

VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Leading Businesses.
Leading Communities.™



416 North Ashley Street P.O. Box 790 Valdosta, GA 31603
229.247.8100 FAX 229.245.0071 ebutler@valdostachamber.com
Contact: Evan Butler-Sands

July 31, 2008
For Immediate Release

Chamber Holds Semi-Annual Meeting to Update **IMPACT 2012 Shareholders**

In 2007, the Chamber, with the help of 72 business and community leaders, devised **IMPACT 2012**, a five year business action plan aimed at helping Valdosta-Lowndes County enhance its position as the business, educational, social, and cultural center of excellence in South Georgia.

Leaders in the business community pledged more than \$2.3 million through **IMPACT 2012** over the next five years to accomplish very ambitious goals for our community.

The Chamber found it important to provide our shareholders with updates on the progress of the various programs and initiatives. Here are the highlights and updated activity presented at the **IMPACT 2012** Shareholders Luncheon, July 31, 2008.

Targeted Business Expansion

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

- We have hired Chris Miller (Creative Cities Consulting) to develop innovative solutions and adaptive sustainable economic social and environmental strategies to ensure growth and success in our economy
- A perfect example of what we are trying to accomplish is our 2008 Guardian Bank Business Plan Competition Winners, Azalea Health Innovations, who have already hired two additional college graduate employees
- MetroOne: First Annual Progressive Dinner: 20 young professionals supported local downtown restaurants July 17. First Annual Professional Development Seminar scheduled for September 24.

Workforce Development & Education

BOOT CAMP: 63 supervisors trained thus far in 2008 (2008 Goal: 100) through **BOOT CAMP** for Supervisors. Training topics include: Workers Compensation, Dealing with Difficult Employees, Handling a Multi-Generational Workforce



Helping Your Child Succeed: This program is designed to teach parents in the workplace simple techniques to become more involved in their child's school work and progress. Through July, 84 parents at 7 businesses have went through the program.

School System Study

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.

Study Goals

- Identify the degree to which professionals in business site selection consider school system organization as a factor in business location
- Identify the degree to which business executives considering relocation to a community consider school system organization as a factor in choosing employment opportunities
- We've hired an outside agency to conduct this study, and we will have the final report to the Chamber Board and community in September

Retiree Attraction

2008 GOALS: Attract 80 amenity-seeking retiree households to the area, and develop and implement targeted national advertising

- The Valdosta-Lowndes County area was nationally promoted on The Golf Channel during the 2008 South Georgia Golf Classic April 28-May 4.
20 spots aired.
- 3,321 active prospects
- An estimated 75 households are considering relocation pending the sale of their homes
- Featured in the Where to Retire magazine in September

Enhancement of Pro-Business Environment

- **South Georgia Partnership for Regional Development:** Formed to host regular forums among elected officials, education leaders and other economic development partners regarding business issues and initiatives.
- **VALET:** Formed as a Valdosta-Lowndes County Rapid Response Team to respond to business and industry needs. VALET has asked business to answer the question, "Are we business friendly?" Results of administered surveys will be presented in September.

Entrepreneurial and Small Business Development

VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Leading Businesses.
Leading Communities.™



2008 Goal: To serve 500 clients in the S.E.E.D.S. Center

- The S.E.E.D.S. Center has served 324 clients from January through June 2008
- **Entrepreneurs In Action** took place on April 12th. EIA is an Entrepreneurial Resource Fair aimed at helping new and existing entrepreneurs find the resources necessary to be successful in business.
- Jeff Hoffman was the keynote speaker via video conference. A series of mini-seminars followed.

###