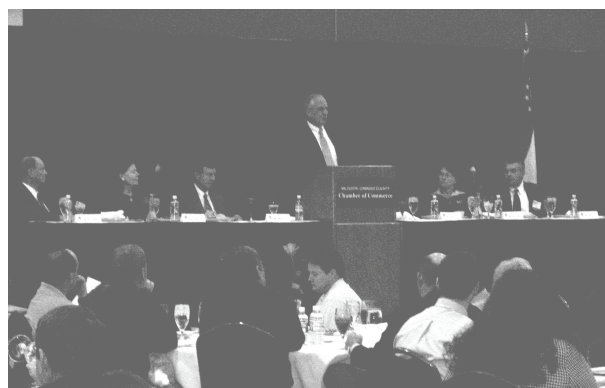
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Honor Roll of Investors

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- American Classifieds
- Ameris Bank
- ASA Engineering & Surveying, Inc.
- Astro Exterminating Services AT&T
- Atlantic Southern Bank
- Chet & Myrna Ballard (P)
- Bank of Valdosta
- Barnes Drug Stores of Valdosta BB&T
- Bemiss Citizens Bank
- Black Crow Media
- Blanton and Griffin Insurance
- Brandon, Rackley & Dukes, P.C.
- James Bridges (P)
- Bush Investment Group, LLC
- Carson McLane Funeral Home
- Cauthan Construction Company
- Citizens Community Bank
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- City of Lake Park
- City of Remerton
- City of Valdosta
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- Coldwell Banker Premier Real Estate
- Coleman Talley LLP
- Colony Bank
- Colquitt EMC
- Colson Printing Company
- Coombs Heating & Air Conditioning
- Covington's Dining & Catering / 306 North
- Cowart Electric and Industrial Contractors
- Culbreth, Minick & Associates, PC
- Cypress Lakes Development / Teamtemps Personnel Staffing



Expansion of Targeted Business

2008 Goal: To facilitate the creation of 200 new jobs for college and university graduates in Information Technology, Environmental Technology, and Medical Services and Support.

The Environmental Technology Showcase was held on Feb. 20 with Dr. Carol Couch, Director of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, as the keynote speaker. There was an impressive 105 people in attendance. The goal of the event was to provide local environmental technology service providers an opportunity to showcase their services to potential clients. Environmental technology is one of the growth industries identified in IMPACT 2012 as a targeted business.



Chris Miller, Creative Cities Consulting (Savannah), is working with the Chamber to identify implementation strategies to achieve IMPACT 2012 goals for targeted business expansion. Miller toured Valdosta and met with business owners in the targeted clusters to help identify priority opportunities. "This community has opportunities to leverage their existing knowledge-based economic and cultural assets to retain a higher proportion of the college graduate population," said Miller. "It's clear to me that Valdosta-Lowndes County is a bright star in Georgia for young professionals....we just need to make certain the rest of the world knows that!"

"WHAT'S NEXT?"

In the Summer issue of *IMPACT Action*:

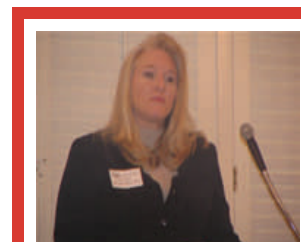
- **VALET** (Valdosta And Lowndes Expansion Team) makes plans to survey new businesses: How can our community be even more pro-business?
- **School System Task Force** presents a progress report on their study
- **S.E.E.D.S. Center** announces winner of Guardian Bank Business Plan Competition
- **Creative Cities Consulting** identifies top implementation strategies for targeted business expansion
- **MetroOne** Web site goes "live"



Entrepreneurial and Small Business Development

2008 Goal: To serve 500 clients in the S.E.E.D.S. Center (Sowing Entrepreneur and Economic Development Success).

- The S.E.E.D.S. Center served 127 clients during the first quarter.
- The Ameris Bank Business Outlook 2008 breakfast took place on Feb. 7 with 102 business leaders in attendance. Dr. Jeffery Humphreys of the University of Georgia, Dr. Cynthia R. Tori, and Dr. Cliff Lipscomb of Valdosta State University shared projections regarding the economic climate of the U.S. Georgia, and Valdosta-Lowndes County, including an outlook for the local housing market.
- The new S.E.E.D.S. Center Web site received more than 6,000 hits in the first quarter of operation!



"Business community support for IMPACT 2012 that focuses on expanding and building business, and attracting amenity-seeking retirees will help the greater Valdosta area avoid the recession effects that are likely to impact the rest of the country."

Dr. Cynthia Tori,
Associate Professor of
Economics Valdosta



- Mediacom/Comcast Spotlight will sponsor Entrepreneurs In Action, an entrepreneur resource fair, in April. Educational workshops and vendors will be on hand to provide assistance in marketing, human resources, small business technology, and more. This year's event features special guest speaker **Jeff Hoffman**, a nationally known serial-entrepreneur who co-founded the premier online travel service, PriceLine.com. Jeff currently serves as the CEO of uBid.com, one the world's leading online auction sites.