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327 W. Savannah Avenue
 Valdosta, Georgia 31601

REGIONAL CALENDAR

DECEMBER

⇒ December 24-25 Christmas Holidays

JANUARY

⇒ January 1 New Year's Day
 ⇒ January 21 MLK Holiday
 ⇒ January 23 Clerks Meeting, Valdosta
 ⇒ January 24 RDC Board Meeting, Adel

in the REGION

DECEMBER ■ 2007

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 A leader in the development of local and regional programs since 1963.

Brooks County Industrial Park Ground Breaking Ceremony

The City of Quitman, Brooks County Board of Commissioners, and the Brooks County Development Authority celebrated "a new day" with the official ground breaking at the new Brooks County Industrial Park. The new park will have 30 lots situated on 250 acres just south of Quitman. All of the lots will have road, water, gas, and sewer infrastructure available for future tenants with rail access nearby. City and County officials utilized the funding resources available to make help this dream a reality for Brooks County. The City of Quitman and the Brooks County Development Authority teamed together and with the help of South Georgia Regional Development Center applied for and received several public infrastructure grants that will bring much needed jobs and private investment into their small community. The City of Quitman and Brooks County Development Authority received a **\$995,898 Economic Development Administration** grant to help extend water, sewer, gas, street, and drainage facilities to the entire 250 acre park. This public investment is expected to create 100 jobs and brings over \$7 million in private investment into the local economy. The City sought and received a **\$500,000 Employment Incentive Program** grant to couple with the **\$500,000 OneGeorgia Equity** grant the Brooks County Development Authority received to extend public infrastructure to the 11 acre site of the park's anchor tenant, Roastwood Materials, Inc. Roastwood's location in the new park will create an additional 52 new jobs and \$1.7 in private investment, bringing the total new jobs created for the park to 152 and private investment to an astounding \$8.7 million dollars. The estimated total project cost is over \$3.6 million, but City and County officials are more than happy to fund the remaining cost of the park, realizing the economic benefit such a park will bring to their area.



Roastwood Materials is a start up company that processes lumber for use in construction of decking, exterior siding, and interior paneling. Their innovative process of kiln drying lumber keeps insects and rot damage at bay is the first of its kind with Roastwood being the sole licensee.

If you are considering projects of this nature and would like to receive technical assistance, please contact Kim Wingate at South Georgia Regional Development Center at 229.333.5277.

Information Technology Services
Contact: Vance Roberts

ITS Assisting With Online Banking Project

SGRDC Information Technology Services department is currently working on a project for the City of Valdosta involving the Bank of America and Govolution, LLC for a new online payment system. We will provide the Bank of America with current utility billing information using the Enrolled V+Billing system, which presents the billing data to the customer through a Payment Collection Gateway. Once a customer creates a profile through the new website, they will be able to review their accounts and select one or more for payment. We are creating a system that will pull those payments daily and process them electronically into the City of Valdosta General Ledger System and Customer Service Utility Billing System. This service will provide secure, encrypted communication between the City of Valdosta, the Bank of America, and the end-user for prompt utility payments.



Peggy Butler Recognized for 40 Years of Service



L-R: Marty LeFiles, Sherry Davidson, Peggy Butler and Chairman Lamar Royal

Peggy Butler was recognized at the December Board of Directors meeting for 40 years of service to the South Georgia RDC.

Peggy works in the Economic Community and Development Department. She also works with the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission.

Peggy will be retiring at the end of December from the RDC. She will be truly missed. We wish her all the BEST!

Congratulations Peggy!!!

Loan Program
Contact: Michelle Frey

Loan Department Welcomes New Staff



Richard Welch, a graduate of Valdosta State University, recently joined the RDC loan program staff consisting of Michelle Frey, John Holcombe, and Danver Coney. Richard previously worked in Jacksonville after receiving his degree in Business Management in the summer of 2006. Recently, Richard returned to Valdosta and began his career with the RDC as a loan officer. Since his start date of September 17, 2007, Richard has met with over 35 banks, set up and assisted in several presentations, and has helped with developing several potential loans.

Richard's enthusiasm is evident when he states, "I've been given a great opportunity to help our loan department market specialized commercial loans that will in turn assist in the development of small businesses and help create jobs for the surrounding region." Some of Richard's duties will include educating and marketing SBA and RLF Loans, establishing existing relationships with banks and their customers, and packaging loans. For more information on the RDC's loan program, contact Richard at 229.333.5277 or rwelch@sgrdc.com.

Geographical Information Systems
Contact: Chris/Rachel B. Strom

Tift County Redrawing School Districts

School districts in our region vary in size from small to large. Our region has 9 counties, but 10 school districts each with different sizes and population. The Tift County School System is going through some changes. They currently have schools with K-3, 4-6, K-6, 7-8, 9, 10-12 grades and are going to a K-5, 6-8, 9-12 schooling system. This will require a lot of student shuffling.



First, we will set goals with the Board of Education, i.e. school capacity. Then we will use GIS to geocode all students. The geocoding process takes those addresses and places each student geographically on a map. Then we will take our road centerlines and construct polygons of city and rural blocks. Then assign data to those blocks, including number of students, their grades, etc. We will analyze student populations and other criteria specified by the Board of Education to delineate future school districts for K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 grade schools. Consideration in this analysis will be student home locations, student ages, student race, student grades, school locations, grades served by each school, and total school capacities.



Redrawing districts used to be an arduous and lengthy manual operation. Using SGRDC-GIS, the Tift County Board of Education can easily create and consider alternative scenarios to find the best solution for them. Redrawing districts for a county is a large project, we can also do this for any school district that adds or builds a new school. This process can also be used to redraw fire district and police beats. If you want to change any districts, let us know. Contact South Georgia RDC-GIS Department at 229.333.5277.



Workforce Development
Contact: Marcia Gaskins

WIA ATTENDS STATE WORKFORCE CONFERENCE

South Georgia RDC WIA staff and service providers attended the 9th annual State Workforce Development Conference December 5-7, 2007 in Savannah, GA. The meeting was hosted by the Georgia Department of Labor. Staff participated in workshops and attended the Georgia Workforce Leadership Association meeting, also in Savannah, on December 5, 2007. The focus of this year's conference was building stronger relationships with Georgia's employers in order to create more employment opportunities for our state's special populations- youth, older workers, veterans, people with disabilities and others needing training or assistance. The conference included information on leveraging working business relationships, school-to-work model programs, and the graying of Georgia's workforce.



Community and Economic Development
Contact: Sherry Davidson

Tifton/ Tift County Chosen As WaterFirst Community

On behalf of the SGRDC we would like to congratulate the City of Tifton and Tift County for being selected Georgia's 10th WaterFirst Community! on Thursday December 6th, members of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) presented Tifton and Tift County with this great honor in recognition of their efforts to conserve water resources. According to Deatre Denion, WaterFirst Program Coordinator, "Tifton/Tift County is well above the curve with implementing several efforts to conserve water resources and stewardships."



For example, a 750,000 gallon storage tank, located on U.S. Highway 82, was built and activated in 2005 to serve several surrounding communities, including the Industrial Park area. We would also like to congratulate Tifton/Tift County on becoming a Signature Community! This is a new program established and funded through DCA that helps to move Georgia's communities from "Good to Great," and to raise the bar by helping them to reach even higher levels of achievement and quality of life for their citizens. These efforts will provide effective planning implementation, by taking a comprehensive approach to addressing community improvement issues. For more information contact Angela Wall, Environmental Planner, at 229.333.5277 or awall@sgrdc.com.