Program Summary

In the first quarter of 2009, the GSW Center for Business and Economic Development has been very active. During this quarter plans were finalized and training delivered for the EF Youth Entrepreneur training; the Annual Economic Outlook Luncheon was held. Both are described in more detail below. Director Cheokas continues to work one-on-one with small business owners in our service area. Consulting was offered to 17 small business clients this quarter.

Activities in which Director Cheokas participated during the quarter were:

- **EFIF Implementation Grant – Youth Entrepreneurship Training.** Director Cheokas delivered her youth entrepreneurship program to high school students at Americus High and Young Ambassadors. Focus for training on seeing entrepreneurship as a viable career path.

- **Economic Outlook Luncheon – February 10th.** Director Cheokas organizes this annual event as part of the Center’s outreach services. Mr. Terry Coleman, Deputy Commissioner, Georgia Department of Agriculture, delivered keynote address. Luncheon was attended by 90 local business people. Topic of address was how South Georgia’s economy is linked to agriculture and transporting these products. Deputy Coleman also highlighted the opportunities available in the development of alternative fuels.

- **Georgia Academy of Economic Development – Each year a group of individuals from the local community are invited to attend the GA Academy of ED which is sponsored through the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).** Director Cheokas was one of the featured speakers for the January 28th meeting. She discussed the importance of small business to our economy; not only in our local area, but the impact it has on a state and national level.

- **Leadership Sumter – Director Cheokas was invited by the Chamber of Commerce to speak to the 2009 Leadership group on the services offered through the GSW – Center for Business and Economic Development.**

- **Robins Logistic Air Base, March 25th – Mrs. Cheokas serves as coordinator for the Robins LAB internship program.** Twice a year representatives from the Base visit campus to talk to Jr/Sr business students about their internship program. Since becoming coordinator, Cheokas noted that GSW students may not be great in number, but they are great in quality – both Spring 2009 applicants were interviewed and one was selected for the program.
Program Measures Impact Statements

January – March 2009: A total 17 new client files were opened for the first quarter of 2009.

First quarter client profile:
- Start-ups – 47%
- Existing businesses – 53%
- Total employment (existing companies) – 140
- Consulting Hours - 105
- Capital investment of $ 0
- In-kind investment of $ 4,200 (EFIF)
- Grant funding $ 4,200 (EFIF)
- Total investment $ 8,400

Points of Interest

Point One:
Americus Chamber of Commerce – Director Cheokas was the recipient of the Economic Developer of the Year award, 2008. She received this award for her commitment and work with the Entrepreneur Friendly grant. Cheokas applied for funding which has been used specifically for marketing training, youth entrepreneurship training, and local advertising campaign “See what I found/did/ate/watched/saw/(etc.) in Sumter County . . . “. She will serve on the 2009 Economic Development committee.

Point Two:
The Center for Business and Economic Development at GSW provides support services to existing business in the area served by GSW. Assisting with the connection of our institution with the business community is a central mission. Director Cheokas discussed with GSW SOBA professors Dawn Valentine, Marketing and Liz Wilson, HR, about the possibility of offering a one day workshop for area small business owners. They have agreed. Plans are being made to offer the workshop in the Fall of 2009 and will include the Economic Summit (R. Valentine and P. Szmedra) as the third component. This workshop will give the attendees a chance to see how their businesses can problem solve, thrive, and prepare for better times.

Another GSW- CBED, WIN, WIN!

Advocacy

At the beginning of each legislative term, the governor will invite groups of legislators for dinner at the Governor’s Mansion. As in years past, Director Cheokas attended this event with her husband, Rep. Mike Cheokas. Governor Perdue spoke with Mrs. Cheokas about the work of the GSW Center for Business and Economic Development. He specifically asked about the Hospital and businesses related to the health care industry. Director Cheokas
explained how the GSW-CBED is working in collaboration other state agencies to provide consulting, non-traditional funding, traditional funding via the recovery package, training, and other services to SB owners.

The GSW Center for Business continues to collaborate with the Small Business Development Center consultants; identifying available resources for small business clients in our area. Upcoming Continuing Education classes for Spring 2009 include:

- Business Boot Camp – Process Improvement 101
- Owning Your Own Business: Step One