

Wednesday, November 19 2008



Valdosta - Lowndes
County Chamber of
Commerce

“Creating Entrepreneurial Communities”

Sowing Entrepreneur and Economic Development Success



Valdosta, Georgia

- Interstate – I-75
- 15 minutes from Florida Line
- Central Georgia
- Valdosta State University
- Moody Air force Base
- Regional Technical College
- Regional Hospital
- Regional Airport



The CHALLENGE!

- Low Average Weekly Wage
- Low Unemployment Rate
- Low Per Capita Income
- Manufacturing is Flat
- Losing College/University Graduates



Our Philosophy

Economic Gardening - The Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce decided to follow the philosophy developed by the economic professionals of Littleton, CO. The City of Littleton, Colorado pioneered an entrepreneurial alternative to the traditional economic development practice of recruiting industries. The new strategies focused on growing job and wealth through small, local companies, and that the job of economic developers should be to create nurturing environments for these companies.



Entrepreneur Friendly -

Governor Sonny Perdue developed the states first entrepreneur and small business development initiative, *Entrepreneur Friendly Communities*. Valdosta was the 1st EF community designated out of 159 counties in the state.

The PLAN!

Home Grown Entrepreneurs Program

- Create small business and entrepreneur development tools to help grow the local economy, the S.E.E.D.S. Center of South Georgia.
- Create jobs for our technical college and university graduates.



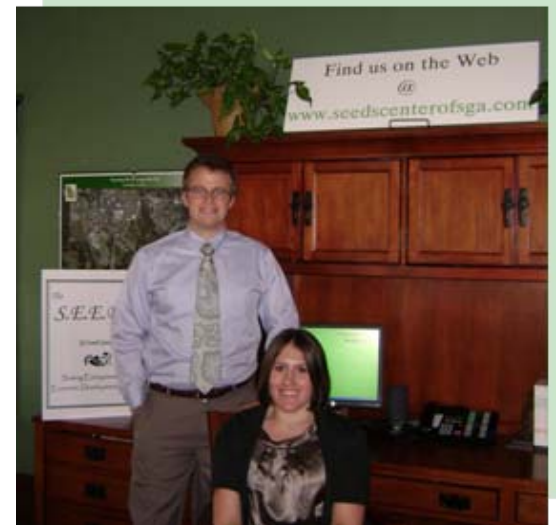
S.E.E.D.S. Center of South Georgia Clients

- Start-up Businesses/ Entrepreneurs
- Existing/Expanding Businesses
- Commercial Realtors/Developers
- Economic Developers, Non-profits, etc.

S.E.E.D.S. Center of South Georgia Services

FREE

- Resource Library and Work Station
- Market Research
- Targeted Sales Leads
- Professional Consultants
- Business Plan Competition
- Entrepreneurs In Action
- Corporate Coaches
- Small Business Owners Network
- Lead Group/Power Networking



Essential Partnerships



- Regional Chambers
- South Georgia Regional Library System
- VSU & Valdosta Technical College
- Small Business Development Center
- South Georgia Regional Development Center
- Commercial Bankers
- City and County Governments
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
“Entrepreneur Friendly” team

Anticipated Results

- More jobs for college and university graduates
- Higher average weekly wages and per capita incomes
- Grow new and innovative companies
- Higher quality of life for all residents

Lessons Learned

- Hiring mature professionals
- More detailed tracking and follow-up systems



Thanks!