



State Legislative Agenda 2010

Consider proposed 2010 State Legislative Agenda for Business

1) EDUCATION

The Chamber supports improvement strategies that link education and workforce development in a seamless manner, preparing a student for whatever future they might choose and ensuring the long-term viability of our local economy. The Chamber's goal is to build the best workforce and ensure our companies have the talent they need to stay competitive.

2) ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Alternative Energy & Conservation

The Chamber supports legislation implementing public policies that promote:

- (1) efforts to optimize energy efficiency that will lead to long-term conservation practices,
- (2) conversion to more environmental friendly forms of energy generation, including nuclear and clean coal technologies,
- (3) research and development of alternative energy sources such as bio-fuels, solar power, tidal energy and other renewable fuels produced by agronomic crops and new energy technologies,
- (4) energy and environmental issues that are sensitive to their short-term and long-term economic impact and that utilize proven and effective technology.

HEALTH CARE

3) Trauma Care

The Chamber supports an increase in the number and funding of level one and level two Trauma Care Centers in the State of Georgia, particularly in South Georgia. Further, the Chamber believes the allocation of such funds should be made in accordance with the formula recently established by the Georgia Trauma Care Commission.

TAXES

4) Sales Tax Exemption on Energy Used for Manufacturing

The Chamber supports providing an exemption with respect to State (not local) sales and use tax for the cost of energy (natural or artificial gas, electricity, or any other energy) used directly in the production of manufactured goods.

TAXES

5) Sales Tax Holidays

The Chamber supports providing a sales tax holiday at the beginning of the school year that would exempt sales tax on back-to-school items. The exemption would last at least four days. An additional sales tax holiday would exempt tax on energy efficient products for at least four days in 2010.

HEALTH CARE

6) Civil Justice Reform

The Chamber supports monitoring and protecting the important legal and civil justice reforms that were adopted in 2005.

HEALTH CARE

7) Clinic for the Working Uninsured

The Chamber supports public and private funding options for safety net clinics that provide access to health care for the working uninsured to ensure that present and future needs are met.

HEALTH CARE

8) Wellness Statement

The Chamber supports the creation of insurance products that provide incentives to reward healthy lifestyles.

9) TRANSPORTATION

The Chamber supports the development of a thoughtful strategy that will provide the needed funding to address transportation funding needs at both the state and local level. The funding solution strategy should provide increased, dedicated, and reliable long-term funding for transportation maintenance and improvements. The Chamber will continue to actively promote top priority projects identified in the City of Valdosta's Transportation Master Plan, as well as our long-standing support for the widening of State Road 133. The Chamber also supports repealing the pickup truck exemption regarding the use of safety belt.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

10) Monitor Water Council

The Chamber supports the Suwannee – Satilla Regional Water Council's vision of managing water resources in a sustainable manner under Georgia's regulated riparian and regulated reasonable use laws. Our common goal is to support the State and Region's economy, to protect public health and natural resources and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens while preserving the private property rights of Georgia's landowners and in consideration of the need to enhance resource augmentation and efficiency opportunities. The Chamber will monitor the progress of the Suwannee – Satilla Regional Water Council and the Regional Advisory Committees with the goal of sustainable Agricultural, Industrial and Municipal water use and water quality.

Public Affairs Division Update

Tim Jones

Vice Chairman

Military Affairs Update



**MILITARY AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE**



Brian Geary, Chairman

2009 Overview

Mission Statement:

To continue a long-standing tradition in our community of cultivating and enhancing a positive relationship between the business community and local military personnel.

Sub-Committees:

- 1. Red Carpet
- 2. Right Start
- 3. Airman Appreciation Day
- 4. Airman of the Quarter
- 5. Sports Day Event
- 6. Anniversary Committee

Goals

- Provide a link between military and the Valdosta-Lowndes County business community through the interaction of military personnel and the business community.
- Educate all Moody newcomers about Valdosta-Lowndes County and familiarize them with the business community.
- Encourage participation of the business community to familiarize the Moody personnel and newcomers to the Valdosta-Lowndes County community.

Goals

- Recognize Moody's contribution of over \$333 million to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Community.
- Strengthen relationship with the Moody Support Committee.
- Encourage communication between the military and the Chamber about their concerns that may be related to the Valdosta-Lowndes County business community.

Right Start Program

- We attended 25 Right Start Presentations and Information Fairs so far this year. These are scheduled every other Tuesday at Moody AFB. Being the only Air Force Base in the world to allow the Chamber to help welcome the new incoming Airmen, we are able to provide a presentation highlighting the Valdosta area, and what the community has to offer to enhance the Quality of Life at Moody.
- During the information fair, we provide answers to any questions the new folks have, and hand out the welcome packets the Chamber members pay to be a part of.
- What a win-win situation for Moody and the Community.

Red Carpet Parties

- We have hosted three Red Carpet Parties at Ocean Pond welcoming the New Senior Leadership to the base. In addition, we presented going away gifts to departing Senior Commanders. It is always a fun time for all; all the guests are treated to a traditional southern dinner, and fellowship.
- We have been able to secure sponsors for all three of the parties this year.
- Plans for the 45th Anniversary Party has begun. The date is set for April 10, 2010.

Red Carpet Events @ Ocean Pond





Thank you to Our 2009 Red Carpet Sponsors:

Three Star Sponsors

ADT Security Services, Inc.

Barker Realty & Auction
Company, Inc.

Colonial Bank Mortgage
Division

Colquitt EMC

Eye Associates of South GA,
LLC

First State Bank/Synovus
Mortgage Corp.

Georgia Power Company

Georgia Printco, LLC

J. Randall Hicks, P.C.
Attorney at Law

Kentucky Fried Chicken

Prudential ACS Real Estate

Reliable Courier & Delivery,
Inc.

Smitty's Package Store

South Georgia Medical
Center

Southeastern Federal Credit
Union

Steel's Jewelry

That Others May Live
Foundation

Turners Fine Furniture

Valdosta Daily Times

Valdosta Technical College

Valdosta-Lowndes Co.
Conference Center &
Tourism Authority

Vallorbe, Inc.

WAL-MART Supercenter

Thank you to Our 2009 Red Carpet Sponsors:

One Star Sponsors

*

ActionCOACH

Ace Electric

Ambling Companies

Astro Exterminating

Bemiss Citizens Bank

Citizens Community Bank

Classic Art & Frames Co.

Col. Clarence Parker

Farmers Home Furniture

Greenleaf Center

Guardian Bank

Langdale Vallotton, LLP

Miller Hardware

Moody Law Firm, LLC

Pearl Executive Shuttle

Prudential Financial Company –
Tim Oliver

Quinn Construction Group

SMITH Northview Hospital

The Herndon Company

The LPA Group Incorporated

The Park Avenue Bank

Valdosta Flying Service

Valdosta Lighting Company

Valdosta-Lowndes County
Airport Authority

Valdosta-Lowndes County
Industrial Authority

Wild Adventures Theme Park

Change of Commands

- We have had several changes in the leadership at Moody so far this year. As I always say it is sad to see the old regime leave but it helps us to meet a new group of leaders. Several committee members, attended the Change of Commands to include:
- Two Wing Commanders (23rd Wing and 93d AGOW),
- Two Group Commanders,
- Three Squadron Commanders,
- The activation ceremony for the 476th Fighter Wing (a fighter wing of reservists).

We also had the opportunity to attend the farewell dinners for Colonel Todorov and Chief Master Sergeant Burgess. Chief Burgess passed along his leadership role as Command Chief to Chief Rick Parson as he deployed to Afghanistan.

Change of Command



National Day of Prayer

- It was an honor in March to attend the Day of Prayer Ceremony hosted by the Moody Chapel with the Command Chaplain of the Air Force presiding over the sermon.

Airmen Appreciation Day

- The committee helped to host a day of fun for those Airmen who live on the base in dormitories. We helped to serve food, provided some door prizes, and some goody bags to help make their day as special as possible. It also allowed us the opportunity to acknowledge these young men and women who put their lives on the line everyday to help secure our freedom.

Visiting Dignitaries

- We provided gifts of South GA pecans and a couple of Red Carpet glasses to visiting Generals to Moody. We have coordinated with the base Protocol Office to keep several on hand and let us know when they have someone visit.

Quarterly/Annual Awards

- Several committee members attended the Annual Awards banquet in honor of the Airmen and Civilians at the base who have excelled in their jobs.



Moody Air Force Base Sports Day

■ Friday, October 23, 2009



Conclusion

- An impressive year. I 'm proud of all the committee members who have stepped up to help in any way possible to make this year a huge success.
- If necessary, we will provide the base with any other support they may need and attend any additional ceremonies they might have. Most importantly, we will continue to plan the 45th Anniversary Red Carpet Party to be held April 10 2010. It is a pleasure to serve as the Military Affairs Chairman. I will continue to represent the Chamber through my connections with Moody and the Air Force.

Government Affairs Council

Represent the business community to federal, state and local elected officials, aggressively promoting legislative issues that pertain to business development

BUSINESS2009

**VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Leading Businesses.
Leading Communities.™



Government Affairs Council



What's in it for me?

Historical Review





SPLOST

1997

Area chambers back SPLOST



Hahira Chamber president Willie Linahan (back left), Valdosta Chamber chairman Lena Bosch and Lake Park Chamber president Howard Tessin with Stan Fillion, seated, chairman of the chamber's committee backing the September 16 SPLOST referendum.

Photo/Paul Leavy, The Valdosta Daily Times

“A Penny for Continued Progress”

1999

SPLOST \$\$\$ at Work



Get Ready for the 88th Annual Chamber Dinner Meeting!



Lindsay Thomas, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce will be speaking on January 25 at the Chamber's 88th Annual Dinner Meeting. He has been listed numerous times in Georgia Trend magazine as one of Georgia's 100 Most Powerful and Influential Georgians.



Photo courtesy of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center

Make your plans now to attend the Chamber's 88th Annual Dinner Meeting. This will be the first event held in the beautiful new Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center! Tickets available until January 18 at the Chamber of Commerce. The entire community is invited!



MSA Status! ²⁰⁰⁰

Census 2000: "It's Your Future - Don't Leave It Blank!"

United States Census 2000

This is the official form for all the people in this address. It is printed and sent to all your neighbors who are printed by the government. It is not a survey. It is a census. It is a count of the people in this address. It is not a survey. It is a census. It is a count of the people in this address.

Start Here / Please use a black or blue pen.

1. How many people were living or staying in this home, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2000?

2. How many people were living or staying in this home, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2000?

3. How many people were living or staying in this home, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2000?

4. What is Person 1's telephone number? (Do not include the area code.)

5. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

6. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

7. What is Person 1's date of birth? (Month, day, and year.)

8. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

9. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

10. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

11. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

12. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

13. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

14. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

15. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

16. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

17. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

18. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

19. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

20. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

21. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

22. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

23. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

24. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

25. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

26. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

27. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

28. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

29. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

30. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

31. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

32. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

33. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

34. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

35. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

36. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

37. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

38. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

39. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

40. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

41. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

42. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

43. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

44. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

45. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

46. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

47. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

48. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

49. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

50. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

51. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

52. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

53. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

54. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

55. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

56. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

57. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

58. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

59. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

60. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

61. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

62. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

63. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

64. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

65. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

66. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

67. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

68. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

69. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

70. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

71. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

72. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

73. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

74. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

75. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

76. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

77. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

78. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

79. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

80. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

81. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

82. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

83. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

84. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

85. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

86. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

87. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

88. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

89. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

90. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

91. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

92. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

93. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

94. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

95. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

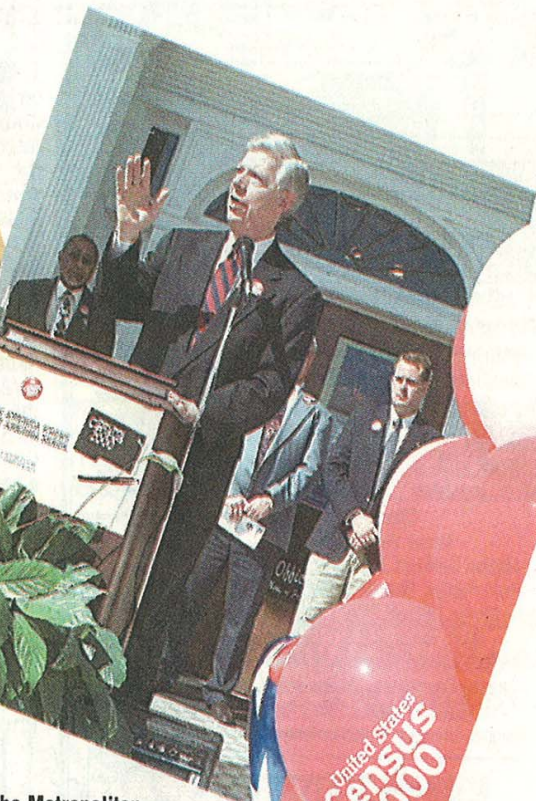
96. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

97. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

98. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)

99. What is Person 1's race? (Mark one.)

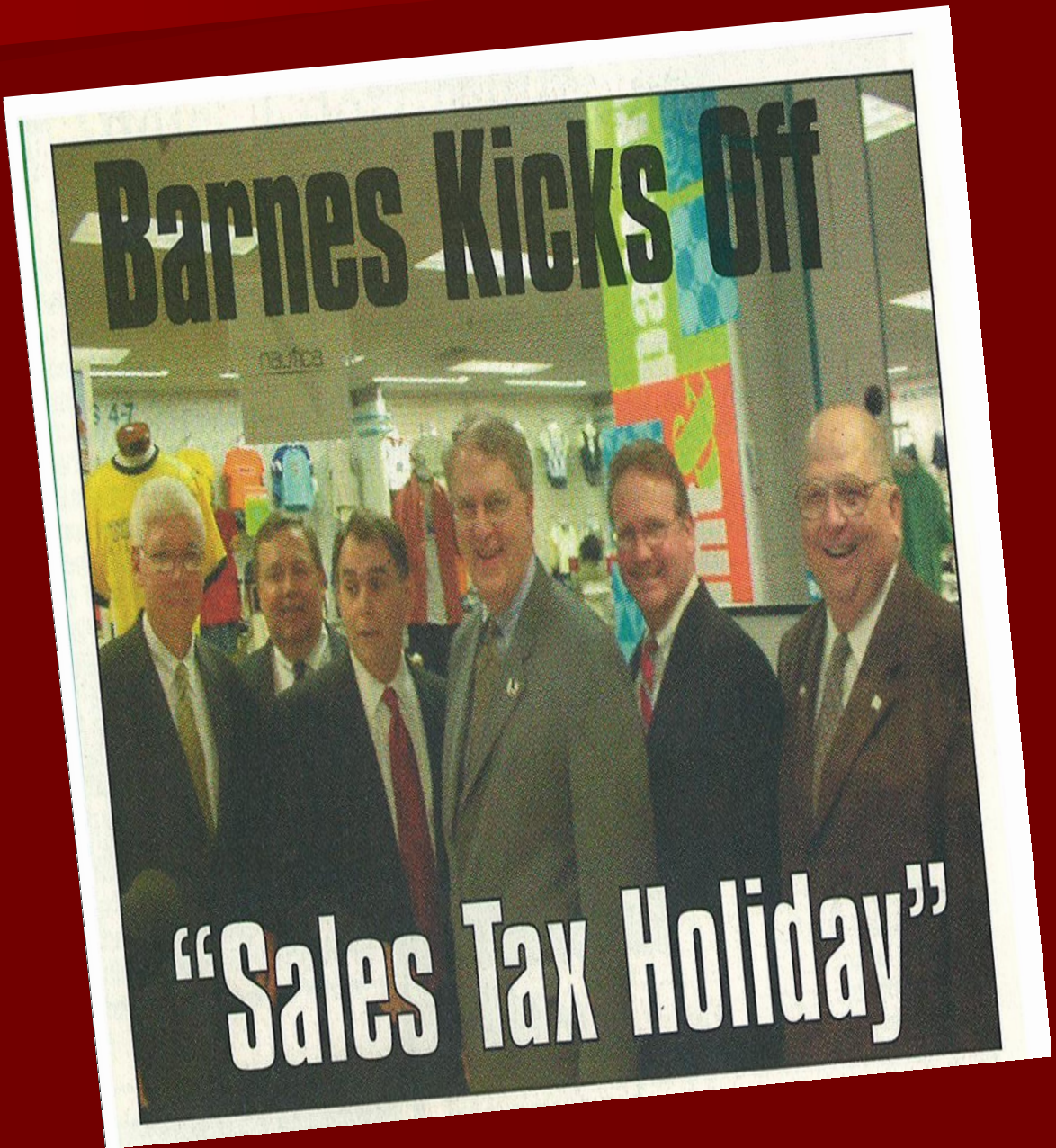
100. What is Person 1's sex? (Mark one.)



John Bowling, chairman of the Metropolitan Area Committee, stresses the safety of the census. "Information collected by the census cannot be shared or sold to anyone, including other government agencies," Bowling said.

Photo courtesy of the Valdosta Daily Times

Sales Tax Holiday ²⁰⁰²





Sales Tax Holiday

August 2004

Volume 48, No. 8

Bubba Campbell recipient of 'Champion of Business Award'

The Chamber presents several awards each year — the A.L. Girardin Award to our 'member of the year', the Small Business of the Year, the Manufacturer of the Year, DRUGS DON'T WORK Partner of the Year, and World Class Employees of the Year. But there's one Chamber award that is NOT presented each year. It's presented ONLY when a Chamber member has impacted the entire business community in an exceptional way.

In fact, the Chamber's 'Champion of Business Award' has only been presented once before. The Chamber created this special award in 2002 to acknowledge and honor the members of our local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly, State Senator **Tim Golden** and State Representatives **Ron Borders**, **Ellis Black**, and **Jay Shaw**, for the pro-business legislation they sponsored on our behalf that year.

"Once again, the Chamber Executive Committee finds that there is an individual whose actions have benefited the entire business community," said Chamber Chairman of the Board **Jud Rackley** (Brandon, Rackley & Dukes, PC) in presenting the 'Champion of Business Award' to **Bubba Campbell** at the Chamber's Mid-Year Membership meeting at JP Muldoons on July 28.. "I know that you are going to agree with the Executive Committee that this local business person truly is a 'champion' who deserves a special thanks."

**"Bubba,
Georgia says
thank you."**

The Valdosta Daily Times
'Our Opinion'



Chamber leaders and members of the Georgia General Assembly surround our 'Champion of Business,' Belk manager **Bubba Campbell**, and wife **Ann** after receiving the award at the Chamber's annual Mid-Year Membership Meeting in July. Pictured are (clockwise from top) **John Heavener** (Georgia Retail Association), **Rep. Ellis Black**, **Sen. Tim Golden** (Beacon Hill Financial, LLC)



SPLOST \$\$\$ at work

2003



Paul Leavy/The Valdosta Daily Times

Chamber Treasurer/Chairman-Elect **Jud Rackley** (Brandon, Rackley, & Dukes PC), **Laura Cotton** (ASA), Chamber 2002 Board Chairman **Bubba Campbell** (Belk), Transportation Committee Chairman **Ronald Cowart** (Cowart Electric and Industrial Contractors, Inc.), and **Gary St. John** (ASA) chat in December immediately following St. John's announcement that ASA/Delta Connection will be initiating jet service from Valdosta Regional Airport in February.

Jet Service Has Landed!

On Dec. 18, members of the Chamber's Transportation Committee welcomed the announcement of jet service to Valdosta Regional Airport. **Gary St. John** of Atlantic Southeast Airlines, Inc. said, "Beginning January 31, ASA will begin flying the first regional jets from Valdosta to Atlanta."

The jets include two 50-passenger CRJs. ASA also will add two 66-passenger ATRs, which are a larger version of the Brasilias currently in use. The CRJs and ATRs will begin replacing the 30 passenger Brasilias starting in February.

The Chamber's Transportation Committee has persisted for more than 15 years in working with ASA to ensure jet service for the Valdosta Regional Airport. **Steve Everett** (Langdale Ford) was an instrumental part of "Project Jet," whose goal in the mid-1980s was to bring jet service to Valdosta. "I believe that

jet service from Valdosta will be the single best thing that can happen to promote airline travel out of Valdosta Regional Airport," Everett said. "The business traveler requires comfort and generally flies a very tight schedule. These planes are much bigger, the seats more comfortable and much roomier than the Brasilia's currently being used. The reduced flight time to about 55 minutes should allow for better connections in and out of Atlanta."

Ronald Cowart (Cowart Electric and Industrial Contractors), chairman of the Chamber's Transportation Committee said, "On behalf of the Chamber's Transportation Committee, I appreciate the efforts of ASA to improve air service to and from Valdosta Regional Airport. The Chamber has really pursued these improvements, and I commend ASA for making them happen."



2003 Telecommunications

Telecommunications: Can Valdosta businesses compete?



Pictured at the 4th Annual Telecommunications Forum are presenters **Ted Lawrence** (BellSouth), **Mike Adkinson** (TechLINKS Magazine), **Jorge Neves** (Sprint PCS), **Darryl Chaney** and **Paula Birth** (Mediacom), and **Randy Cox** (Park Avenue Bank).

“**C**an Valdosta Businesses Compete?” was the subject of the 4th Annual Telecommunications Forum held Oct. 14 at the Valdosta-Lowndes Conference Center. The event was sponsored by the Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber, the Valdosta-Lowndes Conference Center & Tourism Authority, and The Valdosta Daily Times.

Randy Cox (Park Avenue Bank) explained the purpose of the forum. “Since the community was recently named a Metropolitan area, this year’s forum was designed to determine if Valdosta-Lowndes County can compete in terms of our telecommunications services with the other Metro areas.”

This year’s keynote speaker was **Mike Adkinson**, founder and CEO of TechLINKS Magazine in Atlanta. Adkinson told the group, “Technology is not an end in itself, it is a tool to help you. It’s not how much broadband width you have, it’s what you do with it. As our national and state economies continue to change, the key to Valdosta’s future success will be to provide a place where home-grown entrepreneurs know that they can come home, build businesses, receive support, and be successful.”

For more information about the Chamber’s Technology Resources Committee contact **Yolanda Shropshire**, (229)247-8100 or yshropshire@valdostachamber.com.

“**V**aldosta businesses have the same ability to communicate as Fortune 500 companies with real time email access, digital imaging, and connection to corporate computer networks over faster, secure connections.”

Jorge Neves
Sprint PCS

“**T**elecommunication services offered by BellSouth in Valdosta-Lowndes County are in a parity with any other city in the state of Georgia, including Atlanta. The capabilities and infrastructure available in Valdosta-Lowndes County are second to no other cities in the State of Georgia.”

Ted Lawrence
BellSouth

Glitch-Unemployment Insurance Law ²⁰⁰⁵



Lt. Gov. Taylor addresses the business community

The Chamber is already making our case to elected officials about the concerns of the business community for the upcoming 2004 Legislative Session. On Oct. 2, Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor visited with Chamber members to discuss his forecast of the upcoming session. "I encourage everyone to get and stay involved in their local Chamber of Commerce," stated Taylor. "Making your voice heard loud and clear starts at the local level. If we don't



Lt. Governor Mark Taylor met with Chamber members regarding Unemployment Insurance reform during a Chamber reception for him at the Chamber on Oct. 2. Pictured are Mark Wilson (Langdale Industries), William Sirmans (Georgia Department of Labor), Taylor, Jeff Hanson (Park Avenue Bank), and Kris Jensen (Saff America, Inc.).

pay close attention to transportation, education and healthcare, for example, there could be an adverse impact on our business climate and the state's economy. I look forward to working on all of these issues with the business community during our next legislative session."

Chamber Manufacturers Council members urged the Lt. Gov. to work on legislation to clarify wording in the Unemployment Insurance statute that currently allows some dismissed employees who violate their employer's posted attendance policy to collect benefits, in certain situations. "We are pleased that Lt. Governor Taylor supports correcting this 'glitch' in the Unemployment Insurance law which allows payment of benefits even when a claimant violates a known, reasonable and lawful attendance rule," said Mark Wilson (Langdale Industries). "This correction will reduce Unemployment Insurance costs to businesses and will reinforce the message that good employee attendance is a major key to a successful company."

This language amendment is intended to protect employers whose employees are violating their fundamental right to expect them to be at work, not including those absences subject to FMLA pro-

tections. The Chamber currently is in the process of developing the 2004 Legislative Agenda for Business, which will include this issue as well as other top business development issues in our community. Chamber members will be given the opportunity to rank their top legislative priorities for the Chamber to pursue during the 2004 Legislative Session.

■
For a look at the Chamber's 2004 Legislative Agenda for Business, go to the Chamber's Web site at www.valdostachamber.com.

JOHNSON DISTRIBUTING COMPANY

Budweiser
KING OF BEERS

Serving Valdosta
And Surrounding Areas Since 1967

4571 North Valdosta Rd.
Valdosta, GA 31601
(229) 242-8123



Unemployment Glitch – *clarifying attendance as a reason for dismissal*

2005 Champions of Business



Photo by Steven Heddon

Susan Dukes (Ga. Dept of Labor), Mark Wilson (Langdale Industries) and Paula Goff (Regal Marine) pose with their awards following the Mid-Year Membership Meeting. Dukes, Goff, and Wilson received the Champion of Business Award because of their work to pass legislation in the 2005 Legislative Session that clarifies attendance as a reason for dismissal.

Another keynote of the Mid-Year Membership Meeting was the presentation of the 2005 Champions of Business Award. This year, the Chamber's Governmental Affairs Committee presented this prestigious honor to **Susan Dukes** (Ga. Dept of Labor), **Paula Goff** (Regal Marine), and **Mark Wilson** (Langdale Industries) for their work in clarifying attendance as a reason for dismissal.

The Champion of Business Award is not an annual award. The honor is reserved only for those individuals who have gone above and beyond to make a difference for business, not just in their organization or in Lowndes County, but on the state level as well.

Past winners of the Champion of Business Award include the local Delegation: **Rep. Jay Shaw**, **Rep. Ron Borders**, **Rep. Ellis Black** and **State Senator Tim Golden** for the Sales Tax Holiday in 2002 and **Bubba Campbell** in 2004 for his efforts in founding the Sales Tax Holiday.

Dukes, Goff, and Wilson have been working on this issue for several years. In 2001, the Manufacturers Council called attention to a "glitch" in the Georgia unemployment insurance law. This glitch is a loophole that provides unemployment insurance to some employees when attendance is the reason for dismissal. Dukes worked with the Chamber throughout the beginning stages of investigating this issue until it was out of her local jurisdiction.

By 2005, "clarifying attendance as a reason for dismissal" had gained enough momentum to be placed on the Legislative Agendas of the Georgia Chamber and Georgia Industry Association. Goff and Wilson made numerous trips to Atlanta to testify in committee meetings and speak with Legislators on the importance of fixing the "glitch".

These two Champions of Business were instrumental in working with the Georgia Department of Labor to develop the language that will fix the "glitch" and save employers in Georgia thousands of dollars.

The Governor signed HB 520 on May 10, 2005 officially clarifying attendance as a reason for dismissal. Thank you again to our 2005 Champions of Business. Without your help, this legislation would not have been possible! You're our superheroes!



DDW

2005

7.5% Workers Comp Discount
made Permanent



260 Chamber Members save
\$200K+ - potential dollars that stay
in our regional economy



2005 Celebrate the Session

Governmental Affairs Celebrates a Productive Year



Paula Goff (Regal Marine) and Jeff Hanson (Park Avenue Bank) enjoy the festivities at the "Celebrate the Session" reception on Apr. 12.



Pictured at the Legislative Overview Luncheon on Apr. 15 at Valdosta Country Club are Abby Rozar, President of Kiwanis of Valdosta, Shirley McClain (Kiwanis), Rep. Ellis Black, Sen. Tim Golden, Rep. Jay Shaw, Rep. Ron Borders, and Jeff Hanson (Park Avenue Bank).

The 2005 Georgia General Assembly was a very productive time for the Chamber's Governmental Affairs Committee. Several trips to Atlanta to lobby for pro-business legislation paid off with five bills from the Chamber's Legislative Agenda for Business to be signed into law.

Seeing the passage of so much pro-business legislation does not happen often. This year, the Governmental Affairs Committee decided to celebrate by hosting its "heroes" at a "Celebrate the Session" reception on Apr. 12 at the Chamber.

"This was a banner year for the Governmental Affairs Committee," said **Jeff Hanson** (Park Avenue Bank), chairman of the committee. "The hard work of volunteers like **Paula Goff** (Regal Marine) and **Mark Wilson** (Langdale

Industries) this year, and **Fred Wetherington** (Wetherington Farms) and **Susan Dukes** (Ga. Department of Labor) shows exactly what can be accomplished with a grassroots effort."

On Apr. 15, the Governmental Affairs Committee and the Kiwanis Club of Valdosta hosted the 2005 Legislative Overview Luncheon, with comments on the session by **Reps. Jay Shaw, Ron Borders, and Ellis Black**, and featured speaker **Sen. Tim Golden**. More than 80 business leaders were on hand as the delegation discussed the high points of the Legislative Session.

Year after year, Chamber members identify affordable healthcare as their number one legislative issue. The subcommittee decided that this year, the Washington Trip would focus primarily on this important issue. On May 11,

11 business leaders made the annual trip to Washington DC to discuss affordable healthcare with our federal delegation. One "power team" met with **Reps. Sanford Bishop, Jack Kingston, and Charlie Norwood**, and the other team met with **Sens. Johnny Isakson and Saxby Chambliss** to talk about healthcare concerns in Greater Valdosta, and to inform them of progress on the local level. The trip also included meetings at the U.S. Chamber, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Pentagon.

This fall, the Governmental Affairs Committee will reconvene to develop the 2006 Legislative Agenda for Business. For more information on the Chamber's Governmental Affairs program, or to voice legislative concerns affecting your business, contact **Amy Karam** at (229) 247-8100, or akaram@valdostachamber.com.

2008



Manufacturing Cap

General Assembly completes 2008 legislative session



Pictured at the Capital in Atlanta are State Rep. Ellis Black, Rep. Amy Carter, State Sen. Tim Golden and Rep. Jay Shaw.

General Assembly Passes Legislation Supported By Chamber

After a remarkable opening day on Jan. 14 that began with the House overriding a dozen bills vetoed by the Governor at the end of the 2007 legislative session, the General Assembly began its work to resolve issues involving health insurance costs, water, manufacturing, business owner property rights, and other issues important to Chamber members. The General Assembly finished its session on Apr. 4 after passing numerous bills supported by the Chamber.

Legislation important to Chamber members:

AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE

Senator **Tim Golden** was successful in getting a \$150,000 planning grant for a Georgia Wellness Incentive Pilot Program in the 2008 state budget. The planning

grant is the first step to develop a program designed to help lower health insurance costs for employers and employees.

STATE WATER PLAN

The plan calls for Regional Water Councils and the Chamber is working with our local delegation to have Lowndes County representation appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House.

MANUFACTURING

Several bills passed to strengthen manufacturing, including a cap limiting the sales tax on energy used in manufacturing, expanded sales tax exemption for machinery and parts, and the creation of a "Made in Georgia" initiative to promote the sale of products made in Georgia. As Sen. Tim Golden stated, "These kinds of legislative proposals are a great start, but in my opinion, they are only a start. More needs to be done to make Georgia a leader

in and destination for industry. Manufacturers have a huge impact on the economy throughout our state, representing 10 percent of the overall workforce."

STATE SALES TAX HOLIDAY

The holiday was renewed for certain school supplies, clothing, footwear, computers, and computer related accessories from July 31 – Aug 3. This legislation was originally initiated by Valdosta citizens in 2001.

BUSINESS OWNER PROPERTY RIGHTS

Legislation preventing business owners the right to disallow firearms on business property was amended to ensure business owners retained their property rights.

Visit the Chamber's Government Affairs page at www.valdostachamber.com for more information.

Several bills passed to strengthen manufacturing including a cap limiting the sales tax on energy used in manufacturing, expanded sales tax exemption for machinery & parts and the creation of a "Made in Georgia" initiative.

2009

State Legislative Committee Travels to the Capitol



*February 11, 2009 the State
Legislative Committee holds
briefing State Legislators*

2009 State Session

Successfully championed the following State business development initiatives in the 2009 Legislative Session:

HB 120 - Renewal of Sales Tax Holiday

Regional Water Council was formed and includes two representatives from Lowndes County, Wesley Langdale and Rusty McCall

SB 31 - Georgia Nuclear Energy Financing Act, provides for a utility to recover from its customers the costs of financing associated with the construction of a nuclear generating plant



Promoted 2009 Sales Tax Holiday

Belk Thanks Sen. Golden for Great Sales
Tax Holiday!



"This year's B-T-S Sales Tax Holiday sales exceeded the great year we had last year. The mall parking lot was packed!" said Belk store manager Paul Clingan.

Sen. Tim Golden, original author of the Sales Tax Holiday in 2000, fights hard along with the Chamber's Government Affairs Council to get the legislation passed again each year.

"Former Belk manager Bubba Campbell was THINKING B.I.G. when he came up with the Sales Tax Holiday idea for Georgia and approached me about it. Sales Tax Holiday is a win-win for businesses and consumers, and there is no doubt that it stimulates our economy," said Golden.



Let's Get Georgia Moving Transportation Lunch



The Chamber's State Legislative Committee met with the "Let's Get Georgia Moving" Coalition regarding development of 2010 legislation on how to fund transportation for the state of Georgia.

State Legislative Committee meets with Local Delegation on Transportation Funding



The Chamber's State Legislative Committee met with local delegation members, Rep. Jay Shaw, Rep. Ellis Black, Rep. Amy Carter, and State Senator Tim Golden regarding development of 2010 legislation on how to fund transportation for the state of Georgia.



Georgia Chamber Power Lunch ~ "Bringing Georgia Together"



Over 100 businesses attended the GA Chamber Power Lunch on August 27 at the Valdosta Country Club. The theme for the meeting was Bringing Georgia Together.

George Israel, GA Chamber CEO stated, "This was the best turnout of any of the previous 11 events we have hosted. It is obvious the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber is a Five-Star Chamber."



GA Chamber Chairman, Mike Garrett (Georgia Power Co.) stated, "In too many ways, there are still two Georgias. We all need to work together to achieve our common goals."



2009 Federal Legislative Agenda

Alternative Energy & Conservation

Support the development of a National Energy Policy for energy supply & demand involving both the public and private sectors. To ensure that our energy needs are met, bolster our economy, and enhance our national security, we should reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy by stepping up our domestic conservation and efficiency efforts, develop alternative energy sources, and increase our own domestic production.

Affordable Healthcare

The Chamber supports the following efforts to reduce cost drivers that lead to increases in healthcare costs:
Federally supported incentive programs for wellness, prevention, and disease management;
Small-business insurance purchasing groups; and
The creation of tax incentives for those who purchase their own healthcare.

Housing Relief

Encourage legislation that offers additional tax credits on all primary residence home purchases, monetizes credit for availability at closing and can be used in conjunction with mortgages financed by state or local banks in order to stimulate the housing market and the economy.



2009 Federal Legislative Agenda

Electronic Medical Records

The Chamber supports federally supported incentives for the use of electronic medical records and other technological devices to improve quality, increase efficiency and reduce costs of healthcare. The Chamber considers the use of electronic medical records a vehicle for job creation in the Information Technology Field in Valdosta-Lowndes County.

Taxes on Internet & Catalog Sales

The Chamber supports a fair collection of sales tax: Traditional retailers are placed at a price disadvantage because of an inequity in the collection of taxes that provides a windfall benefit to online and catalog retailers. This practice gives the online and other remote retailers an “un-level playing field” with Georgia based businesses. Hundreds of million of dollars are lost in tax revenue and, placing at risk many vital public services provided by state and local governments. 39 states have begun discussions to simplify the tax system in order to ease collections of previously complex state sales and use tax systems. If Georgia were to join these states with simplified sales tax systems, Congress would have to give them the authority to expand the collection authority.

Standing Positions

- Monitor the progress on I-75 and SR 133**
- Protect our economic engines: Moody AFB, education, and healthcare facilities**
- Support the efforts to continue to give our veterans good healthcare and benefits in a timely manner.**



Federal Legislative Committee
meets with
Congressman Kingston



February 9, 2009
Champions spoke on:

- *Health Information Technology Funding*
- *Labor Law Issues*
- *Energy*



Chamber Meets with U.S. Rep. Kingston

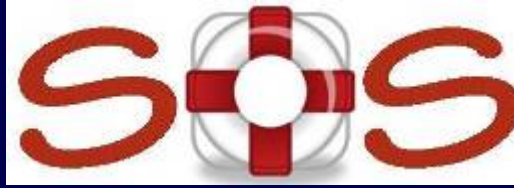
On Sept. 28, the Chamber offered the business community a private meeting with U.S. Representative Jack Kingston.



The Congressman responded to questions and comments by members of the Government Affairs Council. Randy Sauls (South Georgia Medical Center) addressed healthcare issues facing our community to Cong. Kingston, in particular, trauma care funding availability for South Georgia.

Congressman Kingston gave a brief overview of the most important issues facing our nation today including the Afghanistan war, healthcare, employment/labor law and cap and trade legislation and fiscal responsibility.

STIMULUS OR STYMIED:



IS YOUR BUSINESS READY FOR THE COMING CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT LAWS?



Presentations by Jason Willcox and G. Robert Ryan, Jr. (Moore, Clarke, DuVall & Rodgers, P.C) & Megan Smith & Anne Barnas (SmithBarnas & Associates, Inc.) in association with the Federal Legislative Committee





Chamber leads regional meeting with Congressman Bishop



**Chamber advises Bishop
" VOTE NO on EFCA "**



Washington Fly-in Federal Legislative Champions



**Chamber champions present
2009 Federal Legislative
Agenda to U.S. Delegation,
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
and the Pentagon**



Federal Legislative Overview Luncheon with U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson



Friday, April 17

12:00p.m.-1:30p.m.

Hilton Garden Inn

Cost: \$15.00

Come early for best
seating & to greet
& meet the
Senator!





Chamber Co-Sponsors 1st Time Homebuyers Forum



The Chamber assisted U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson's office in getting the word out to South Georgians that the \$8,000 Homebuyers Credit sunsets on November 30. The First-Time Homebuyers Forum was held at Valdosta Technical College. Attendees obtained information regarding the tax credit as well as available programs and assistance from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Housing of Urban Development, Department of Veteran Affairs and Federal Home Loan Bank of Georgia.

2009 Local Legislative Agenda Presentations

Local Legislative Agenda presentations to
Cities and County



Government Affairs Council Chair, Paula Goff (SMITH Northview Hospital) presented the Chamber's 2009 Local Legislative Agenda during the Aug. 4 Lake Park City Council Meeting.

Goff stated, "This is the first year the Chamber has developed an official local agenda, and we are pleased to present it to all of our local governments and stakeholders. This is a 'living' document and will be updated as needed. We are very excited about the organization of our Gateways Committee which will be chaired by Marshall Conner (Georgia Power Co.) along with vice-chair Aaron Strickland (Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful). We are asking all of the stakeholders to appoint a representative and come together as a committee to make our Gateways more appealing."



Gateways Committee Columbus Trip

Gateways Committee Goes to Columbus on
a Fact-Finding Mission



Members of the newly formed Gateways Committee visited with Columbus Chamber President, Mike Gaymon and Gateways Committee Champion, John Flournoy to study the successful gateway improvement program in Columbus, Ga.

"Gateways provide a first impression of a community to visitors upon entering, and we have implemented a thoughtful, unified strategy to strengthen and beautify the overall appearance of our community," stated Flournoy.

Census 2010 Kick-off Event



It's
in



Our
Hands!



We move forward when you send it back !

SAVE THE SECRET BALLOT! THE VIRTUAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON

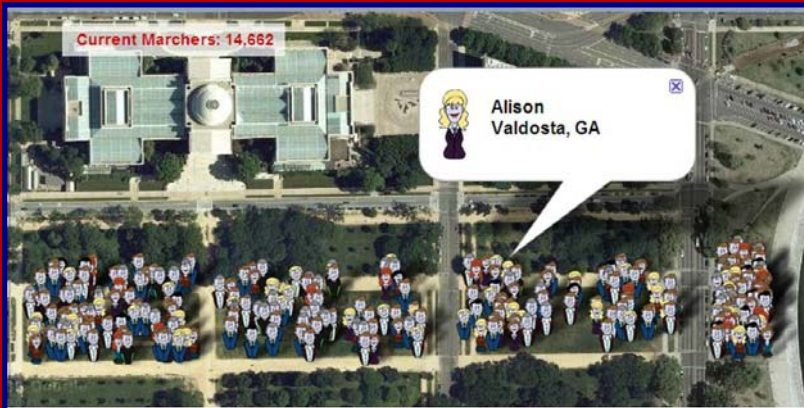
SAVE
SECRET
BALLOT

HANDS
OFF

Save the Secret Ballot:
MARCH TODAY!

14 Legislative Alerts & 11 Updates

Organize
seeking to
dramatically
American labor
with legislation that
would essentially
abolish secret ballot
elections during
union organizing
drives. By forcing
workers out of the
voting booth and
subjecting them to a
public "card check"
scheme, the bill
would take privacy,
power, and choice
away from America's
workers.



What's on tap?

Meeting with GDOT Commissioner
Vance Smith

Monday, November 30, 3:30p.m.

City Hall Annex

Reception following at the Chamber
5p.m.

.....

State Legislative Luncheon

Wednesday, 12-1:30p.m.

Rainwater Conference Center

\$15

Please RSVP

tap . . .

Feb. 3, Atlanta
State Legislative Briefing
Luncheon

&

Bird Supper @ Depot

March 25

Regional Water Council Meeting
Valdosta Technical College