

■ CHAMBER UPDATES

Albany Area Chamber

Catherine Glover, President/CEO

To show appreciation for all the work our legislators do for the Albany area, the Legislative Affairs Committee held a luncheon in their honor at Stonebridge Golf & Country Club. Each legislator was given the opportunity to speak to the crowd of more than 75 people. Jay Smith (Georgia Power), chair legislative affairs committee, presented the legislators with a beautifully framed photo of Albany's garden district for their offices at the state capitol.



Each year the Chamber, representing the business community of Albany, raises money in support of the Albany-Dougherty Economic Development Commission (ADEDC). In June, the Chamber hosted a phone bank to raise these funds. Myriad volunteers shared their precious time during the workday to call prospective donors, and helped raise more than \$20,000.

Since the inception of the Family Medicine Residency program 18 years ago, the Chamber has given doctor bags to the incoming residents. Over the years the bags have grown in size from an old-fashioned black doctor bag to a suitcase to a huge duffel bag. This year 55 businesses generously donated items to fill the duffel bag plus more. A special thank you goes to HeritageBank of the South for their continued sponsorship of the doctor bags.

Emerge Albany hosted its June Second Friday Luncheon at the Welcome Center with over 60 young professionals in attendance. Phoebe Community Visions provided a wonderful lunch as well as the speaker for the day – Darrell Sapps. Mr. Sapps spoke to the group on the special events and projects Phoebe will be having during their Centennial year. As part of Emerge Albany Gives Back, young professionals gathered at the Flint River Quarium in June for some dirty fun! The volunteers cleaned fallen tree debris around the Blue Hole, a 175,000 fresh water tank holding aquatic life that can be found in the Flint River, and the Aviary.

Americus-Sumter County Chamber

Angela Westra, President

Over 125 members of the Chamber recently enjoyed an evening on the SAM Shortline, traveling to Lake Blackshear to watch the sunset. This event was offered free to Chamber members as a benefit of their membership. The Chamber says thanks you to Heart of Georgia Railroad for sponsoring this event. They also appreciate the many volunteers for their help and hospitality and to everyone who made the event a huge success!



Augusta Metro Chamber

Sue Parr, President & CEO

Ten business leaders met with Congressman John Barrow at the Chamber office in May for an informal discussion and a good exchange on views regarding various issues including immigration, trade, health care reform, EEOC actions, EM budgets for SRS and the Savannah Lock & Dam.

Attorney General Sam Olens was the guest speaker for the Chamber's Post Session Legislative Breakfast in June. Attorney General Olens spoke to a crowd of 150 chamber members on key issues including health care, education and water rights. Other guests of honor included area delegation members who provided their insights on the 2011 Session of the Georgia General Assembly.

The Leadership Augusta Class of 2011 recently graduated from their ten-month training program. Leadership Augusta is a program affiliated with the Chamber where more than 900 citizens of all ages, professions and educational backgrounds have had the opportunity each month to meet, learn and train to be informed leaders in the community.



The Chamber's Drugs Don't Work Committee put together a powerful team of speakers for its June Conference. The speakers were selected based on an emphasis to link the business community's role in changing drug-related behavior. Since estimates indicate that 70% of people who abuse illegal drugs are employed, businesses that adopt drug free workplace policies can substantially impact abuse and drug-related crime. Speakers for the conference included community anti-crime advocate Clint Bryant with Augusta State University and law enforcement officers from Richmond and Columbia Counties.

Barnesville-Lamar County Chamber

Amanda Rose, President/CEO

The Chamber will host the 2nd Annual Summer Sizzle Concert on July 16. The event will be held in downtown Barnesville at the Ritz Park Amphitheater. The event will be an official Margaritaville Party sponsored by Landshark, and the Official Jimmy Buffet Tribute Band, A1A, will headline the event. Bring your chairs and blankets and be sure to wear your dancing shoes!

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Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber

Joe Frank Harris, Jr., Interim President

The Chamber has experienced a spike in membership in 2011. While only half way through the year, the membership numbers have already reflected more than last year. To celebrate all of the new members, the Chamber hosted a New Member Welcome Breakfast. Members, new and old, were invited to enjoy pancakes flipped by our Chamber President and Chairman of the Board. The breakfast was not only an informational session, but also an opportunity for the local media partners to explain options on how to increase business through advertising. Joe Frank Harris, Jr., Interim President, made a presentation on the Chamber's initiatives and expressed goals. Fred Kittle, Chairman of the Board, expressed the excitement to have new members and encouraged involvement in the Chamber. New chamber members also heard from each staffer, who discussed the Chamber committees and programs designed to add value to Chamber membership and grow their business.



Cobb Chamber

David Connell, President & CEO

The Chamber concluded its annual three-month membership drive, with 28 teams representing more than 100 different organizations. This year's goal was greatly surpassed, setting an all-time campaign record with \$779,505 raised.

The Chamber, in conjunction with the Greater North Fulton Chamber and the Gwinnett and Council for Quality Growth, hosted the Metro Atlanta Northern Crescent Transit Summit. The summit, presented by Jacobs and Siemens, featured national elected and technical experts to make the business case for transit in the suburbs. Keynote speakers, Pat McCrory, former mayor of Charlotte, and Steve Banta, CEO of Phoenix METRO Light Rail, shared how they planned, executed and advocated for successful rail projects. Attendees also learned about the potential game-changing, high-capacity transit lines in Cobb, Fulton and Gwinnett counties that would significantly reduce traffic congestion while strengthening economic development assets in the north metro Atlanta suburbs.

The Coalition of Cobb County Business Associations and the Chamber will host the first annual Summer J.A.M. (Joint Association Meeting). This event signifies the relationship the Chamber has built with business associations in the area and celebrates Cobb's growing business community. Guests will enjoy complimentary food and drinks while networking in a relaxed environment with other business professionals. This event also features live music, food and drawings for door prizes.

The Chamber is proud to be celebrating 23 years of Give Our Schools a Hand (GOSH). GOSH is an annual celebration that honors more than 130 Teachers of the Year from Cobb County, Marietta City and post-secondary education systems. This salute to public education is one of the largest in the nation. The purpose of GOSH is not only to show appreciation for teachers in the community, but also to encourage area businesses, parents and civic groups to take an active role in enhancing the quality of education. Events this year include: the Handprint Unveiling Ceremony and Teacher of the Year Celebration Breakfast and Pep Rally.

Dalton-Whitfield Chamber

Brian Anderson, President & CEO

Design, Engineering and Manufacturing Camp (Camp DEM) was held at Dalton High School in June. Camp DEM gave 28 middle school students the opportunity to learn about the diversity of careers within the carpet industry. The design for the camp removed the students from their typical educational setting. From the beginning of the camp, the curriculum was designed much as an adult professional development. The first such camp in the area was developed as two Archway Partnership education committee members, Brian Cooksey, Manager of Operations Training and Development for Shaw Industries and Barbara Ward, Workforce Development Director of the Joint Development Authority, began bringing together ideas they gathered from other such camps. At the beginning of each day and at the close of the session, members of the Shaw Learning Academy presented challenges to the students as they developed team building activities. Safety in the work place was also an emphasis during these sessions. Rotation activities for the students included fabrication skills, where they designed CO2 dragster cars learning about tolerances and limits; graphic design skills where they created a design for their own carpet; and engineering skills where they built a cube made of smaller cubes, drew the design parts of the cube on graph paper and then created the cube design on the computer using CAD (Computer Aided Drafting). Students also attended a careers session where they assessed their personality and studied careers that might best suit their personality.



Emerging Leaders Institute graduated a class of 28 young leaders. Approximately 20 community leaders joined with the Chamber to assist in this effort.

■ CHAMBER UPDATES

DeKalb Chamber

Leonardo McClarty, President/CEO

The Chamber's offices will be relocating back to Decatur on September 1. The new address will be One Decatur Town Center, 125 Clairmont Avenue, Suite 235, Decatur, GA 30030. Phones will remain the same.

Douglas County Chamber

Kali Boatright, President & CEO

The Chamber's Young Professional Connection (YPC) held its bi-annual "Executives Unplugged" event in June. Young professionals networked with the Chamber Chairman's Club, 20 of Douglas County's top executives, at Blue Agave Mexican Bar and Grill. YPC members were able to speak with top level CEO's and executives in a laid back, off the cuff atmosphere. YPC also met with Congressman Westmoreland in June at the Chamber. YPC members spoke one on one with the Congressman about current topics in legislature on a federal and state level.



Eatonton-Putnam Chamber

Roddie Anne Blackwell, President

The Chamber held the Annual Ambassador Retreat in June. Ambassadors spent the day getting to know each other, learning about the Chamber and training to be the perfect Ambassador through a variety of activities.



The Chamber held a Lunch-N-Learn in June titled "Professionally Presenting Yourself, Your Company and Your Solution Using Business Etiquette." The seminar was presented by Kate T. Lewis. Members enjoyed lunch as they learned how to use the skills of business etiquette to receive better outcomes for their business. Attendees learned that there are no gender rules when it comes to business etiquette; we should extend the same courtesies to both men and women. Telephone etiquette tips included not "doing or eating" while on the phone and to have a mirror next to your desk to make sure your facial expressions match your words.

Franklin County Chamber

Aida Reynolds, Executive Secretary

Mayor David Jordan welcomed the crowd who turned out for the Grand Opening of the Royston Wellness & Community Park. There was a special dedication of the playground, in loving memory of Stephen Ginn. The new park, located on Skelton Street, is a 43-acre development with a 1.3 total miles of asphalt trails, a kids playground, day use picnic and grilling areas, 9 holes of disc golf, and 8 fitness stations!



Greater Hall Chamber

Kit Dunlap, President & CEO

The Chamber hosted a JOB FAIR & CAREER EXPO in June with 40 companies participating. Some 1,350 potential employees came to seek the job openings at: Wrigley, King's Hawaiian, ZF Wind, Albert International., Cargill, ATEX, Merial Select, IMS Gear, Charles Black Construction, Northeast Georgia Medical Center and the other companies. Resume writing and job tips were offered at the event.

VISION 2030, a division of the Chamber, made a community visit to Cary, N.C. Some 30 Gainesville / Hall County community leaders representing business and government made the trip. The Cary Chamber hosted us and we met with their leaders and learned about their efforts in economic development, transportation, water issues, public art, education, land planning, sports and recreation and government relationships. We also toured the Research Triangle Park.

The June Business After Hours was hosted by Port Royale Marina on Lake Lanier. With their new amenities of boat slips, rental houseboats, restaurant and open air beverage facility, and complete retail store, it was fun for Chamber members to mix and mingle on the shores of Lake Lanier. Port Royale is one of the largest marinas on Lake Lanier.

The Chamber is beginning to host meetings regarding the Transportation T-SPLOST; educating our members and then the public on the July 2012 Referendum.

Greater Macon Chamber

Chip Cherry, CCE, President

The Chamber hosted *Fast Pitch Lunch* as part of its speed networking series. *Fast Pitch Lunch* allowed a maximum of 30 attendees to each give a two-minute sales pitch about their company, gave them the opportunity to hand out promotional items, and to network

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Greater Macon Chamber (*continued*)

as they enjoyed lunch. This was a spin off of our *Connecting Over Coffee* – the breakfast version of this event. These events are simple to put together and are always well attended by a variety of businesses.

Macon Economic Development Commission, a division of the Chamber, is partnering with the Georgia Employers Association to offer a Human Resources Employment Law Certificate Program to Chamber members. The program is designed for individuals who work in, or want to work in, Human Resources, and want to enhance their skills, and gain a better understanding of the laws that go along with the field. There are seven courses from June–December, occurring in half day classes once a month.

We had a great group of fellow Chamber executives come into town for the 2011 GACCE Board Retreat. After their full day of brainstorming and planning to prepare for a successful 2012, the Chamber treated them to a low country boil at the Fish N' Pig, the perfect summer restaurant situated on Lake Tobosofkee. The staff enjoyed entertaining the guests and socializing with the GACCE crew over dinner.

Henry County Chamber

Kay Pippin, President

The Chamber and SCORE are hosting monthly small business roundtables as well as weekly counseling sessions. SCORE, Service Corps of Retired Executives, is an organization made up of retired business executives who offer free and confidential guidance for small business owners. The roundtables feature peer discussions facilitated by a business professional from the SCORE association. These discussions aim to help Henry County businesses overcome obstacles and seize opportunities, engage Henry County small business owners in facilitated peer learning, and develop a feeder system for counseling. The counseling sessions provide entrepreneurs with one on one guidance and advice from an experienced professional.



Since becoming a Camera-Ready Community in March, Henry County has been delighted by the influx of inquiries from the Georgia Film, Music and Digital Entertainment Office. These representatives and location specialists are actively searching for useful and unique locations for television and film production. In June a portion of Georgia Highway 20 in Hampton was overrun by zombies filming the hit AMC television series “The Walking Dead.” To the casual observer the highway seemed to be the site of a horrific car accident, but this and similar productions are providing great economic growth and development for many communities in Georgia.

Liberty County Chamber

Leah Poole, Executive Director

The Chamber is pleased to announce that it has chosen August 30 as the date for the 2011 Fort Stewart Vendor Fair presented by DRASH. The event, which is scheduled to take place at Club Stewart on the base, will host 70+ vendors both locally and from out of the area. Fort Stewart, the largest military installation east of the Mississippi River, was host to this sold-out event in 2009. The base, which is home to the 3rd Infantry Division and 23,000 soldiers, is in a non-rotation year where all of the men and women are redeployed back to Fort Stewart. Potential vendors, contractors and local businesses are offered the chance to meet with up to 800 purchasing card agents and will have the ability to showcase their products and services in a focused setting. This year's show will continue the theme of shopping local with a “Shop, Save, Support” logo to encourage businesses and citizens to shop local and support the local economy.



Liberty County is pleased to announce that Governor Nathan Deal has officially recognized the community as being Certified Work Ready. Being a Certified Work Ready Communities of Excellence means that a designation communicating that the county has the skilled workforce needed to meet business demands and drive economic growth, as well as the educational foundation to build a pipeline of workers ready to create ongoing success has been accredited. Liberty County earned 2,901 Work Ready Certificates, 115 percent more than goal. It also increased the public high school graduation rate from 69.4 to 77.8.

Robins Regional Chamber

Ed Rodriguez, GCCE, President & CEO

The Chamber hosted its 6th Annual Consumer Business Expo during Mother's Day weekend at the Galleria Mall in Centerville. During the Cox sponsored event, nearly 50 different Chamber member organizations had the opportunity to showcase their craft and display their products & services to hundreds of people in the Robins Region. The Chamber also offered seminars during the event. Exhibitors had an opportunity to hear from several organizations including Georgia Media Services, Proforma Ascension Marketing Group, Houston Family Medicine, Pre-Paid Legal Services and the UGA Small Business Development Center.

The Chamber also hosted the 7th Annual Family Business After Hours event, sponsored by Flint Energies and Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q. Chamber members and their families enjoyed great bar-b-q as well as popcorn, snow cones and lots of fun! A rock-climbing

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Robins Regional Chamber (*continued*)

wall, inflatables and a spin art station was on hand for the young and young at heart!

The Chamber, Perry Area Chamber and Peach County Chamber hosted the Houston-Peach County Legislative Delegation at the 10th Annual Legislative Appreciation Reception, held at the Go Fish Education Center in Perry. Honored guests included Senator Ross Tolleson (20), Senator Cecil Staton (18), Senator Robert Brown (26), Representative Larry O'Neal (146), Representative Willie Talton (145) and Representative Buddy Harden (147) from Houston County; as well as Senator George Hooks (14), Representative Robert Dickey (136) and Representative James Lynmore (135) from Peach County. Former Gov. Sonny Perdue was also present at the event.



The Chamber hosted the Robins Region's Legislative Delegation at the Chamber's Post Legislative Eggs & Issues breakfast in June. Sponsored by AT&T, the delegation gave a post-session recap and updated the community concerning new laws. The Chamber's Governmental Affairs Chairman, Randy Randall, moderated the event.

Swainsboro-Emanuel County Chamber

Bill Rogers, Jr., Executive Director

A committee, appointed by Swainsboro Mayor Charles Schwabe to address "derelict and unsightly property" within the city, met with Swainsboro City Council at its June meeting. The committee presented a collection of photographs of property along the city's major corridors that needs immediate attention. Following discussions, council members urged the committee to move forward, pledging their full support. In April, the Chamber's Board of Directors sent a letter to Swainsboro City Council urging the body to address these unsightly areas. The Mayor named City Planning & Zoning Commission Chairperson Gloria Mason, Downtown Development Authority Chairman Jerry Cadle, City Building Inspector Bruce Kirby, and Chamber President Bill Rogers Jr. to a special committee to address the issue. City Council representative Bobbie Collins serves as chairperson of the committee. Letters will be sent to property owners urging them to "clean-up" before any legal action is taken. Property owners will have 30 days to respond.

Sylvester-Worth County Chamber

Karen Rackley, President / Executive Director

In keeping with trying to support local resources, the Chamber chose to partner this year with our High School for its Annual Dinner. The event had over 200 attendees with 14 business sponsors. They used the school's Choir Director and School Nutritionist as event coordinators. In doing so, the Chamber helped them earn money for their programs. The students served, created the decorations, provided the entertainment (Jazz Choir), and provided us with a budget (all under the direction of the Choir Director Miki Hutchenson). The School Nutritionist provided us with a menu and dinner (that rivaled any caterer!). The majority of proceeds that the Chamber received from the dinner went to the Jazz Choir to help them get to Savannah for a Jazz Festival and to the School Nutritionist to help her get some items needed for her program. The event turned out to be one of the most attended Annual Dinners we have had in Worth County. It also gave the students an opportunity to work with the Chamber and find out more about what the Chamber does within our community.

Toccoa-Stephens County Chamber

Wendi Bailey, President

The Chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Tom Bell, spoke to the Chamber at their 65th Annual Meeting recently. Bell's speech focused on his concerns regarding the national debt, and he said he thinks the debt poses a tremendous threat to the future of the free enterprise system. Bell called on the federal government to do a few things well, rather than many things poorly. He added that the federal government needs to live within its means and not spend what it does not have. He urged those in attendance to talk about the debt issue with others and tout the free enterprise system and the entrepreneurial spirit.



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To see the full list of GACCE Board Members, please see the GACCE web site at www.gacce.org.