

VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Leading Businesses.
Leading Communities.™

Mid-Year Progress Report **2009**

James H. Rainwater Conference Center
One Meeting Place
Thursday, July 16, 2009
11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITED®



Operations & Administration

Mid-Year Highlights

Jeff Hanson, Chairman of the Board

Finance Committee – Paul Nichols (Nexstep Technology), Chairman

- Monitored budget bi-monthly

Chamber Activity

- 2,981 member referrals have been made (2,674 last year)

Web Site Activity

- Averaged 125,494 hits/month (146,785 last year)
- Tracked search engine location monthly

IMPACT 2012 Oversight Committee – Bill DeCoudres (Guardian Bank), Chairman

- Celebrated 95% collection rate for first year of operation
- Met to review progress with initiatives and to ensure that funds are being utilized appropriately
- Hosted semi-annual Shareholders Lunch

Workforce Development &

Education Division

Mid-Year Highlights Greg Justice, Vice Chairman

Business/Education Support Team - David Newbern (U.S. Press), Chairman

- Recruited and trained 15 new CHOICES volunteers and presented the workshop to 1,202 8th graders
- Organized Job Shadow Day for 97 Lowndes High School students and recruited 25 businesses to host them
- Coordinated and hosted the STAR Banquet for Region 10

Workforce Development Committee - Greg Justice (Regal Marine), Chairman

- 151 parents experienced 'Helping Your Child Succeed' (74 last year)
- 49 participants attended the Boot Camp for Supervisors (2009 goal is 100)
- Hosted industry specific meetings to recruit businesses to use Work Ready

World Class Recognition Program - Sherry Zipperer (First State Bank & Trust Company), Chairman

- Expanded the World Class Recognition Program to include employers
- Received a record 29 nominations for World Class Employees

MetroOne - Erika Biddix (MAC Meetings & Events) and Emily Browning (Fowler, Holley, Rambo & Stalvey), Co-Chairmen

- Coordinated and hosted the following professional development opportunities:
 - ⇒ **Walter Hobgood** (Express Employment Professionals): *"Resolutions for Your Career"*
 - ⇒ **Susie Ellington** (Elli's Boutique): *"How to Open a Business in Downtown Valdosta"*
 - ⇒ **Marsha Webb** (Ameris Bank): *"Pre-qualifying or Refinancing in the Current Economic Climate"*
 - ⇒ **Curtis Fowler** (Fowler, Holley, Rambo & Stalvey): *"360° of Financial Success"*
 - ⇒ **Brad Lofton** (Valdosta-Lowndes Co. Industrial Authority): *"How Valdosta has Remained Recession Resistant"*
 - ⇒ **Trey Taylor** (Taylor Insurance): *"Linked: How Everything is Connected and Why You Care"*
- Launched the Metro Valdosta Emerging Leaders recognition program

Member Service Division

Mid-Year Highlights David Newbern, Vice Chairman

Membership Development

- 103 new members have joined the Chamber in 2009 (121 last year)
- Chamber has a 91% retention rate (94% last year); industry average is 80%
- Total membership is 1,505 (Goal for 2009 is 1,560)

Member Services

- Named Antoine's The Flavor of New Orleans 2009 Minority-Owned Business of the Year with Lucy Holifield (Minority Business Development at UGA) as keynote speaker
- Named Ellis, Ricket & Associates 2009 Small Business of the Year with Terri L. Denison (U.S. Small Business Administration) as the keynote speaker
- Distributed 5,500 copies of two quarterly issues of *Progress* magazine

Marketing Committee – Phyllis Royal (Full Circle Marketing & Advertising), Chairman

- Chamber programs and volunteers have been featured on 5 billboards, 7 television interviews, 30 radio appearances, and 32 print articles

Ambassadors Committee – Jerry Kozuch (South Georgia Vein Center), Chairman

- Coordinated 43 ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings
- Coordinated 6 Business After Hours and 2 Early Bird Breakfasts
- Organized 5 “Member Crashers” and visited 30 Chamber members
- Increased number of Ambassadors to 32 (22 last year), who represented the Chamber at all events, totaling more than 300 hours of service

DRUGS DON'T WORK In South GA Program – Katinka Kelly (American Drill Bushing), Chairman

- Greenleaf Center breakfast with 60 in attendance (65 last year)
- 264 members (264 last year)
- 324 hours of training for supervisors and employees

Existing Industry Committee – Marcie Dennard (The Park Avenue Bank), Chairman

- Revised Business Retention and Expansion Survey for electronic distribution

Economic Development Division

Mid-Year Highlights Tom Gooding, Vice Chairman

Triple Crown Hometowns Program

- Relocated 23 (19 in 2008) retiree households for a total of 278
- Web site, www.georgiaretire.com had over 74,800 hits (55,000 in 2008)
- Developed 3,500 retiree prospect leads from 47 states and 3 countries
- National advertising on the Golf Channel during the South Georgia Classic
- Named “Top 100 towns in U.S.A. to live” by Relocate-America.com
- Featured in *Forever Young*, a Canadian 50+ publication

S.E.E.D.S. Center of South Georgia

- Served 192 clients (324 last year)
- 11 businesses established using S.E.E.D.S. Center assistance (9 last year)
- 72 “ABCs of How to Start a Business” distributed (169 last year)
- Added “Tools for Business” Web site portal to S.E.E.D.S. Web site
- Coordinated 5th Annual Entrepreneurs In Action Resource Fair
- Named SEGA Medical Research the winner of the Guardian Bank Business Plan Competition

Professional Consultants Program – Greg Reid (Edward Jones Investments), Chairman

- Added 4 new Consultants (2009 goal is 12)
- Provided 32 hours of consultations (46 last year; 2009 goal is 80 hours)

Small Business Owners Network – Ann Barnas (Smith Barnas & Assoc.), Chairman

- Hosted 3 speaker sessions and 3 roundtable discussions
- Monthly meeting open to all Chamber small business members

Leads Group — Greg Reid (Edward Jones Investments), Chairman

- Weekly meetings to share sales leads

South Georgia Partnership for Regional Development

- Hosted Greater Columbus Chamber President Mike Gaymon

Public Affairs Division

Mid-Year Highlights Tim Jones, Vice Chairman

Government Affairs Council – Paula Goff (SMITH Northview Hospital), Chairman

- Hosted State Legislative Briefing in Atlanta
- Successfully championed the following State business development initiatives in the 2009 Legislative Session:
 - ⇒ HB 120 - Renewal of Sales Tax Holiday
 - ⇒ Monitoring work of Regional Water Council
 - ⇒ SB 31- Nuclear Energy Development
- Coordinated meeting in Valdosta with Representative Jack Kingston
- Co-hosted “Stimulus or Stymied Seminar: Employee & Labor Law Legislation”
- Coordinated the 2009 Federal Legislative Overview Lunch with U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson as keynote speaker and U.S. Chamber Labor Law Executive Director, Michael Eastman
- Coordinated meeting in Quitman with Representative Sanford Bishop regarding proposed changes in employment and labor law
- Coordinated the annual Washington, DC trip with 11 members who met with members of Congress, USAF officials at the Pentagon, and U.S. Chamber staff
- Distributed 9 “Legislative Alerts” and 7 “Legislative Updates”
- Developed the Chamber’s first formal Local Legislative Agenda

Military Affairs Committee – Brian Geary (Ace Electric), Chairman

- Hosted two Red Carpet Parties to welcome Moody’s leadership to our Community.
- Participated in 12 Right Start Programs for all newcomers to MAFB

Business Expansion Division

Mid-Year Highlights

Terri Lupo, Vice Chairman

Targeted Business Expansion Committee – Bill DeCoudres (Guardian Bank), Chairman

- Utilized Creative Cities Consulting to calculate baseline employment and wage data for targeted businesses in Lowndes County
- Hosted Chris Miller (Creative Cities Consulting) for third “Metro In Motion Speaker Series”
- Hosted quarterly meetings of the IT Professionals Network
- Continued development of VITAL (Valdosta IT Alliance Lowndes), an IT partnership to promote internships for college/university students
- Hosted 2 workshops for inventors, and created the South Georgia Inventors Network

VALET – Jodi Doss (Jodi’s Accessories), Chairman

- Developed top 10 list of “must haves” when establishing a business
- Developed a top 10 FAQ for licensing, zoning, permitting processes
- Created “Site Selection for Dummies” – a fact sheet regarding proper site selection
- Hosted annual Business Outlook Breakfast with Dr. Jeff Humphries (UGA) as Keynote speaker

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