Georgia Southwestern State University  
Center for Business and Economic Development  
Advancement and Impact Report

First Quarter  
January - March 2010

Program Summary

In the first quarter of 2010, 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:

- Economic Outlook Luncheon - February 9, 2010. Director Cheokas organizes this annual event as part of the Center’s outreach services. This year’s event will be co-sponsored by the Americus Rotary Club. Keynote speakers will be Dr. Philip Szmedra and Dr. Randall Valentine, both professors in the School of Business at GSW. They will discuss current economic conditions; to include a national, state, and local perspective. The program was of much interest to the audience. Bob Slender with the GSW-IT Department filmed the presentation for use on GSW-TV.

- Griffin Bell Quail Hunt Dinner - February 11, 2010. The Griffin Bell Hunt is a sponsored event held each year to bring potential businesses to the Americus Sumter County area. Director Cheokas attended the dinner as part of the CBED outreach to represent the services offered through the School of Business Administration at GSW.

- Marion County High School, Future Business Leaders of America – February 27, 2010. FBLA is a National organization with groups operating within Georgia high schools. Mrs. Cheokas was asked to serve as a judge in both the entrepreneur and professional job interview categories. An excellent opportunity to meet business teachers and students at the high school level.

- Entrepreneur Friendly Summit, Milledgeville, GA - March 3, 2010. An EF Summit is held every other year. The summit offers all statewide EF communities and EF Champions to come together to learn and hear of innovative and successful programs being implemented throughout the state. Director Cheokas learned of two programs that could be duplicated in other communities. One involved private and public partnerships with middle school science and English classes (VW manufacturing plant with County School system). The second program was a funding program developed by Michelin Tire Company to sever specific
communities where they had closed plants. The funding is granted to individuals to start their own businesses.

- **Americus Sumter County Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Sumter Class 2010 - March 17, 2010.** Director Cheokas spoke to the participants of the Leadership Sumter class on the importance of small business to the economy of our area. She provided specific information demonstrating the steady growth of family owned small businesses in our area. They tend to weather hard economic times better.

- **Robins Logistic Air Base - March 25, 2010.** This was the second visit to our campus during the academic year for Robins. Mrs. Cheokas serves as coordinator for the Robins LAB internship program. There were 11 students in attendance with 8 applying.

- **Southwest Georgia Economic Summit, Andrews College, Cuthbert, GA – April 1, 2010.** Congressman Sanford Bishop’s office funded and supported a comprehensive review of the economic conditions existing in rural southwest Georgia. Congressman Bishop had enlisted the assistance of the Fanning Institute (UGA) to survey a nine county region to determine areas of opportunity and collaboration. Director Cheokas participated in the conversation centered on infrastructure improvements, especially broadband capabilities and availability. Having internet connective provides a global platform for rural small businesses.

**Program Measures Impact Statements**

January – March 2010: A total 17 new client files were opened for the first quarter of 2010. 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

**Point of Interest**

Americus Chamber of Commerce – Director Cheokas continues 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 “Plant, grow, and harvest rewards in Sumter County . . . “. She will serve on the 2010 Economic Development committee.
Director Cheokas has worked with local newspaper and radio station to provide matching funding for small business marketing. The Americus Times Recorder will match dollar-for-dollar $2,200, total of $4,400, in print advertising. With the assistance of Rachel Murie, City Public Relations department, an ad campaign was developed to promote Sumter Country as being an Entrepreneur Friendly. Plant, Grow, Harvest – themed ads will run in the fall of 2010 - a total of 12 weeks (¼ page ads). Chamber of Commerce will track impact and provide results. Schedule run dates September – December.

Note: The WDEC also matched dollar-for-dollar $2,000, total of $4,000, for 30 second radio spots that will ran from February to June.

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 2010** include:

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

GGC
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