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327 W. Savannah Avenue
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

REGIONAL CALENDAR

March

- ⇒ 19 Economic Development Forum, Thomasville
- ⇒ 20 Bike/Ped Meeting, RDC
- ⇒ 26 Board Meeting, Adel

April

- ⇒ 1 GARDC, Atlanta
- ⇒ 6 JLUS Policy Committee Meeting, RDC
- ⇒ 13 So. GA. Partnership, Valdosta
- ⇒ 14 MPO Policy Committee Meeting, RDC
- ⇒ 15 Regional Clerks Meeting, Lowndes County
- ⇒ 21 RDC Legislative Appreciation Dinner, Cook County
- ⇒ 23 Chamber-EDA Lucheon, Quitman
- ⇒ 26-27 ACCG

May

- ⇒ 3-5 EDC Conference, Atlanta

in the REGION



FEBRUARY/ MARCH
▪ 2009

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

Groundbreaking: City of Lakeland 2006 CDBG Water Improvements Underway

The City of Lakeland hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, March 2 to mark the beginning of the city's water system improvement project. Mayor Bill Darsey led the campaign to fund needed improvements to the city's water system with the full support of the council members of the city. With the assistance of the RDC, the city applied for a DCA CDBG Grant in 2006 and was awarded \$500,000 to benefit residents of the southeastern portion of town. After receiving this award, Lakeland also received additional funding in the form of a 0% interest GEFA loan. In total, the city has obtained over \$2.7 million dollars to be spent on renovating their 1930s water system. Also as part of the project, the city will completely refurbish the existing two water towers which currently operate in Lakeland. For the water system improvements, the city received a bid from Standard Contractors for just over \$1.5 million to replace the entire water system throughout the community. Currently, the majority of the city's water system uses old pipe, which when exposed to water over a prolong period, will begin to rust, which results in the dark, black water that has plagued Lakeland for so many years.



Members of the Lakeland Mayor & Council and invited guests break ground for the City's CDBG Project.

City leaders are also excited because, due to the current economy, construction prices were under budget, which will allow the city to make additional improvements associated with their water system, such as installing radio meter readers. According to Mayor Darsey, most of the meters in town can be read instantly from City Hall using this new technology. The South Georgia RDC would like to congratulate the Mayor and Council and citizens of Lakeland on their new water system. We look forward to our continue success with Lakeland in the future.

South Georgia Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Forum

Bicycle and pedestrian issues have become increasingly important in the region in recent years for many reasons. With gas prices rising to record highs and the economy reaching near record lows, many people have been inclined to change their mode of transportation from automobiles to bicycles, while others choose to walk. Others, who may not be walking or riding for economic reasons, have begun to see the environmental and health benefits that can be gained by increased use of non-motorized vehicles. The bottom line is that for any number of reasons, people are beginning to use alternative modes of transportation to move about their community.



With the increased numbers of bicycles and pedestrians using road networks that were designed for motor vehicles, it has become clear that upgrades to the infrastructure system and education of walkers, bicyclists, and motorists is critical. This is why many communities have created regional and local bicycle and pedestrian plans that outline necessary infrastructure improvements as well as non-infrastructure needs, such as education and enforcement of laws and regulations, that are necessary to make an area more accessible and safer

for both motor vehicles and those who choose to walk or ride a bike.

The South Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was created and adopted in order to lay out a framework for how to best make South Georgia a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly region. The main goal of the Plan is to assure the safest and most connected system for users of non-motorized transportation as possible. The Plan looked at existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and ways that these facilities could be improved or expanded to develop an "adequate and connected bicycle and pedestrian network."

The SGRDC will be hosting a forum on Friday, March 20 from 9:00a.m.-12p.m. to revisit the Regional plan as well as local plans in order to stimulate discussion on how best to ensure that these plans are implemented. The forum will feature a presentation by David Kenemer from the Coosa Valley RDC and *Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia* on strategies to make our region more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Refreshments will be provided and we ask that attendees RSVP to David Morgan at dmorgan@sgrdc.com or by calling the RDC at 229-333-5277.

Loan Services
Contact: Michelle Frey

Azalea Sleep Lab, Inc.

Azalea Sleep Lab, Inc. provides sleep diagnostic testing for customers who suffer from a variety of sleep issues. The sleep lab offers a comfortable outpatient procedure that is committed to helping patients reclaim restful nights of sleep. Azalea sleep lab has been owned and operated by Larry Simpson since January of 2007. The new facility will create two new jobs and allow Azalea Sleep to run more sleep studies with very little extra cost.

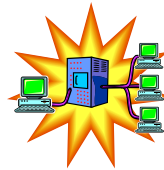


Azalea Sleep Lab's new facility will be located at 2935 North Ashley Street, Building E, Valdosta, Georgia 31602. The building was financed by the South Georgia RDC through a Small Business Administration 504 loan in participation with Guardian Bank. Visit Azalea Sleep Lab's web site at www.azaleasleep.com

Information Technology Services
Contact: Vance Roberts

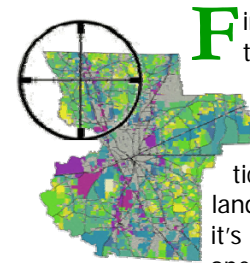
SGRDC Next Generation Networks

IT network infrastructure is defined as a combination of hardware and software technologies that control an organization's information and communication flow. With the emergence of Web 2.0 applications that use the internet as a primary delivery mechanism, the need for highly resilient networks that can securely deliver network services while maximizing the use of available bandwidth is becoming paramount. The South Georgia RDC is meeting the challenge of this technological change by rolling out next generation tools powered by Cisco Systems, Symantec, and Microsoft within the data center that allow the IT support staff to better monitor and direct these critical network traffic flows. The aforementioned solutions all lead to higher network availability, faster problem resolution, and a more secure computing environment for our customer base and within our organization.



Geographic Information Systems
Contact: Chris/Rachel Strom

GIS Develops Custom Solutions for Valdosta Lowndes Development Authority



Finding the right location for new industry in a community is a lot like looking for that proverbial needle in the haystack. The "needle" being the right combination of natural land characteristics and access to resources. If a piece of land doesn't have the right qualities, well, it's just more hay. SGRDC-GIS has developed a custom solution for the Valdosta-Lowndes Industrial Authority (VLIA) that makes that search for potential industrial sites a lot easier.

Using several custom-built analysis models in GIS software, the percentage of wetlands, soil suitability, total size, and proximity to adequate roads, rail and utilities are quantified for each and every parcel in Lowndes County. This means that each parcel receives a score for each characteristic. Using those results, any parcel in the county can be reviewed for its score for either a single characteristic, or the overall total score of all of the qualities of the parcel. Furthermore, the analysis in the models is weighted to compensate for more or less important characteristics. The snapshot above is color-coded based upon the total score of all criteria measurements.

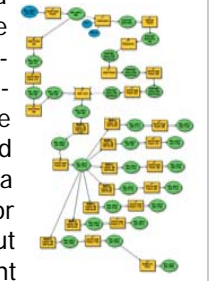
So how is it being used? Since each parcel of land now carries with it a score for each characteristic, it's as simple as querying the database to identify those that scored highest overall or within a particular category. This has been done and a

"short-list" of parcels has been produced that are being investigated further for feasibility of acquisition and development by the authority.

The impacts of this new analysis model have been significant at the industrial authority. Authority Director, Brad Lofton said "the industrial site selection model SGRDC developed for our organization is the most objective and practical tool I have ever used. The list of final sites filtered through the program is the sole product of a data driven and scientific process, and it has been tremendously effective for the VLIA."

A model for success....

To the right is a snapshot of just one of the analysis models. As you can see, these models are really just a flowchart of GIS analysis commands that are initiated with a single click in ArcGIS software. The advantages of using analysis models for tasks like industrial site selection are numerous. The most dramatic benefit is found in time savings. To analyze every parcel in a county without GIS would take weeks or months. With these models, that work is cut down to less than an hour. Another significant benefit models like these offer is the opportunity for repeatability a year or two later when parcel configurations, utility systems and road networks have all changed or grown.



We all change our minds sometimes. If you change your criteria or want to tweak the scoring, the appropriate piece of the model can be modified without reinventing the entire thing. And finally, analysis is objective therefore allowing for defensible decisions.

If you'd like learn more about GIS can help you, give us a call. We are happy to help!

Community & Economic Development
Contact: Sherry Davidson

SGRDC Staff Receives 2008 Watershed Award

The South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC) is proud to report that the Environmental Department was presented the 2008 Watershed Award at the Georgia River Network Conference held in Athens, GA on February 20, 2009. This award is to recognize governmental agencies that have successfully implemented the goals of Georgia Adopt - A - Stream (AAS). The goals of Georgia AAS are to: (1) increase public awareness of the



Richard Batten & Angela Wall

State's nonpoint source pollution and water quality issues, (2) provide citizens with the tools and training to evaluate and protect their local waterways, (3) encourage partnerships between citizens and local government, and (4) collect quality baseline water quality data.

The SGRDC teamed up with Georgia AAS to provide technical information and assistance to citizens interested in preserving and restoring the banks and vegetation along waterways in the Suwannee Basin. This network will educate citizens about the importance of protecting riparian corridors and provide landowners with the information they need to restore the riparian zone on their property to reduce erosion, improve water quality and provide wildlife habitat with native plantings. The SGRDC will continue its efforts to educate citizens and provide technical assistance to help maintain and preserve the natural resources in the Suwannee Basin.