

Chamber Board HeadlineS

2014 Chamber Board of Directors

Carlton Holley, Chairman of the Board
(Fowler, Holley, Rambo & Stalvey)

Bruce Allred (Smith Drug Company)

Baha Zeidan (Azalea Health)

James McGahee (Associate Member)

Jan Brice (Langdale Place)

Jay Prince (Prince Automotive Group)

Kevin McCraney (Georgia Power Co.)

Lee McArthur (ING)

Marty LeFiles (LeFiles Valenti Financial
Advisors, LLC)

Michael Lee (Ameris Bank)

Mike Hill (Mike Hill Real Estate)

Myrna Ballard (Chamber of Commerce)

Ron Borders (Real Living Realty Advisors)

Sue Cox (Covington's and 306 North)

Tom Carroll (Sunset Farm Foods, Inc.)

General Counsel - **Tom Gooding** (Blackburn,
Elliott & Gooding)

2014 Chamber Community Council:

- **Angie Crawford** (State Farm Insurance)
- **Beth McCrary** (BB&T Corporation)
- **Brad Folsom** (Moore, Clarke, Duvall & Rodgers, P.C.)
- **Chris Lilly** (Lowe's Dist. Center)
- **Clint Wills** (South Georgia Pecan Co.)
- **Curt Fowler** (Fowler & Company)
- **Dan Hoffman** (Young, Thagard, Hoffman, Smith & Lawrence, LLP)
- **David Waller** (Associate Member)
- **Heather Ferguson** (Stifel)
- **Hugh Chancy** (Chancy Drugs)
- **Jerry Jennett** (Georgia Gulf Sulfur Corp.)
- **Lacie Guy** (Valdosta Chiropractic & Rehab)
- **Louis Levy** (Associate Member)
- **Molly Deese** (Wild Adventures Theme Park)
- **Ron Zaccari** (Guardian Bank)
- **Ryan Williams** (Nexstep Technology Services, Inc.)
- **Scott James** (Talk 92.1)
- **Sean Panizzi** (Teamtemps Personnel Staffing, Inc.)
- **Stacy Bush** (Bush Wealth Management)
- **William Grow** (South Health District)

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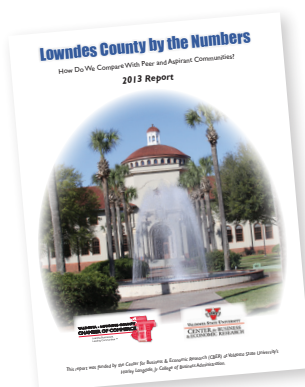


Noted VSU Economist Addresses Chamber Board

Dr. Cynthia Tori, an economics professor at the Langdale College of Business at VSU, shared her thoughts with the Chamber Board on the recent media story regarding Valdosta's low ranking among Metro Areas nationwide on two important measures of community economic health. Dr. Tori noted that the Valdosta Metro Area was ranked third from the bottom among the 365 Metro Areas in the U.S. on median family income and percent of population below poverty. She noted that the three more rural counties (*i.e.*, Brooks, Lanier and Echols) that are included in the Valdosta Metro Area are not to blame for our low ranking, as their combined populations make up only 20% of the total population of the Metro Area. Moreover, Lanier County's median family income is actually higher than Lowndes County's, and Brooks and Lanier Counties' poverty rates are lower than Lowndes County's poverty rate.



Dr. Cynthia Tori,
VSU Langdale College
of Business Economics
Professor



Dr. Tori also referenced a report called **“Lowndes County By The Numbers”** that is produced by the College of Business each year for the Chamber's Annual Economic Summit, which shows Lowndes County ranks **11th among the 15 peer counties** in the south-eastern U.S. on 11 measures of community economic health. To view the full report go to: www.valdostachamber.com/2013economicsummit

“Comparing Lowndes County with the communities that rank #1 and #2, it’s clear that they have a smaller portion of their labor forces involved in retail and hospitality industry jobs than we do, and a higher portion working in higher wage manufacturing. As the Chamber has been saying for years, it’s the mix of jobs that matters.”

Dr. Cynthia Tori

Asked if these statistics should be cause for concern in our community, Dr. Tori said, “If we are satisfied with these rankings, then we can continue the status quo. If we want our community to do better, we will have to identify a community-wide strategy to accomplish this.”

	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	% Below Poverty	Population
Brooks	\$35,284	\$45,599	22.3%	15,403
Lanier	\$41,867	\$50,498	21.9%	10,400
Echols	\$27,933	\$39,000	36.3%	3,988
Lowndes	\$38,348	\$50,089	23.4%	114,552
GEORGIA	\$49,604	\$59,198	17.4%	

American Community Survey, Census.gov Median household income includes income of everyone over 15 years who lives in the household, whether or not they are related (family, non-family, single person, etc.). Median family income includes income of everyone over 15 years who is part of a family.

“The economic information presented by Dr. Tori is a huge concern to the Chamber and our Board. We feel that a significant change is needed in our community to improve our area’s standing in these key economic indicators. The Chamber is prepared to work with the other key organizations within the Valdosta-Lowndes County community to develop an overall economic growth strategy for our community. A true collaborative effort by the key business and governmental organizations will be needed to accomplish a positive change in our community dynamics going forward.”

Carl Holley (Fowler, Holley, Rambo and Stalvey)
2014 Chairman of the Board



Upcoming Chamber Events:

Chamber Choice Awards

Thursday, April 3 • 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Sponsored by: **Citizens Community Bank**

Rainwater Conference Center

RSVP to pmartin@valdostachamber.com

Visit: www.ValdostaChamber.com/Top10Events

World Class Employee Recognition

Tuesday, May 6 • 7:30 - 9 a.m.

Sponsored by: **First State Bank & Trust and**

ELeadOne/Fresh Beginnings

Time for Nominations: www.ValdostaChamber.com

Nominations are due by March 12!

VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Leading Businesses.
Leading Communities.™



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