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

**Fourth Quarter**  
**October - December 2008**

**Program Summary**

During the fourth quarter of 2008, the GSW Center for Business and Economic has participated in following activities in support of small businesses in the Americus/Sumter County service area.

- **EFIF Implementation Grant** – Second offering of Maximum Marketing training began in September concluding in mid-October. A graduation luncheon was held in recognition of the attendees’ accomplishments. These training classes were offered to small business owners on marketing strategies; topics included, how to improve marketing plan, identify target market, low budget grassroots marketing techniques. Sessions taught by instructors from the SBDC Network. Ms. Suzanne Barnett from Valdosta State did a tremendous job of engaging the 22 participants. Training was a 6 week program offered to area small business owners and 5 auditors. Plans are to follow up this training with financial and human resource management training. Director Cheokas will discuss expanding opportunities with the Chamber of Commerce Small Business Committee on which she serves.

- **Youth Entrepreneurship Training** – As part of EFIF grant funding, Mrs. Cheokas held a three part mini-seminar on Youth Entrepreneurship training for the high school students who attend Early College. First session was held on October 20th; this program introduced the students to entrepreneurship as career path. The second session was instructed by the GSW - SIFE team. The SIFE team used a small business ownership/business plan learning module for training. The last session was the highlight of the series – a panel of small business owners shared their story with the students, followed by Q&A time. Training will continue with other high school groups during March 2009.

- **Director Cheokas will serve on the Chamber of Commerce’s Economic Development committee for 2009.** She attended a Chamber retreat November 13th where a plan of action was developed to include continued support for training classes and special programs such as roundtable discussion meetings for small business owners.

- **Perry Chamber of Commerce Retreat:** Director Cheokas was invited to lead the strategy planning discussion for the Perry Chamber of Commerce annual retreat meeting held Nov. 13th. She assisted their Board of Directors with identifying short term and long term goals. Break out groups were used to determine action, tracking, measurement, and report formats.
Program Measures Impact Statements

October – December 2008: A total 5 new client files were opened for the fourth quarter of 2008.

Fourth quarter client profile:
  o Start-ups – 60%
  o Existing businesses – 40%
  o Total employment (existing companies) – 18 (excludes Chamber members)
  o Capital investment of $ 95,000 (*projected)
  o In-kind investment of $ 3,500 (EFIF)
  o Grant funding $ 5,800 (EFIF)
  o Total investment $104,300 *

Year Ending 2008: Client Profile
  o Start-ups – 48%
  o Existing businesses – 52%
  o Total employment (existing companies) - 612
  o Capital investment of $ 7,412,000
  o In-kind investment of $ 12,500 (EFIF)
  o Grant funding $ 15,800 (EFIF)
  o Total investment $7,940,800

YTD Total Client Count: 83
YTD Total Consulting Hours: 610
Average Consulting per Client: 7.35

Advocacy

Ms. Cheokas continues to serve as a liaison for the School of Business in the GSW service area. She attends chamber meetings in Sumter and Schley counties. She is currently serving on the Small Business Committee of the Americus Chamber.

All activities further enhance the reputation of the Center, expand the economic impact upon the region, and connect the community at large with resources available at Georgia Southwestern State University.

Human Interest

The Center for Business and Economic Development at GSW provides support services to existing business in the area served by GSW. Assisting with the connecting of our institution with the business community is a central mission. Again, during the fourth quarter, just such an opportunity arose with the Maximum Marketing training.
Review: Through our Entrepreneur Friendly initiative small business owners in our community expressed that additional training in the area of marketing was key to their sustainable success. Specifically, the focus should be on how to most effectively market and promote their individual businesses on “shoe-string” budgets.

Director Cheokas asked Dr. Dawn Valentine and Dr. Cecilia Maldonado, Marketing professors with the GSW – SOB, to critique the marketing “commercials” of local business owners during their Maximum Marketing class graduation. Both agreed and the response was most favorable. Having these two academically qualified professionals critique individual proposals was an invaluable service. Often times small business owners do not have the knowledge or expertise to successfully promote their products and/or services. Being able to offer them an opportunity to work with our faculty was certainly an added value; not only for business owners, but it also reinforced the partnership Georgia Southwestern State University has with the community at large.

Looking Forward

UPDATE:
Economic Outlook Luncheon – Plans have been finalized for the annual Economic Outlook luncheon to be held Feb. 10th, 2009. This annual event is sponsored by the GSW – Center for Business and Economic Development. Deputy Commission Terry Coleman, GA Department of Agriculture will be the guest speaker for this year’s event. Letters of invitation and registration flyers have been prepared and will be mailed the second week of January 2009. Dr. Kooti, Dean, GSW-School of Business will provide the local area economic outlook.

UPDATE:
OneGeorgia Community block grant was not awarded to the City of Americus for the Perry Brothers Oil project. Instead the City was approved for a GEFA loan. The City has a positive rating and therefore did not meet OneGeorgia grant criteria. The project continues to progress with projected opening date of new retail/fuel operation location for Perry Brothers in Fall 2009. Job retention and creation will remain the same. Investment equity will continue to be used.

Of special note – Sumter Regional Hospital has a pending letter of agreement with Phoebe Putney Hospital (Albany) group to lease and operate as Phoebe Putney – Sumter. With the new agreement, Phoebe has expressed plans to relocate the health care facility. The prospective location is the northwest quadrant of Hwy 280 (Plains Hwy) and Hwy 19 S. This property is directly across from Perry Brothers’ new location - - providing convenience store, fast food, tires, and fuel products. If the new hospital is built here, Perry Brothers’ initial growth projections will exponentially increase due to visibility and traffic count.