



**VALDOSTA-LOWNDES**  
**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

ADVOCATE | BUILD | CONNECT | PROMOTE

**2018 - 2028 STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **Mission Statement:**

*To serve as the voice of business in our community.*

## **Vision Statement:**

*To be recognized as one of the nation's premier Chambers of Commerce and a leader in business advocacy.*

## **Key Result Areas:**

- PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT – How well are we serving our members with the services they need to be successful? How well are we serving our community's business development needs overall?
- GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS – How strong and effective are our advocacy efforts on the local, state and federal levels?
- FINANCE – What are our long term goals for financial stability and growth, and what are we doing to accomplish them?
- COMMUNICATIONS – How effective are our methods of communicating with all of our constituencies?
- TECHNOLOGY – How close is our Chamber to being on the leading edge and a business model of technology utilization?
- GOVERNANCE – How effectively has our Chamber harnessed and utilized the horsepower of our community's top business leaders?
- HUMAN RESOURCES – How does our Chamber CEO and staff measure up in terms of job knowledge, education and training, professionalism, productivity and member service?
- INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY – How will our Chamber help prepare our community for the new economy and the "new normal" economic situation that we find ourselves in?

# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

## *Membership & Member Services*

**GOAL: Increase Chamber membership to 2,000**

- Continue to conduct annual membership survey to identify top needs of members
- Evaluate ROI for Chamber and for members for each Chamber event/activity annually
- Identify problems with retention through methods such as the use of an online exit survey
- Develop programs such as Chamber Spectrum Benefits and DRUGS DON'T WORK to create "golden handcuffs"

## *Education & Workforce Development*

**GOAL: Create an awareness of the talent pipeline that begins with early learning (ages 0-8)**

- Actively advocate for effective utilization of universal Pre-K in Georgia
- Actively promote the Quality Rated Early Learning program and process

## *Economic & Community Development*

**GOAL: Create an entrepreneurial culture in our community**

- Use Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) to plant the seeds for entrepreneurship, increasing to 24 students per year
- Create an annual business fair for young entrepreneurs to showcase their businesses
- Establish the small business incubator in Downtown Valdosta with at least 80% occupancy
- Partner with VSU's entrepreneur center to grow small businesses for the incubator
- Establish a \$1 million revolving loan fund for incubator tenants, clients and graduates

**GOAL: Help businesses nimbly adapt to the “new economy”**

- Relocate the SEEDS Center to the small business incubator and continue to assist 500+ clients annually
- Create an educational annual conference for home-based businesses, makers, and other micro businesses
- Establish an annual Innovate! Conference to encourage creative thinking among small businesses

**GOAL: Provide opportunities for local leaders to establish a culture of collaboration and unity**

- Keep local leaders abreast of the community’s economic health with annual Business Outlook Breakfast and annual Economic Summit
- Establish a bi-annual Intercity Tour to provide positive, successful examples
- Maintain 30 Chamber Community Council members who participate in quarterly activities with the Chamber leadership to keep them abreast of community challenges and opportunities
- Support and facilitate efforts that result in local government and local school system collaboration and unity and alignment behind common community goals

**GOAL: Maximize collaboration among major economic engines**

- Moody Air Force Base: Expand the reach of MoodyLink activities to promote Chamber Certified Moody Friendly Business program, MoodyLink Magazine, Moody Talent Connection and MoodyLink.org
- Valdosta State University: Develop the Valdosta Business & University Alliance to promote Chamber Certified VSU Friendly Business program, and develop a talent connection with VSU for internships and co-op programs with businesses
- South Georgia Medical Center: For SGMC and the other economic engines, help build the kind of community that enhances efforts to recruit top personnel

**GOAL: Actively promote regional partnerships to create power in numbers in South Georgia**

- Continue to partner with other chambers of commerce in the region on business development, member services, and advocacy initiatives such as:
  - South Georgia Military Affairs Council
  - DRUGS DON'T WORK in South Georgia
  - SEEDS Business Resource Center
  - Chamber Spectrum Benefits program

- Continue to partner with other private business membership associations on advocacy initiatives such as:
  - State and Federal Legislative Lunches
  - Meet The Candidates
  - Campaign Academy

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

**GOAL:      Become the premier local chamber government affairs council in Georgia**

- Utilize VoterVoice to develop an effective and robust grassroots membership involvement process
- Continue to take strong positions on local development regulations through the SORT Committee
- Continue to take strong positions on state- and federal-level legislation through thoughtful development of annual state and federal legislative agendas
- Continue to provide vigilant oversight of the Military Activity Zones
- Use South Georgia Military Affairs Council to promote the stability of Moody AFB

## FINANCE

**GOAL:      Secure the financial stability of the Chamber**

- Maintain a minimum \$100,000 reserve fund for day-to-day operations
- Maintain a minimum \$35,000 reserve fund for the Barber House

**GOAL:      Identify sources of non-dues revenue that provide benefit to Chamber members**

- Grow participation in Chamber Spectrum Benefits to provide an average \$20,000/year in marketing fees to Chamber
- Grow participation in Certified Moody Friendly program to provide an average \$20,000/year in membership fees to Chamber
- Grow participation in DRUGS DON'T WORK in South Georgia to provide an average \$45,000/year in membership fees to Chamber

# TECHNOLOGY

**GOAL: Upgrade Chamber systems to leading-edge technology**

- Install new telephone system
- Implement Chamber long range Technology Plan for computer equipment replacement
- Assist Chamber members with their technology education needs through Business University classes

# GOVERNANCE

**GOAL: Strengthen volunteer leadership structure**

- Encourage Chairmen-Elect to participate in GACCE Leadership Conference
- Utilize Membership 101 format for Board Orientation in January to underscore expectations

# HUMAN RESOURCES

**GOAL: Ensure that Chamber staff compensation and benefits are comparable to like-size 5-Star chambers in Georgia**

**GOAL: Plan and budget for Chamber CEO succession**

# COMMUNICATIONS

**GOAL:** Continue ongoing assessment of and improvement in the effectiveness of all Chamber communications

**GOAL:** Outsource services where special skills and/or equipment can improve communication quality and professionalism

- Outsource where logical and practical social media communication and website management
- Outsource event audio, video and lighting to enhance the Chamber's professional image

**GOAL:** Model small business technology best practices for our members

# INNOVATION & CREATIVITY

**GOAL:** Foster an environment for innovation and creativity that results in new business growth

**GOAL:** Seize opportunities arising from economic changes in the region