




**2011 GACCE Annual Conference**

**BEST PRACTICES SESSION**


**First 25 Ideas**




**Albany Area Chamber**

**Strive2Thrive – Albany’s Vision to Eradicate Poverty**

- Unique workforce development process; out of 25 states, the Chamber is the only business organization to spearhead this type of community/economic development initiative
- Ties in the need to diminish poverty through business and community mentorships and training
- Encourages self-sufficiency, middle class values, and individuals coming off the social services roles and on to the tax roles



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**TRADING SECRETS**  
FOR YOUR EYES ONLY!


**Secrets of a Successful Chamber Executive:**  
What You Need To Know!

## Americus-Sumter County Chamber

### Students of Excellence Awards

- Award students in public and private schools for their academic, athletic, and civic achievements.
- Hold three ceremonies – each for elementary, middle and high school students – on Sunday afternoons in April and May.
- Utilize local university and technical college as venues – allows large portions of the population to see the campuses

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## Americus-Sumter County Chamber

### Chamber Pages

- Each month the local daily newspaper allows Chamber to print (free of charge) two full pages in the newspaper – on the last day of each month.
- Allows Chamber to print positive business news – ribbon cutting photos, Business After Hours photos, new members, etc.
- Printed for over 1,000 reader in the immediate community.

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## Americus-Sumter County Chamber

### Tailgate Parties at GSW and SGTC

- Twice a year, the Chamber hosts (free of charge) a tailgate party for GA Southwestern State University's Canes Baseball & Softball teams and South GA Technical College's JETS and Lady JETS basketball teams.
- Shows the Chamber's commitment to the local university and technical college.
- Brings Chamber members onto those campuses, allowing members to mingle with teams.

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## Ashburn-Turner County Chamber

### Real Game of Life

- Interactive game / presentation that teaches high school students real life options after graduation (unskilled job, technical school, military, college, entrepreneurship)
- Presentation teaches career path beginning salaries and exactly how far that monthly salary level will go towards living expenses in the real world.
- Chamber Board of Directors and local business owners teach the class once a year to all Turner County 10<sup>th</sup> grade students.



Experience Southern Charm!  
**ASHBURN**  
Turner County

Shelley Zorn  
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## Augusta Metro Chamber

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### Executive Welcome Morning Mixer

- Needed a morning networking event for folks not interested in traditional Business After Hours. Wanted a different type of reason for members to make the effort.
- Morning event with coffee and continental breakfast designed as networking opportunity for new C-level executives that have just moved into the community. Invite 5-7 guests of honor for this quarterly event which is free to members. Quarterly annual sponsorship of \$2,000 and location donates coffee & breakfast.
- New executives feel they are officially being welcomed to the community by business leadership. Members get to meet high-level executives that they might not otherwise meet.

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## Augusta Metro Chamber

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### Top 10 in 10 Young Professionals to Watch

- Annual competition for 25 to 25 year olds. Judging criteria includes their past professional achievements and their 5-10 year goals.
- Partners include our local glossy publication *Augusta Magazine* and the Mayor's office. Judging panel includes Chamber's top leadership and representatives from each partner.
- Each recipient is profiled in the annual June edition of *Augusta Magazine*. Two-page spread of whole group & great coverage for Chamber. A luncheon is held in their honor, where they receive a very cool plaque from the Mayor. A complimentary nomination by the Chamber to *Georgia Trend's* 40 Under 40.

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## Banks County Chamber

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### Annual Picnic on the Lawn

- Annual Chamber social event held at the Ragsdale Grist Mill property.
- Major fundraiser for Chamber.
- Great fun, food, and fellowship.



**BANKS COUNTY**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Sherry Ward  
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(706) 677-5265




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## Barrow County Chamber

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### Chamber 101 – Orientation

- It allows new members to understand, in one hour's time, what the Barrow County Chamber does.
- It allows members who may not be new, or new members who have not attended an orientation before to attend and get a refresher.
- It allows the Chamber to get an idea on what new members are looking for in joining the Chamber. This is done at no cost to the membership, and we serve a lunch that is donated by our local Zaxby's Restaurant.



**BARROW COUNTY**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Tommy Jennings  
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(770) 867-9444




**Blairsville – Union County Chamber**

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**Membership Rally**

- Membership retention effort
- Half-day come & go conference with general session pep rally with music, pom poms, local motivational speaker. Multiple breakout sessions all focusing on how to use Chamber membership to grow your business.
- Free event with light refreshments.



**Blairsville**  
UNION COUNTY, GEORGIA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Cindy Williams  
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(706) 745-5789




**Blakely –Early County Chamber**

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**Holidays on the Square**

- Held first Saturday in December
- Festival involving a parade, vendors, and arts and crafts that helps generate revenue for local businesses.
- Has become a Blakely tradition for over 17 years



**BLAKELY  
& EARLY  
COUNTY**

Christie Haynes  
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(229) 723-3741




## Carroll County Chamber

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### Lunch on the Chamber

- Thank you and networking event for Chamber members. Held 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in June from 11am – 2pm. Sponsor & exhibit opportunities. Planned by Ambassador Committee and Chamber Staff.
- 200-300 attendees. Grilled burgers and hot dogs cooked by Chamber President with help from Executive Committee. Set up inside and outside Chamber. Tents outside in courtyard and front lawn. Live band last two years.
- Door prizes given away every 15-20 minutes. In addition to food and sponsor booths, also have Wii games and corn hole toss. No program, speeches, or agenda.



**Carroll County  
Chamber of Commerce**

Daniel Jackson  
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(770) 832-2446





## Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber

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### Buy Bartow – Work Bartow Initiative

- Encourages citizens to buy locally when possible.
- Goal to increase employment by 1% in Bartow County, which means 500 jobs.
- When a business in Bartow hires a Bartow County resident, a representative from that business and the person hired can "ring the bell", literally, a historic bell has been restored in our downtown area, so an opportunity to ring the bell is presented and the position hired is posted on a sign outside the bell tower.





Leslie McMillan  
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(770) 382-1466




## Catoosa County Chamber


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### Secrets at the Chamber

- Always had difficulty with attendance at New Member Orientation – until this March. Had Benefits Stations throughout the office with food, photos, flowers, etc. in each room. We have 5 different offices and each was hosted by a Chamber volunteer, not the staff.
- Had over 45 in attendance with a mix of new members and seasoned members.
- We have experienced an increase in volunteers. We expect this will also help with member retention as more members understand and “plug into” the benefits of Chamber membership.



Martha Eaker  
meaker@catoosachamberofcommerce.com  
(706) 965-5201




## Chatsworth-Murray County Chamber

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### Annual Meeting / Banquet

- Speaker.
- Commercials.
- Facility.



Dinah Rowe  
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(706) 695-6060

## Cherokee County Chamber

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### Jingle Bell \$hop

- Supports \$hop Cherokee Initiative - Find special gifts for everyone on your Christmas list without crossing the county line!
- Provides Holiday Shopping Extravaganza - One-stop shopping experience offering an array of distinctive gifts.
- Entertains Children – Visit with Santa and make crafts in his workshop while enjoying goodies from his sweet shop.

Pam Carnes  
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(770) 345-0400


## Clayton County Chamber

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### Principal Partner's Day Program

- The Principal Partner's Day program provides an opportunity for business and community leaders to serve as Principal for a Day in our local school district. The program begins with an orientation/mixer event and culminates a month later with school visits and a luncheon.
- This partnership has strengthened our communities involvement with the local school district and the Chamber. Businesses have maintained their involvement and subsequent educational and workforce development initiatives have been formed.
- The program touched all levels of education in our community. The School Superintendent, University President, Technical College President and other higher education institutions were participants and active in the planning of the program along with the business community.

Yulonda Beauford  
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(678) 610-4027



**Clayton County Chamber**


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**Leadership Clayton – Mandatory Kick Off Retreat**

- Being out of the county everyone was better focused by being far from their office.
- The day and a half retreat helped establish early bonds that set the tone for the entire program.

**CLAYTON**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Crystal Black  
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(678) 610-4021



**Clayton County Chamber**

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**Leadership Clayton – Long Term Sustainable Projects**

- Allows the participants to work as a team. (Active Teambuilding)
- Cause the participants to utilize their resources as a group and leverage that which they learn in the program to create a sustainable project to benefit the Clayton County Community.
- As a result the class has one or more ways to stay connected to their class, to the leadership program and to the community.

**CLAYTON**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Crystal Black  
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## Colquitt-Miller County Chamber

### Leadership Colquitt Program


- Successful leadership Colquitt program in a rural county. Miller County's Population is 6,125. Over the past 9 years, Leadership Colquitt has graduated 225 participants who now serve in leadership positions, civic clubs, churches, organizations, and both city & county elected offices.
- The program was started in 2002 when the Fanning Institute offered grants to rural counties. When grants were no longer available, the Chamber adopted the program as part of its program of work.
- A steering committee, composed of class graduates, works with the Chamber staff to recruit participants, plan the curriculum and host each class.

Veryl Garland-Cockey  
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## Columbia County Chamber

### Board Visits – Prize Patrol


- Purpose to get Board members more engaged and serve as a member retention tool for membership. The President and the Membership Director each month take a car of Board Members (3 or 4) and go visit Chamber members for about two hours.
- The two staff members take a group each month and a board member must go once a quarter. This allows for about 12 member visits, per car, per month totalling 242 Board Visits for 2010, excluding July.
- We deliver a Chamber candy jar, printed materials, a business card portfolio with the BOD cards and staff cards. The visit allows us to learn more about their business and issues, and it's a great opportunity to let the member know what the Chamber is doing for them.


 Tammy Shepherd  
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## Darien-McIntosh County Chamber

### Blessing of the Fleet – Community Kick Off

- Some citizens of Darien-McIntosh County felt that over the years the Blessing of the Fleet Festival became too commercial and lost some of its sense of community; so the Kick Off day was created.
- The Kick Off Day focuses on the “hometown” events (i.e. – The Shrimp Eating Contest, The Shrimp Box Derby, The Children’s Fishing Rodeo, etc.). This day allows citizens to participate in the events with their friends and neighbors and truly enjoy the sense of community at little or no individual cost.
- The community day also launches the activities for Blessing of the Fleet week.




**Mandy Harrison**  
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## Douglas County Chamber

### Chamber Shirt Fridays

- Every Friday, Chamber staff wears t-shirts from one of our member companies, takes a pic, blogs and Facebook’s it and then runs it with a link to that business in the next week’s e-newsletter.
- We promoted this as an opportunity last October during membership drive not knowing how it would catch on, but we have had Chamber Shirt Friday ever since then and are booked Fridays through August.
- Local businesses get free promotion for the price of 5 t-shirts (or nicer if they choose) and many members look forward to seeing who it is going to be this week, plus they look forward to some of the fun photos when we can tie a theme pic in with the business. (i.e. lying on an icy sidewalk like we fell for home health care, books and librarian glasses for a local college, holding wads of cash for a local bank, cool sunglasses for eye clinic nearby).



**Kali Boatright**  
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## Elbert County Chamber

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### Incentive for New Members to Join Chamber

- New Chamber members get 20-30 second ads on two radio stations. The cost of these ads can more than pay for the membership for smaller businesses. Chamber memberships sell themselves - people love to hear their company name on the radio.
- Members want more for their money - something in return - this is instant payback to the member.
- Add this to a membership drive - helped EC Chamber gain 161 new members .

Phyllis Brooks  
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 (706) 283-5651

## Fannin County Chamber

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### Buy Local Campaign

- Use posters and testimonials to advertise program.
- Created business cards with the campaign tag line.
- Created 10 Good Reasons sheet to go along with campaign.

FANNIN COUNTY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE


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**BEST PRACTICES SESSION**


**Next 20+ Ideas**




**Gordon County Chamber**

**Keep It In The County**

- The initiative serves more than just the interests of the Chamber members who sponsor the program. It supports the entire community, welcomes participation from non-member businesses, educates the public about the impact their spending decisions have on the local economy and continues to progress toward its ultimate goal of becoming a permanent community program.
- The campaign has been emulated by several other Chambers and the Cobb County Board of Commissioners sought our advice in launching their own similar program.




**Jimmy Phillips**  
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(706) 625-3200




**Greater North Fulton Chamber**

**Quarterly Exclusive Chairman's Circle After Hours**

- Only GN FCC staff and our Chairman's Circle (highest tier) members and their spouses are invited.
- Hosted by a Chairman's Circle member at their place of business.
- Doesn't cost chamber anything and helps build relationships between our business leaders!




Tedra Cheatham  
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(678) 397-0565



**Greene County Chamber**

**Coffee and Cards – Monthly Networking Program**

- Serves as a great way to network and hear presentations on various topics (social media, marketing, branding, etc.) but it also serves as a venue for members to give testimonials about their connections with other members.
- The members who attend are all able to give a 30 second commercial about their business---great way to advertise.
- Members leave with a new customer or client!



Greene County  
Chamber of Commerce

Becky Cronic  
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(706) 453-7592

## Henry County Chamber

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### Relationship with Local Press

- Henry County has one daily newspaper, The Henry Daily Herald and our Chamber works closely with its staff. The Daily Herald sells ads and publishes the Chamber's monthly newsletter at no cost to the Chamber. The Chamber's print newsletter is inserted in the Daily Herald's newspaper for community-wide distribution.
- Chief sales person for Daily Herald serves as Chairman of Chamber's Ambassadors. Daily Herald's staff attends Chamber functions; Chamber president meets/talks with editor on a regular basis
- Chamber receives accurate and regular news coverage including inclusion in responses to community issues as a result of solid working relationship.

Kay Pippin  
kpippin@henrycounty.com  
(770) 957-5786


## Henry County Chamber

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### Non-Dues Revenue Sources

- We now produce our community resource magazine and a county map in-house.
- The net profit realized by the Chamber from these two projects was in excess of \$76,000.
- A little extra effort by staff resulted in big non-dues revenue for the Chamber.

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## Jackson County Area Chamber


### Jackson Derby

- Virtual horse race – Board sponsored event
- Limited ticket sales - \$100 per ticket
- [www.jacksonderby.com](http://www.jacksonderby.com)



**JACKSON COUNTY**  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Linda Foster  
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(706) 387-0300




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## Johns Creek Chamber

### Arts On The Creek – Arts Festival

- Co-hosted by the Chamber, City of Johns Creek and the Johns Creek Arts Center and held every Labor Day weekend - [www.artsonthecreek.org](http://www.artsonthecreek.org)
- Sponsors are the backbone of event, providing financial support to ensure that entrance to the festival is free to the public.
- 2010 set a record with nearly 20,000 attendees, more than 80 artists, 50 businesses, 19 restaurants and food vendors and countless performers in music, dance and theater.




**JOHNS CREEK**  
CHAMBER  
*Connect. Grow. Thrive.*



*Arts On The Creek*  
JOHNS CREEK, GA

Maria Rose  
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(770) 495-0545




## Lake Park Chamber


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### E-Blast / Friday Blast

- Gives opportunities for FREE advertising for Chamber Members
- Weekly updates on news, events and issues in the local community
- Reaches a large network of people who may or may not be part of the Chamber



Penny Perrin  
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(229) 559-5302




## Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber


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### Reality Check Program

- Educational program targeting 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in Baldwin County at all three schools. The program stresses the importance and correlation of level of education and earning potential.
- Program requires students to visit 14 booths at which money is deducted from their randomly assigned annual pay based on randomly assigned occupations. Students are also randomly assigned an educational level and a family status.
- Upon completion, students will realistically see how important education is to their job earning potential.



April Bragg  
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**Monticello-Jasper County Chamber**

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**Volunteer Program**

- I am the only employee with the Chamber, so I rely on volunteers to assist me in the Visitor's Center. Appreciate your volunteers.
- Educate your volunteers.
- Listen to and learn from them.



Monticello-Jasper County Chamber Of Commerce  
Promoting Business. Promoting Community.

Anna Mickle  
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**Newnan-Coweta Chamber**

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**Overall Event Flyer**

- Helps members schedule important chamber events for the full year—listing of all key signature events, monthly events, networking events, etc.
- Promotes annual theme (2011 Discover Coweta Series), keeping it front and center at all events and on the website.
- Gives members a great reference tool for Chamber involvement.



Newnan-Coweta  
Chamber of Commerce

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## Newnan-Coweta Chamber

### Virtual Workplace

- Saves the organization money – helps create an entrepreneurial working environment
- Changes culture to support more effective work-life balance—it's a yoga work environment
- Requires strong infrastructure, strategic planning, organization, consistent behaviors and laser focus to ensure accountability



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## Newnan-Coweta Chamber

### Annual Theme – Discover Coweta (2011)

- Uses theme to best describe your goals and focus for the year and helps create synergistic alignment throughout the organization—launch at annual meeting. Carries out theme through all publications, events, etc.
- Refers to theme throughout year in talking points, member communications, board meetings, community meetings, press releases, etc.
- Promotes a clear and consistent message throughout the year




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## Paulding Chamber

### Business Expo Tables – Membership Luncheon

- Tables provided by Chamber and placed around the perimeter of the room. New member gets first table free, \$25 charge for others. Limited to 20 tables.
- Businesses have the opportunity to display, market and distribute promotional items to the attendees (avg. attendance 225-275). Drawing is held at monthly Business Leads meeting for free table.
- This program has become very popular among members and tables are usually booked 2-3 months in advance. Once a business has registered for the Expo the tables are available on a first come first serve basis and participants will often begin arriving hours before to get secure a table in a “prime location.”




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## Polk County Chamber

### Small Business Expo

- Layout is simple – we have 49 (8x10) spaces – the event is held at a renovated middle school in Cedartown (The Purks Building) – it is easily accessible from the downtown area and has plenty of parking spaces.
- We provide one table for each booth space. The charge for the expo is \$65 for members – \$84.50 for non-members and an extra \$5 for electricity.
- Sponsor levels are Presidential (500) Executive (250) Associate (100) – We keep everything simple and affordable so any of our members can participate. We usually have around 200 -300 attendees – it is a one day event – usually on Thursday from 3pm to 6pm. It is very low maintenance and we clear around \$2500 which is great for a Chamber of 315.




Tamaka Hudson  
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## Statesboro-Bulloch County Chamber

### Annual Meeting Video – with punchlines!

- Format – comedic take on the year’s accomplishments. Board members star in the production. Theme mirrors a hobby or occupation of the outgoing chairman. One chairman who loves hunting led the chase “for the big bucks” with his board dressed in camo.
- January 2011 – “Extreme Makeover” Edition. Following retirement of 20-year president of Chamber and Development Authority, 2 new execs – both coincidentally named Thompson – are moving into the historic district office. Renovations are needed and luckily the Chairman is a builder. A real construction site is the stage for the antics of bankers and college deans as crew, hammering and re-wiring until the final scene (“Move that bus!”) unveils the beautiful renovation and welcomes the Thompsons.
- Result – 7-8 minute video is highlight of meeting. Attendees say they don’t want to miss each year’s edition.





Phyllis Thompson  
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 (912) 489-9120



## Sylvester-Worth County Chamber

### Stop and Shop Program

- Encourages our citizens and business owners to make their purchases locally and support our local businesses - we have a Stop and Shop Link on our Webpage that will take you chamber members that participate. The program is offered to EVERYONE not just Chamber participants.
- Not just local promotions. Also state wide - if you are visiting Sylvester-Worth County this symbol is used in all advertising so that when everyone becomes familiar with the Stop and Shop Logo. When they see the sign they will know that that business has special savings for them.

Karen Rackley  
[karenrackley@msn.com](mailto:karenrackley@msn.com)  
 (229) 776-7718

## Toombs-Montgomery Chamber

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### Serving Up Toombs-Montgomery

- To highlight products and services of local retail and small businesses.
- Booth space is sold to businesses for \$50. Corporate sponsorships are \$300 and include additional benefits. Getting quality restaurants to participate is essential for drawing a good crowd. In addition, each business is asked to provide a door prize, and encouraged to have drawings at their booth for their visitors.
- The first event featured nearly 35 booths – 6 of which were corporate sponsors. Admission to the event will be \$10 for 2011. Over 180 tickets were sold last year.

**Bill Mitchell**  
**bmitchell@toombschamber.com**  
**(912) 537-4466**


## Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber

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### Leading Business of the Week

- Random drawing – company must be a member of Chamber for at least 5 years and in good standing
- Presented with banner for their business for one week
- Listed on the home page of the Chamber's website for one week. Listed in the *Progress* magazine. Opportunity for a business to sponsor the banner for one year.

**Betty Morgan**  
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**(229) 247-8100**




**Walton County Chamber**


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**Annual Casino Night & Auction**

- Rent gaming tables from vendor – includes tables, dealers, etc.
- Silent & Live Auction items from chamber member companies
- Event attracts members who don't attend other chamber events – very relaxed and fun event. Average Net over the past 3 years = \$7,800

 **WALTON COUNTY**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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(770) 267-6594





**Wayne County Chamber**

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**Annual Gala – “A Taste of Wayne”**

- Turned Annual Banquet into a fundraiser called “Taste of Wayne” – promotes “BUY LOCAL” program
- Eliminated the largest expense – food; Restaurants provide free samples, live music, business awards, remarks
- Silent Auction = \$10,000; Sponsors = \$7,750; Ticket Sales = \$7,670; Raffle = \$2,000  
Event netted \$20,000

 **Wayne County Chamber**  
of COMMERCE



John Riddle  
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**Wilkinson County Chamber**

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**Board Membership Drive**

- Have each Board Member select 5 people out of their Rolodex that are not Chamber Members. Should be close friends/acquaintances.
- Executive then writes an invitation letter printed on the Board Member's Company Letter Head with the member's signature. Acts like an invitation and puts good "peer pressure" on the prospect to join.
- Out of 50 letters, we usually gain 10 – 15 new members.



**Ralph Staffins**  
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