

RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION

1428 SECOND AVENUE
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

228 WEST LAMAR STREET
AMERICUS, GEORGIA

706-256-2910

2013-2018
Comprehensive
Economic Development
Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

The River Valley Regional Commission has provided assistance for the sixteen counties and thirty-five cities in its region in achieving their economic development goals as well as completing and updating the annual comprehensive economic development strategy. Essential to achieving these goals is an economic roadmap designed to diversify and strengthen the regional economy with the input of both the public and private sector.

To aid in the future growth of the River Valley region, the RVRC staff has prepared the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which will provide the information necessary to analyze the statistics and demographics of the region, as well as the issues the communities will face and opportunities for growth and economic development over the next five (5) years. The CEDS is designed to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the region as a whole, to better develop economic strategies to guide the region in the upcoming years. The CEDS is a five (5) year plan covering the period 2013-2018 with annual updates.

The Purpose of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

is to analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources. This will provide critical information that will help to identify the existing and future needs of the region. This process will aid local governments in developing policies and strategies that will drive growth within the region for the next five(5) years.

The River Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy will include the following information and topics:

- Background of the economic development situation of the River Valley region which includes a discussion of the economy, population, geography, workforce development and use, transportation access, resources, environment, and other pertinent information
- A analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities
- CEDS Goals and Objectives - Defining Regional Expectations necessary to solve the economic problems, or capitalize on the resources of the region
- Community and Private Sector Participation. - A discussion of the relationship between the community in general and the private sector in the development and implementation of the CEDS
- Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities - A section which identifies regional projects, programs, and activities designed to implement the Goals

and Objectives of the CEDS as well as local projects. A prioritization of vital projects, programs, and activities that address the region's greatest needs or that will best enhance the region's competitiveness will also be included.

- CEDS Plan of Action - This is the implementation plan for the goals and objectives in a manner that
 - promotes economic development and opportunity;
 - fosters effective transportation access;
 - enhances and protects the environment
 - maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with any applicable State or local workforce investment strategy;
 - balances resources through sound management of physical development; and
 - obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.
- Performance Measures - Performance will be evaluated in the annual update based on the following measures:
 - number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS;
 - number and types of investments undertaken in the region;
 - number of jobs retained in the region;
 - amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS; and
 - changes in the economic environment of the region.

I. Background

The River Valley Region is composed of sixteen (16) very diverse counties. These counties and cities range from being developed to extremely rural. Their capacity for economic growth varies throughout the region. As a result, the economic development goals for the communities throughout the River Valley Region will also be very different, and will need to be addressed accordingly.

Rural - Areas not expected to urbanize or require urban services such as water or sewer, etc. over the next twenty (20) years.

The majority of the River Valley Region is defined as undeveloped, forested, or agricultural lands, resulting in large tracts of rural lands which face little to no development pressures. Comprising of 10% of Georgia's 159 counties, the River Valley region was home to 20% (8) of the state's forty less developed counties in 1990, 27% (11) in 2000 and 25% in 2010. In addition, ninety percent (90%) of the region was designated as an agriculture/forest or other "undeveloped" land use. These areas are facing very little development pressure but still want to maintain their 'rural' nature while pursuing sustainable economic development. The goal of these areas will be to concentrate any new growth around existing towns and other developments, as to not consume greenfields, while encouraging sustainable agricultural and industrial techniques to preserve and protect the environmental features of these areas.

Developing - Areas likely to become urbanized and have water and sewer available or require urban services (i.e. water and sewer etc.) within the next 20 years.

These areas are those within the region that are experiencing some growth and as a result will be facing more development pressures in the coming years. The goal for these communities will be to ensure that new development is appropriate and addresses the character of the local community. Developing areas will also still have some of the concerns of rural communities, especially in the counties and unincorporated areas. These communities must be careful to avoid allowing new businesses to consume agricultural and rural lands at a rapid rate, and should therefore encourage infill and redevelopment of existing downtowns and communities.

Developed - Areas demonstrating urban development patterns where urban services such as water and sewer services, etc. are being provided.

These areas of the region have been fully developed and will continue to grow in the upcoming decade. They will also face the most development pressures of any

other communities in the region. In these cities and counties it will be vital that they consider sustainable development practices in order to conserve and protect the natural environments, as well as to reduce the burdens of local governments in terms of providing services such as water and sewer. Other issues, such as alternative transportation, become more viable and should be taken into consideration.

Transportation Alternatives

Transportation alternatives refer to a variety of means of traveling within a community, as opposed to solely using automobiles. These alternatives include walking, cycling, using buses, trains or trolleys, or flying. It is important for communities to have a comprehensive transportation system that includes as many different means of getting from one destination to another as possible.

Some limited form of public transportation is available throughout the region. However, with the exception of the Columbus/Muscogee County area, these systems are extremely rural, and run on limited schedules and lines. The RVRC is coordinating with several counties in the region to develop the Pataula County Transit System to expand the public transportation offered in the region. Bicycling as an alternative means of transportation has gained more traction in the region, with several communities specifically planning for bicycle routes. However, the infrastructure required to encourage pedestrian activity throughout the region is fairly lacking. Many communities do not have a network of sidewalks extensive enough to connect necessary amenities. In addition, none of the local governments in the region have passed sidewalk ordinances requiring developers to provide user-friendly sidewalks.

Heritage Preservation

Many different elements contribute to a region's heritage, including its historic and culturally significant structures and sites, which contribute to the region's identity and character. As this all relates to sense of place and regional identity, preservation of these sites and structures is important to maintaining the unique character of the region. These sites and structures can often provide a strong base for future growth and economic development, and are therefore essential to the continued health and sustainability of the region.

While the River Valley region is very rich in historic character, local governments throughout the region have taken few steps to specifically protect historic resources. The majority of the cities in the region have designated historic districts within their communities, and has at least six (6) active historic preservation commissions. While many cities have expressed interest in new development complementing existing historic structures, only three of the cities in the region have passed ordinances making this a requirement.

Environmental Protection

There are many environmentally sensitive areas within the region that need protection, including various bodies of water, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and groundwater recharge areas. Protecting these resources not only ensures the environmental health of the region for future generations, but can promote a community's sense of place, and therefore economic prospects.

Throughout the region, local governments have consistently worked to not only inventory and assess their natural resources, but have also taken the necessary measures to protect them. For example, many communities have passed Part V Environmental Ordinances, which include provisions for protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands protection, river corridor protection, and use other land use regulatory measure aimed at protecting natural resources. However, all local governments within the region should consider adopting Part V standards. In addition, tree ordinances will help to not only protect the mature trees in the region, but also require replanting of trees removed as a result of new development.

Population

The population of a community is evaluated on several factors including overall growth, growth of different segments including race and age, and income. One of the important factors in assessing the health of a community is analyzing the changes in the population over time and determining patterns and causes.

The region's population has grown 5% from 2000 to 2010. This growth has not been uniform throughout the region. Some counties have actually lost population. The region's population is aging faster than the rest of the state - almost twice as fast. The minority population has grown significantly with a significant increase in the Latino and Asian population. This mirrors the State of Georgia; however, the population growth does not. The State of Georgia grew by slightly over 18% from 2000 to 2010. The region's median household income is over one-third (1/3) lower than that of the State of Georgia.

Economic Development

Growth Preparedness

In order to be adequately prepared for both population and economic growth, a region must ensure that the necessary social, physical and regulatory infrastructure is in place. This includes several important factors, such as an appropriately trained local workforce, public infrastructure to include water and sewer lines, and the encouragement of infill and redevelopment in areas in which infrastructure already exists. This strategy has the benefit of seeing redevelopment in underutilized parts of the region, but also reducing the burden of the local government in maintaining more infrastructure.

Most local governments throughout the region have population projections for their communities forecast twenty years into the future. For many, these projections are also used by school boards and other local decision making bodies to ensure consistency in the community. However, there are several communities in which the projections used by these boards are different, which can lead to discrepancies within the local government.

Many of the local governments in the region lack a Capital Improvements Program that will help to support current and future growth. This is an area which needs to be addressed as many local governments have identified areas they would like to see developed in the future. Without a plan to help guide development towards these more desirable areas, local governments will be left without tools to be an active participant in the growth of their community.

Appropriate Business

Appropriate businesses are vital to ensuring that a county or city draws the most benefit from the businesses within its jurisdiction. Types of businesses should be tailored to the local work force to provide local jobs to residents. In addition, a variety of businesses that require workers with different levels of skill and education will stabilize the economy.

While the economic development organizations for the local governments in the region consistently take into consideration the community's strengths and weaknesses when developing business strategies, often the job base is not diversified enough to ensure that if a major employer closed, the community would not seriously suffer. Communities must still increase the diversity of their job base considering existing businesses when recruiting other businesses and other appropriate business development strategies.

Employment Options

Employment options correlate very closely with appropriate businesses. Local governments, development authorities, and statewide economic developers should not only be aware of the strengths and skills of their local residents (employee pool), but also strive to expand the employment options of the residents in their community, so as to attract new residents with additional skills and strengths. Communities within the region with few employment options are generally less diverse, causing those with higher skill sets to commute outside of their home county to find work.

Within the River Valley region, local governments and economic development authorities encourage entrepreneurial businesses and support them through programs designed to provide guidance and assistance. While communities throughout the region often have jobs available locally for unskilled labor, many of these communities lack an adequate number of both skilled and

managerial/professional jobs to meet the demands of the citizens living in the region. As a result, many residents are forced to commute to local job centers. This is an opportunity for many communities in the region to capitalize on the skills of the residents living within the community to expand and diversify the local job base. The extension of broadband services within the region would positively impact economic development by allowing residents the option to work from home, versus commuting to regional job centers.

Educational Opportunities

As technology increases, many job markets will require more up to date training and education; therefore, it is important for local governments to coordinate with educational providers in the area to ensure that residents in the region have ample access to a diverse range of training and continuing education opportunities.

Within the region most communities have the capacity to offer work force training options which can provide skills necessary to obtain local jobs. This is an important step towards filling local jobs with local residents rather than having to hire employees from outside of the community. While all of the communities in the region have reasonable access to higher educational opportunities, few of these communities have job opportunities available to college graduates, allowing them to return to the region to live and work, if so desired. This is an issue for the region, as many of the residents who leave for educational purposes cannot return to region due to the lack of available jobs. The development of broadband capabilities will also increase the capacity for satellite learning and online education within the region.

A detailed analysis of each section is contained in the Performance Measures and the data appendix at the end of this document.

Potential Fort Benning Expansion Area

It is important to note that Fort Benning is considering a potential expansion of up to 216,365 acres in Stewart, Marion, and Webster, Counties. The expansion could also occur in Russell County in Alabama. Within these counties the number of acres proposed to be included in the expansion varies, though the acreage proposed to be added from Stewart County is the greatest, at 123,003 acres. In both Chattahoochee and Marion Counties the acreage proposed acreage to be acquired is very close at 38,034 and 38,021, respectively. The land proposed to be included in the expansion from Webster County is considerably less at 17,307 acres. No one knows when or if the Fort Benning base expansion will take place. However it is prudent to consider future development in the Potential Fort Benning Expansion Area for consistency with base expansion compatibility and the impact or affect it will have on the local tax base of River Valley's communities.

II. Analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities

In June of 2012 the River Valley Regional Commission used Survey Monkey to determine the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for the region. A broad spectrum of people was chosen to receive the survey and each was asked to forward the survey to others they knew. A total of sixty-one (61) responses were received. The following is a summary of the questions and responses. Note: Strengths and weaknesses are generally considered internal while threats and opportunities are considered external.

Economic Strength's: Tourism assets were listed as the greatest strength followed by raw materials/natural assets which tied with health care facilities and access/proximity to markets.

Economic Weaknesses: The lack of a well trained workforce followed by quality local/regional school system were listed as the highest concern for the majority of the respondents.

Economic Threats/Limitations: Respondents were most concerned about the flight of younger generation from our community followed by vacant main streets/town centers and/or shopping.

Economic Opportunities: The biggest opportunity in the region according to survey respondents is available land followed by tourism attractions.

Economic Goals: Creating new jobs followed closely by encourage the growth of existing businesses and industries is the top goal for the majority of persons responding.

Identify Economic Partnerships Already Formed: The top answer was Chamber of Commerce followed by Economic Development Councils. Interestingly ten (10) people responded that they didn't know if one existed.

Key Local Organizations Which Should Be Involved in Economic Development: The majority of respondents chose the Economic Development Authority followed closely by local governments. Over half of the respondents listed school boards/PTA's as organizations which should be involved. Note that the local/regional school system was listed as the second highest economic weakness for the region.

State of Georgia Local Resources Needed to Implement a Plan: Strategic grants to leverage economic projects was the number one answer followed by incentives for job growth.

One Action the State Could Undertake to Advance Economic Development in Your County: There were 60 different responses to this question and interestingly none of them were duplicates. They ranged from locals having to do it themselves to tax incentives, to funding for a full time economic development director. The one common theme was job training/workforce development.

The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) does a Municipal Issues Survey prior to its annual convention of mayors, councilors, managers and clerks. Job creation and economic development were listed as the top issues facing cities in 2012 at 59.4%. This response correlates with the CEDS survey. Also in the top five were job creation as well as creating and maintaining a strong downtown which were also priorities listed in the CEDS survey. The GMA survey which had 722 responses from throughout the State of Georgia shows that some of the issues facing the RVRC region are not unique to the region.

Details on all of the RVRC responses are found in the data appendix at the end of this document.

Local Workforce Investment Strategies

The River Valley Region is served by two (2) Workforce Investment areas, the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Investment Board and the Middle Flint Workforce Investment Board. While both boards have specific goals and objectives that are unique to the Workforce Investment program, both have goals that are in common with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The goals of the Middle Flint Workforce Investment Board are as follows:

- Provide employers with educated and skilled workers they need to effectively meet the demands of the local labor market.
- Participate with local Employer Committee groups, Economic Development agencies, Chambers of Commerce offices, Adult Literacy agencies, and other community agencies to identify needs, develop strategies and implement services to strengthen the local area workforce.

The vision of the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Investment Board is as follows

- Build a seamless Workforce Development System that will provide a supply of skilled workers, thereby increasing the area's competitiveness in the global economy.

Past, Present and Projected Economic
Development Investments

River Valley Region Economic Development Projects 2008-2011

County	Company	Private Investment	Jobs
Muscogee	Synovus	\$45,000,000	75
	Eastman Kodak	\$15,000,000	50
	JCI (NWHBP)	\$30,000,000	310
	Tom's/Lance	\$4,000,000	147
	Prosperity America	\$500,000	300
	Lance (E)	\$10,500,000	70
	NCR	\$27,000,000	872
	Exide (E)	\$35,000,000	200
	Berry Plastics (E)	\$4,000,000	25
	St Francis Hospital (E)	\$30,000,000	150
	Blue Cross Blue Shield GA (E)		50
	Columbus Gourmet (E)	\$700,000	50
	MDV	\$25,000,000	175
	Kysor/Warren (E)	\$3,000,000	200
	DMI	\$3,500,000	311
	McCauley	\$1,000,000	75
	Lance (E)	\$3,000,000	25
	Heckler Koch (E)	\$1,500,000	20
	Eastman Kodak (E)	\$29,250,000	62
	Pratt & Whitney (E)	\$19,000,000	177
Virginia College	\$8,190,475	100	
Stewart	Corrections Corporation of America	\$7,000,000	300
	Smith Furniture	\$80,000	2
	Piggly Wiggly - Richland		
Crisp	Inland Port - Phase I	\$1,000,000	35
	Big Tex Trailer		
Schley County	TCI Powder Coatings	\$3,200,000	25
	TCI Powder Coatings	\$570,000	14
	Wrap It	\$1,200,000	8
	New Auto Parts Store/Mechanic Shop	\$250,000	5
Harris	Daehan Solution (NWHBP)	\$35,000,000	300
	Daehan Solution (E)	\$16,400,000	80
	Johnson Controls (E) (NWHBP)	\$12,100,000	175

	JCG Foods (Cagle Purchase)	\$21,250,000	640
Marion County	DeVita Dialysis		
	P & C Bank		
	Ameris Bank		
	J's IGA		
Sumter	Sak Marine Co.	\$5,000,000	250-400
	Phoebe Sumter Medical Center	\$10,000,000	400
	Pet Care Rx	\$3,000,000	125
	Southeast Railcar	\$1,500,000	80
	PharmaCentra	\$1,500,000	85-150
	CE Minerals	\$1,500,000	80
Randolph	A.G. Daniel/CEACO	\$6,000,000	40
	Southside Business Developers DBA Piggly Wiggly		
	Peerless	\$1,000,000	35
Macon	CE Minerals	\$50,000,000	38
	Southern States	\$1,000,000	84
Quitman County	D & J Plastics	\$200,000	20
Dooly County	Reeves Construction (Asphalt Plant)	\$3.4 Million	50
	Riley Forestry (Forestry Harvesting Equip)	\$200,000.00	20
	Lassiter Equipment (John Deere Super Store)	\$2.3 Million	35
	Dooly Livestock (Cattle Sale Barn)	\$1,750,000	22
	McMillan Plastics (Plastic Recycling)		6
	Marvair (Air Conditioning Plant)	\$1.5 Million	30
	Advanced Trailer (Semi Trailers)	\$300,000.00	25
	William's Metal Recycling	\$1.6 Million	50
	Davis Brothers/McDonald's (TruckStop/Dining)	\$350,000.00	5
	Piggly Wiggly Unadilla (Grocery Store)	\$4.4 Million	170
	State Bank & Trust Unadilla (Banking)	\$1.7 Million	25
	Flint River Services (Food Services)	\$1 Million	15
		\$10.5 Million	50

	Chevron Unadilla (Gas Station)	\$1 Million	8
	Pinehurst Travel Center (Truck Stop)	\$1.4 Million	8
	John Bleakley Motor Homes	\$1.4 Million	35
	Unadilla Truck Stop (Truck Stop/Diner)	\$1.7 Million	28

Total Private Investment \$505,690,475

River Valley Region Current Economic Development Projects (2012)

County	Company	Private Investment	Jobs
Crisp County	VegaBio Fuels		
	Chexar Networks Inc.	\$19,000,000.00	500 over 5 years
Sumter	Imerys Oilfield Minerals, inc	\$100,000,000.00	75-150
Stewart County	Richland Rum	\$100,000.00	2
Randolph County	Turbine Refurbishing Company	\$500,000.00	unknown
Muscogee	Kia Autosport	\$6,500,000	50
Muscogee	AFS America	\$3,000,000.00	65
Dooly	Dollar General Market Place-Vienna	\$2,300,000.00	10 FT, 30 PT
Stewart	Richland Downtown Redev. Project (8 bldgs 3 businesses)	\$78,000.00	2

Current projected private investment for 2012 is \$131,475,000.00 with over 600 jobs created. (Note: the jobs created by Chexar Networks, Inc. will be created over a five (5) year period.) These projects are already under development or have been completed in 2012.

River Valley Region Future Economic Development Projects

County	Company	Private Investment	Jobs
Randolph County	Hwy 27 Industrial Park	\$50,000,000.00	120
Dooly County	Henley Bldg (Vienna)	\$50,000.00	2
Macon County	Downtown Infrastructure (Various Businesses)	\$25,000.00	2
Sumter	Americus Motor Sports Complex	\$75,000,000.00	200

Future projects which are estimated to be finished in the next 3-4 years are projected to stimulate over \$125 million in private investment and create over 300 jobs.

Economic Development Clusters

Utilizing the CEDS process and consultation with the Vice-Presidents of Economic Development of the area Technical Colleges, the staff of the River Valley regional Commission has determined that the economic development clusters of the 16 county-region are as follows:

- Medical
- Logistical
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Defense
- Automotive

Note: The above clusters are listed in no particular order.

Tourism is also a segment that while not listed above is an important economic sector in the River Valley Region. Tourists spent \$513 million dollars in local businesses in the River Valley Region generating jobs and tax revenue according to the latest information available to the Georgia Department of Economic Development. In 2010, the latest year economic information is available; tourism was responsible for 6,000 jobs in the region as well as \$20,000,000 in state tax revenue and \$15,000,000 in local tax revenue. (Source: Economic Impact of Domestic Travel in Georgia by Region and County - 2010) The RVRC region has many established tourism attractions such as Callaway Gardens, Andersonville National Historic Site, National Prisoner of War Museum, Georgia Veterans State Park, Port Columbus and Westville; however, there is tremendous untapped potential in some of the undiscovered and undeveloped attractions. These would include State Parks/Lodges, Lake Walter F. George, White Water Creek Park, historic homes and buildings as well as the many historic downtowns which have remained relatively untouched since the 1950's.

The region has more than a few exceptional golf courses with the potential to create a Golf Trail which could bring overnight visitors to support the State Parks/Lodges and hotels. According to the study done by the Georgia Department of Economic Development in 2010, average spending per person per day by domestic overnight travelers was \$116, while day-trippers spent an average of \$47 per person. Lodging accounts for most of this difference.

The potential for TV/Movie/Digital Media is tremendous for the region because of these undiscovered and undeveloped assets. But the region must also develop the necessary infrastructure to support this industry i.e. hotels, restaurants open

all week and in the evenings, and the shops that will provide the services required by these industry professionals.

Economic Impact of Tourism in the River Valley Region - 2010

	Expenditures (\$ Millions)	Payroll (\$ Millions)	Employment (Thousands)	State Tax (\$ Millions)	Local Tax (\$ Millions)
Chattahoochee	\$11	\$2	\$0	\$0	\$0
Clay	\$2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Crisp	\$37	\$7	\$0	\$1	\$1
Dooly	\$9	\$2	\$0	\$0	\$0
Harris	\$31	\$12	\$0	\$1	\$1
Macon	\$6	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$0
Marion	\$5	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$0
Muscogee	\$361	\$76	\$4	\$14	\$11
Quitman	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Randolph	\$4	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$0
Schley	\$2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Stewart	\$3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sumter	\$33	\$8	\$0	\$1	\$1
Talbot	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Taylor	\$5	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$0
Webster	\$1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$513	\$112	\$6	\$20	\$15

Source: Travel Industry of America

III. Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives identified in this section are necessary to solve the economic problems or capitalize on the resources of the region. The strategic projects, programs, and activities identified in Section V will work to fulfill these goals and objectives.

GOAL: THE RIVER VALLEY REGION WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS AND PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE NEXT 20 YEARS.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage water and sewer system improvements to improve the capacity of the systems.

OBJECTIVE: Support broadband improvements throughout the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support E-911 efforts throughout the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support the Regional Transit Authority.

OBJECTIVE: Support the study of high speed passenger rail in the MPO urban area.

OBJECTIVE: Support needed runway extension at the Columbus Metropolitan Airport.

OBJECTIVE: Support the improvement of all aspects of the transportation system to facilitate the flow of goods and people, enhance economic growth, connect people and jobs, and improve quality of life.

GOAL: ALL INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN THE RIVER VALLEY REGION WILL MEET THE NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage all Industrial Parks in the River Valley Regional Commission's sixteen-county region to be shovel ready and all qualified Industrial Parks to be certified by Georgia Power.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage necessary infrastructure improvements to all Industrial Parks in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage access to railroads or rail spurs to a minimum of half of the Industrial Parks in the region where possible.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage development of virtual speculative buildings in a minimum of two (2) industrial parks in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support road improvements along Hwy 280 and rail improvements for the Inland Port.

OBJECTIVE: Support the development of water reservoirs in the region

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage maintenance of all state owned rail line from Georgetown to Cordele.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the deepening of the deepwater port in Savannah.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the expansion of the Inland Port.

GOAL: THE WORKFORCE OF THE RIVER VALLEY REGION WILL BE READY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE EMPLOYERS

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage increase of the high school graduation rate and the reduction of high school drop out rates.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage internships and work study programs within the high schools in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage partnerships between Technical Colleges and high schools in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage every high school graduate to further their education with a Technical College Certificate/Degree or an Associates/Bachelor's Degree from a 2-year or 4-year college or university.

OBJECTIVE: Support efforts to significantly improve reading levels of all students by the Third Grade.

OBJECTIVE: Support vocational training in high schools.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage GED and continuing education efforts for the adult population of the River Valley Region by partnering with Technical Colleges and other agencies.

GOAL: IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK FOR THE CITIZENS OF THE RIVER VALLEY REGION

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage local governments to pursue all means available to eliminate substandard housing in the sixteen-county region including public and private sources.

OBJECTIVE: Support continued improvement of existing housing conditions through all available public and private means.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the development of infill housing in areas already served by public infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the removal of dilapidated housing and structures throughout the region.

GOAL: PROMOTE AND PRESERVE THE EXISTING TOURISM ASSETS IN THE REGION

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the preservation of historic buildings in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage cooperative marketing of existing tourism assets.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the development of new tourism assets in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the Georgia Grown Program.

OBJECTIVE: Support and Encourage the Highway 27 Association and its efforts to develop the corridor.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage local Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitor's Bureaus.

OBJECTIVE: Support, encourage and expand the existing cultural arts in the Region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage designation of Chattahoochee Trace Region as a National Heritage Corridor.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the development and designation of Scenic By-Ways in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the Whitewater development along the Chattahoochee River in Columbus.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the use of State Parks and facilities throughout the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the development of a marina by Georgetown-Quitman County.

GOAL: PROMOTE THE RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES AND ASSIST IN THE RECRUITMENT OF NEW BUSINESSES IN THE REGION.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the use of local revolving loan funds to assist in the development and expansion of small businesses.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the use of the "Buy Local" and "Georgia Grown" programs.

IV. Community and Private Sector Participation

The CEDS committee is made up of community and private sector members who are also members of the River Valley Regional Council. The following are members of the committee:

Mary Ayers - Taylor Orchards

Bump Welch - Retired Magistrate Judge

Andrea Brooks - Sumter County Board of Commissioners

Carole Rutland - Columbus Water Works, Board Member

Charles Gibson - City of Lumpkin, Mayor

Chip Jones - Free lance journalist

Edward Lee - Veterinarian

Jerry "Pops" Barnes - City of Columbus Councilor

Kevin Brown - Marion County Board of Commissioners

Mike Speight -State Bank and Trust

Pam Jordan - Talbot County Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director

Patricia Goodman - Randolph County Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director

Tommy McKenzie - Insurance agent (The McKenzie Agency)

Wally Summers - South Georgia Technical College, Vice-President of Economic Development

The committee is active in the planning and preparation of the CEDS. The committee meets regularly as well as having an annual public meeting to discuss the CEDS with other community leaders in order to gather public input. Also an on-line survey was used to gather public and private sector input. The CEDS was placed on the RVRC website for public comment for 30 days prior to being sent to EDA for approval. After approval by EDA, the CEDS will remain on the RVRC website and is available to the public.

V. Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities

The following strategic projects, programs, and activities area designed to meet the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS document:

County	Project Description	Activities	Programs	Lead Organizations	Jobs
Talbot County	Technology & Workforce Development Center	Renovate/ upgrade interior and HVAC in existing building to provide classroom space	Federal, state, local	Talbot County IDA	Unknown
Muscogee County	Transportation	Widen Whittlesey Road & Veterans Parkway	GDOT Local	City of Columbus	Const only
Muscogee County	Veteran's Parkway Widening	Widen existing 2 lane road to 4 lanes with turn lanes & median as needed	GDOT	City of Columbus	Const only
Muscogee County	Talbotton Road/Warm Springs Road	Widen & reconstruct 2.02 Miles of existing 2 lane road to 4 lanes.	GDOT	City of Columbus	Const only
Muscogee County	Brown Avenue Bridge	Bridge Replacement on Brown Avenue	GDOT	City of Columbus	Const only
Muscogee County	Schatulga Road/Eastern Connector	Widen & reconstruct 2.02 Miles of existing 2 lane road to 4	GDOT	City of Columbus	Const only

		lanes.			
Muscogee County	Buena Vista Road Interchange	Reconstruct Interchange	Georgia DOT & City of Columbus	City of Columbus	Const only
Muscogee County	Cusseta Road/Old Cusseta Road Interchange	Construct Interchange and reconstruct road	TIA	City of Columbus	Const only
Muscogee County	Buena Vista Road (Spiderweb)	Intersection Improvements	TIA	City of Columbus	Const only
Randolph	Hwy 27 Industrial Park	Infrastructure	Federal, state, local	Randolph County Dev. Auth.	120
Dooly	Henley Bldg	Rehabilitate Bldg.	State Local	City of Vienna	2
Macon County	Rehabilitate and reinvigorate downtown Montezuma	Infrastructure improvements in downtown Montezuma as well as investments by downtown businesses in buildings	State, local and private	City of Montezuma	20
Sumter	Americus Motor Sports Complex	Infrastructure improvements	State, local, private	Sumter Payroll Development Authority	200
City of Americus	Farmers Market Renovation	Construct additional covered space, paving, restrooms, and parking	City of Americus & Downtown Development Authority	Local, state, and Federal funds	1
City of Americus	Georgia Southwestern State University Entranceway Enhancement	Design, construct sidewalks, lighting, bike lanes, convert from	City of Americus	Local, DOT Federal, and DOT State funds	Const only

	Project	4 lanes to 3 lanes, center lane islands, and landscaping of Tripp St. between Lamar Street and Felder Street			
City of Americus	Cultural Arts and Conference Center	Renovate former supermarket into multi-use cultural arts center, convention and conference center, gallery, retail, restaurant space	City of Americus and Downtown Development Authority	Local, state, and Federal funds	15
City of Americus	Business Needs Analysis Survey	Assessment and analysis conducted on business mix in Americus and identify in priority ranking businesses needed and develop business recruitment action plan	City of Americus	Local, State and Federal funds	unknown
City of Americus	Urban Re-development Plan & Urban Re-development Project Areas	Adopt an Urban Re-development Plan for the City of Americus in which 5 Project Areas have been	City of Americus	Local, Federal, and State funds	Unknown

		<p>identified. Begin re-development of project areas including but not limited to: new infrastructure-water and sewer, new sidewalks, lighting, green space, rehabilitation & construction of residential and commercial properties.</p>			
City of Americus	MLK Jr Blvd/Highway 19 Overlay District/ Commercial Corridor Plan	<p>Design, construction and installation of sidewalks, lighting, trees, and creation & landscaping of center lane islands of Highway 19 which will include the entire area from the City Limit of Highway 19 South to the City Limit of Highway 19 North.</p>	City of Americus	Local, state, and Federal funds	Unknown
City of Americus	Downtown Revitalization/ Renovation of Buildings	Complete downtown building inventory and	City of Americus & Downtown Development	Local, state, and Federal funds	Unknown

		identify buildings with loft potential as well as commercial/retail space potential in an effort to reduce commercial vacancies and increase residential opportunities. Complete 2 building renovations each year.	Authority		
City of Americus	Furlow School Renovation	Renovate former grammar school in historic district for community outreach program(s) or other identified uses.	City of Americus	Local, state, and Federal funds	Unknown
Clay County	Phenomenon Trail Phase I & II	Acquisition, engineering & Construction	Clay County	Local, GDOT State, and Federal Funds	unknown
Clay County	Biomass Electric Generating Plant	Trying to acquire financing	Clay County Development Authority & private company	Bonds & private funds	40
Stewart County	Complete Phase I of Downtown Richland Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of facades of 8 downtown businesses	City of Richland, Richland Better Hometown & private businesses	State, local, private funds	4

Suggested Regional Prioritized Projects

Activity	Category	Responsible Party(ies) and Partners	Cost	Funding Source(s)	Projected Jobs (New/Retained)	Priority
Facilitate the development of programs within the local school systems that prepare students for the workforce utilizing the assets of the Technical Colleges, the University System, and others.	Review	RVRC Local BOE WIA Bd Local Colleges and Universities	\$30,000	Member Dues Local BOE WIA Bd Local Colleges and Universities	50	1
Facilitate the continued development of the in-land port in Cordele as a way to stimulate economic growth.	Planning	RVRC SWGA United DCA USDA	\$50,000	Member Dues SWGA United DCA USDA	200	2
Using GPS technology, capture the various visible and underground components of the region's water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer infrastructure.	Planning	RVRC Local Govts DCA USDA	\$60,000	Member Dues Local Govts DCA USDA	10	3
Identify and address telecommunications deficiencies in the region.	Planning	RVRC Local Govts SWGA United	\$30,000	Member Dues Local Govts SWGA United	50	5
Coordinate efforts with local broadband providers and cities/counties/local organizations to identify and address key issues.	Planning	RVRC	\$30,000	Member Dues	50	4
		Local Govts		Local Govts		
		DCA		DCA		
		USDA		USDA		

		GDEcD		GDEcD		
		Local HD		DCA		
		USDA		USDA		

VI. CEDS Plan of Action

The River Valley Region is unique in many regards. It is home to a world-class military installation, two major river systems, a vitally important groundwater recharge area, a growing inland port facility, and rich cultural and historical resources. Integral to the River Valley's Plan of Action for future growth is the ability to capitalize on these tremendous resources, and to increase intergovernmental cooperation and coordination to grow the positive impact of investments and economic development ventures. The key goals of this Plan of Action are to provide River Valley citizens a region that includes:

- Quality and affordable housing in close proximity to jobs and schools.
- Preservation and restoration of downtowns, historic neighborhoods, and established residential neighborhoods that utilize infill techniques (to include downtown lofts, quality single family homes and townhomes).
- Development of traditional type neighborhoods that are pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
- Improved access to daily transportation
- Sign control on potential scenic routes to protect views.
- Expansion of existing bicycle trails/routes and existing shoulder width to provide regional connectivity.
- Protection of the region's water supply, water quality, opens space, historic/ environmentally sensitive areas and agricultural lands.
- Improvement of downtowns by making storefront enhancements, adding pedestrian facilities and maintaining sidewalks and landscaping.

Specific activities to promote this include the following:

- Coordinate quarterly Lunch and Learn meeting with downtown professionals and volunteers to provide information and training on subjects of interest. This will provide networking as well as training opportunities.
- Provide assistance in key infrastructure improvements which will stimulate business growth and development.
- Stimulate entrepreneurship through start-up businesses, small businesses, and expansion of larger businesses.

- Partner with area technical colleges whenever possible to implement workforce development programs.
- Market the River Valley Region as a tourist destination throughout the region, Georgia and the Southeast as well as encouraging cooperative marketing.
- Encourage more intergovernmental cooperation between local governments, planning organizations, and economic development agencies including the River Valley Regional Commission.
- Work with local school boards and superintendents to inform them of their critical role in the economic development process.
- Work with local governments, Downtown Development Authorities, etc. to provide information on incentives for downtown revitalization, job creation, and location of businesses and offices within downtown areas.
- Promote the region as a location for movies/television/music videos, etc. with the Camera Ready designation achieved by all counties.
- Plan for public infrastructure including affordable, workforce housing.
- Plan and promote business sectors that play off of Inland Port's growth.
- Assist transit systems with increasing the coordination of their programs to create greater cost efficiencies and to improve and expand services as well as assist local governments with establishing transit systems.
- Facilitate the interaction between transit systems to strategically transport passengers from one system to another or to form joint transit systems.

Cooperation with State Economic Development Priorities

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) is the state's sales and marketing arm, the lead agency for attracting new business investment, encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, locating new markets for Georgia products, attracting tourists to Georgia, and promoting the state as a location for film, video and music projects, as well as planning and mobilizing state resources for economic development. GDEcD is a global agency and one-stop-shop for accessing Georgia's assets and finding the right components for success. These goals are accomplished through the combined efforts of the Global Commerce Team, Tourism Team, Film, Video & Music Team and the Marketing & Communications Team. Activities identified in the CEDS that do not conflict with the goals stated above would be deemed consistent with the efforts of GDEcD.

In determining Strategic projects to be included in the Action Plan, each project was evaluated by the CEDS Committee to determine if it conflicted with any of these priorities. No projects conflict with the Economic Priorities of the State of Georgia as listed by the Georgia Department of Economic Development. Any new projects proposed for the Plan of Action will be evaluated to determine if there is a conflict with the State of Georgia's economic priorities. (See attached letter from the Georgia Department of Economic Development.)

VII. Performance Measures

Unemployment Rate 2005- May 2012 River Valley Region

	2005	2009	2011	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Apr-12	May-12
Chattahoochee	10.3	15	17.8	17.8	17.1	17.3	16	16.7
Clay	5.3	8.5	8.7	9.1	9.1	8.6	9	8.4
Crisp	6.4	11.7	13.3	13.7	13.3	12.8	11.7	11.9
Dooly	6.1	9.6	14.2	14.7	14.8	13.9	13	13.1
Harris	4.1	7	7	7.3	7.3	6.7	6.2	6.3
Macon	8.6	12.1	14.7	14.6	14.4	13.6	14.3	14.1
Marion	5.2	9.6	8.7	8.7	8	7.6	7.5	7.3
Muscogee	6	8.8	9.4	10	9.8	9.3	8.6	8.9
Quitman	6.1	11.2	12.3	12.9	14.2	12.9	10.6	10.4
Randolph	7.4	11.7	12.8	11.7	12.5	12	12.9	13.2
Schley	6.6	12.4	11.4	13.3	12.5	11.4	12	12
Stewart	9	10.3	11.2	11.8	12.2	10.8	11	10.8
Sumter	6.7	12.6	13.3	13.2	13.1	12.6	12.5	12.7
Talbot	6.9	9.1	9.3	9.6	8.7	8	8.7	8.8
Taylor	7.6	11.5	13.2	13.6	13.1	12.7	11.6	12.3
Webster	6.3	9.4	9.2	10.6	10.4	9.8	8.3	7.8
Region Total	6.79	10.66	11.66	12.04	11.91	11.25	10.87	10.92

Source: GA DOL

For the region unemployment has been growing, similarly to the state and the nation. Five (5) counties have seen high unemployment rates go even higher in the last three years. Crisp County's rates have gone down in the last few months which may be attributed to the new Chexar Networks, Inc. which will be hiring 500 persons over the next five (5) years.

Regional Job Levels

						-4.74%	0.19%
County	JOBS 2000	Jobs 2007	JOBS 2009	JOBS 2010	Jobs 2011	change 2000 to 2010	change 2010 to 2011
Chattahoochee	2,429	1,536	2,227	2,209	1,717	(712)	-492
Clay	1,275	1,387	1,290	1,285	1,307	32	22
Crisp	9,323	9,961	8,555	8,039	7,935	(1,388)	-104
Dooly	4,587	4,645	4,346	4,110	3,907	(680)	-203
Harris	12,564	15,412	15,179	15,057	15,890	3,326	833
Macon	5,085	4,695	4,541	4,344	4,329	(756)	-15
Marion	3,207	3,150	2,980	2,956	3,669	462	713
Muscogee	80,100	80,743	78,095	77,465	76,720	(3,380)	-745
Quitman	979	998	851	837	830	(149)	-7
Randolph	2,839	2,555	2,412	2,329	2,475	(364)	146
Schley	1,654	1,706	1,657	1,535	1,697	43	162
Stewart	1,983	2,118	2,065	2,000	2,005	22	5
Sumter	14,762	13,679	12,492	11,571	11,297	(3,465)	-274
Talbot	2,707	2,944	2,823	2,760	2,856	149	96
Taylor	3,244	3,121	3,121	2,988	2,986	(258)	-2
Webster	1,034	1,184	1,071	1,015	1,141	107	126
Region Total	147,772	149,834	143,705	140,500	140,761	(7,011)	261

Source: GA DOL

Overall the region has lost over 7,000 jobs between 2000 and 2011; however, the trend seems to be changing. Between 2010 and 2011 there were 261 jobs created in the region. This is a small but positive change.

Analysis of Change in Number of Businesses in RVRC Region 2000-2010

	# of Annual Businesses				4.2% positive growth	- 2.5% negative Growth
					Change	Change
					2000-	2009
	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2010	2010
Chattahoochee	69	0.92%	107	1.38%	38	17
Clay	75	1.00%	66	0.85%	-9	-3
Crisp	577	7.72%	583	7.52%	6	-26
Dooly	228	3.05%	231	2.98%	3	-6
Harris	328	4.39%	454	5.86%	126	-16
Macon	248	3.32%	240	3.10%	-8	-3
Marion	104	1.39%	100	1.29%	-4	-6
Muscogee	4,448	59.49%	4657	60.09%	209	-78
Quitman	41	0.55%	43	0.55%	2	1
Randolph	209	2.80%	189	2.44%	-20	-2
Schley	78	1.04%	69	0.89%	-9	-6
Stewart	101	1.35%	99	1.28%	-2	-8
Sumter	755	10.10%	736	9.50%	-19	-32
Talbot	79	1.06%	84	1.08%	5	-7
Taylor	156	2.09%	152	1.96%	-4	-13
Webster	50	0.67%	47	0.61%	-3	4
Region Total	7,477		7,750		311	-201

Source: GA DOL

Entrepreneurs in the region were active between 2000 and 2010 but could not keep up with the recession. Between 2000 and 2010 there were 311 new businesses; however, there was a loss of 201 businesses between 2009 and 2010.

Private investment in the region for the past five (5) years has been significant in spite of the recession. (See section II for a listing of projects for the past five (5) years). Over \$500 million has been invested by the private sector in the region which indicates tremendous faith in the economic potential of this area. In 2012 over \$125 million is estimated to be invested with another \$125 million already planned for the next 3-4 years in projects that have commitments. While these projects are not spread equally across the region, there has been some sort of growth in most of the counties.

Regional Trends

Regional economic trends have not improved much. The population of the Region has not grown significantly since 2000. The educational level per individual in the Region has significantly increased but still lags far behind the state and national levels. The region is primarily an agricultural-based economy seeking to improve economic diversity and maintain a quality lifestyle. The critical issue is the lack of a qualified workforce to fill higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs. Although the number of employed individuals has decreased for the past few years, the number of employers providing jobs has increased during the same 2000 to 2009 time span. Sales for the region have tended to increase for the 2000 to 2005 time period with a slight decrease in 2008.

Opportunities

There are opportunities for improvements to strengthen and enhance the economic base. Efforts toward quality education and training for skilled jobs should be improved. Local and regional leadership programs for all ages should be enhanced. The many natural resources in the region and the agricultural character of much of the area are a draw for tourists. Combining the rural qualities with well-maintained small downtowns should be used as an economic catalyst in the region. Local government spending should be focused on improving the small-town character of the communities (i.e. sidewalks, lighting and crosswalks).

A more detailed analysis of the performance measures is contained in the data appendix at the end of this document.

Data Appendix

Economic Synopsis

The River Valley Region, like the rest of the nation, has and will continue to deal with significant economic problems. Fifteen of the sixteen counties that make up the River Valley Region have historically maintained at a level of approximately 70% of the State and National PCI while still progressing in a positive direction. Harris County is the exception to this statistic, having been the only county in the region which has met or exceeded the U. S. and Georgia Per Capita Income since 1999. The average Weekly Wage Rate has risen by 13.2% from 2004 to 2008 and the Per Capita Income has increased steadily at 10%.

The current national recession has already lasted longer than many experts predicted. While several economic indicators show the beginning of a rebound, unemployment still remains high. In the River Valley Region, two major factors have affected the western side of the region economically: Growth at Fort Benning and construction of the KIA plant in West Point (Troup County).

Since 1919, Fort Benning has continued to grow in importance to the U.S. Army as a premier training facility. The importance of the installation at Fort Benning was emphasized in December 2005 with the issuance of the formal report from the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. Due to the convergence of several Department of Defense initiatives, the BRAC Commission recommended relocating the Armor Center and School from Fort Knox (KY) to Fort Benning combining the Infantry and the Armor branches and creating a unified Maneuver Center of Excellence. As a result of this decision, approximately 30,000 new residents are expected to arrive in the area, both in Georgia and Alabama, by 2011.

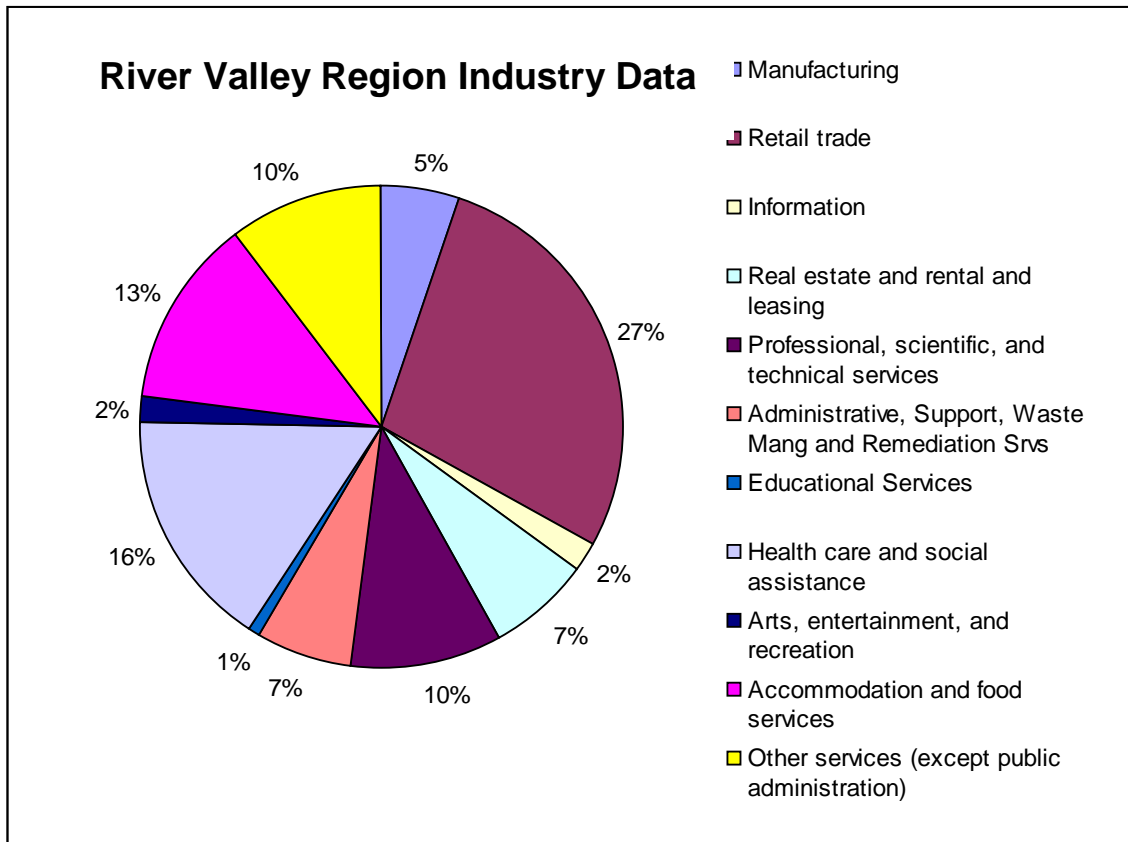
The KIA plant has brought several suppliers to the region. While this number is not as high as originally anticipated, businesses such as Johnson Controls and Daehan Solutions Georgia have created much needed jobs.

The impact for both of these projects has not been region-wide. However, they have mitigated the impact of the recession for both Harris and Muscogee Counties.

Economic Base

The River Valley Region has employers representing all major industry types within the market area. Muscogee County, Harris County, Sumter County and Crisp County are the regional commercial and industrial centers. The region heavily depends on these communities for high employment availability essential to support the region.

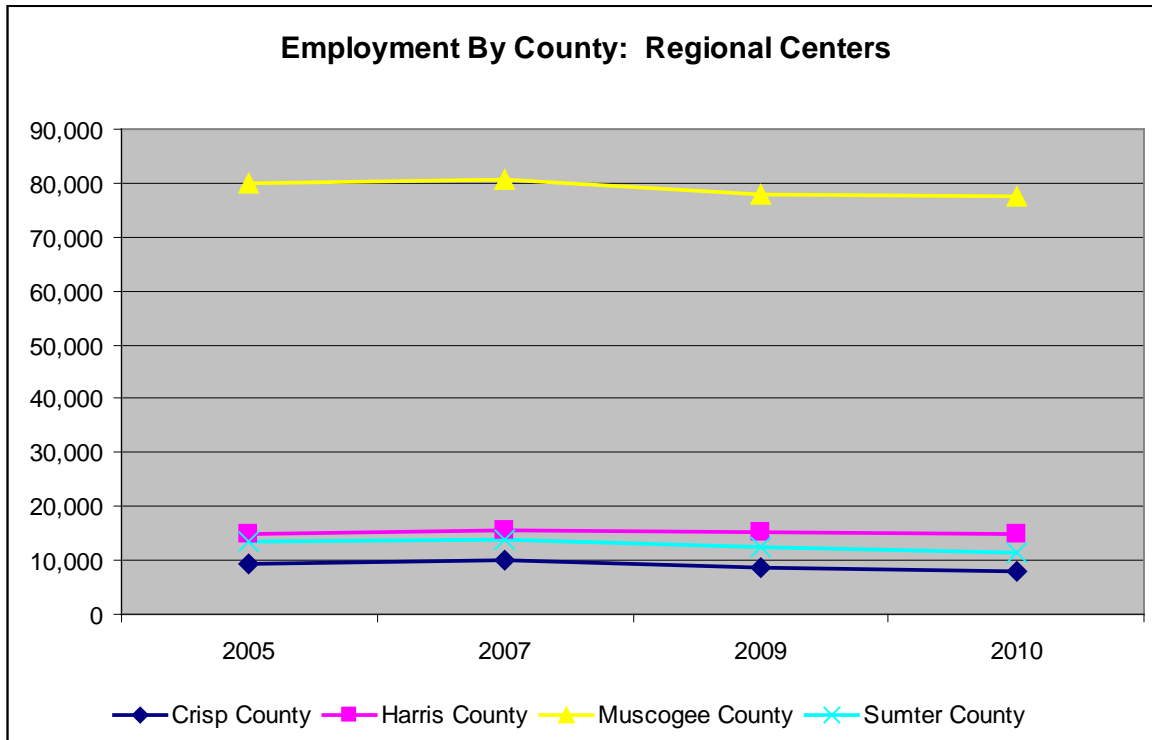
Figure 1



Source: Economic Census 2007

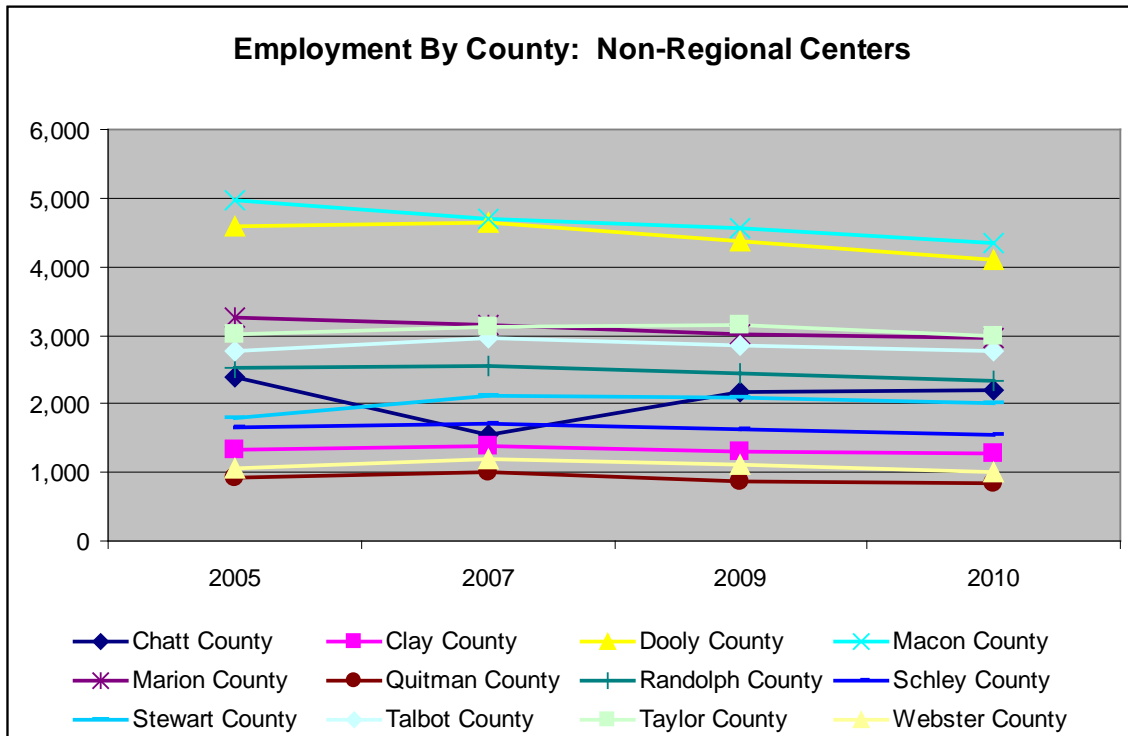
Muscogee County offers the highest number of employees for the region with Harris County having the second highest number of jobs in the region. During the early part of the decade, Harris County was in fourth position in the region in terms of jobs located in a County. The increase in Harris County employment levels is primarily due to the KIA plant and the cluster suppliers.

Figure 2



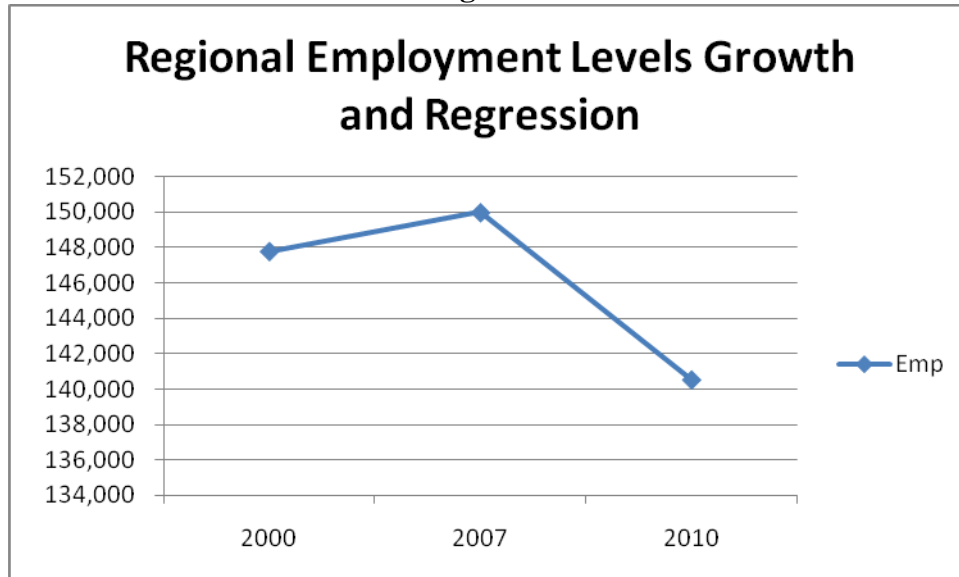
Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Figure 3



The regional job market grew during the early part of the decade and then retracted well below the starting levels. The region lost 3,352 jobs between 2009 and 2010 accounting for a 2.3% job loss for the period. The regional unemployment percentage rate has also grown significantly during the last seven years and has nearly doubled since 2007.

Figure 4



Source: Georgia Department of Labor

As noted above, the peak of job creation was 2007 with a downturn following. All counties lost jobs with the exception of Chattahoochee County. The positive factor in Chattahoochee's job growth is related to the buildup of troops at Fort Benning directly impacting the county numbers. Georgia Department of Labor data shows the reduction in jobs within the River Valley Region may be slowing.

The major commercial and industrial centers of Muscogee, Sumter, and Crisp Counties have the most jobs to offer and the highest levels of job loss. The job losses noted in excess of one hundred in Dooly, Macon, Randolph and Taylor Counties reflect the general trend of downsizing or relocating companies to foreign countries.

Labor Force

The labor force is the population of persons employed and those looking for and available to work. It retracts and expands with job availability within a region.

When reflecting upon the region's labor force, multiple factors must be taken into account such as the skills of the labor force to meet the needs of the employers and the availability of jobs. Too many people in the labor force relative to the job base, results in unemployment or low wages. With high unemployment levels, employers have an opportunity to obtain highly skilled workers for lower wages. If there are too few persons in the labor force, a community can have a labor shortage. The lack of skilled labor capable of providing a quality product can negatively impact a company limiting its ability to grow.

	Labor Force 2010	Labor Force 2009	Labor Force 2007	Labor Force 2000
Chattahoochee	2,630	2,606	1,698	2,642
Clay County	1,408	1,408	1,470	1,348
Crisp County	9,285	9,716	10,587	9,774
Dooly County	4,638	4,814	4,909	4,814
Harris County	16,253	16,339	16,004	12,966
Macon County	5,036	5,169	5,070	5,441
Marion County	3,281	3,302	3,310	3,337
Muscogee County	85,543	85,719	85,295	84,010
Quitman County	967	963	1,056	1,044
Randolph County	2,677	2,739	2,736	3,016
Schley County	1,794	1,893	1,815	1,724
Stewart County	2,237	2,304	2,263	2,095
Sumter County	13,368	14,312	14,746	15,390
Talbot County	3,023	3,111	3,149	2,861
Taylor County	3,445	3,533	3,320	3,422
Webster County	1,131	1,187	1,241	1,074
River Valley Region	156,716	159,115	158,669	154,958

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

There has been a demonstrated outflow of the labor force between 2009 and 2010 but an overall slight positive growth since the early part of the decade. Overall, the regional labor force has remained relatively steady with the increase and decrease of jobs within the region.

Unemployment Rates

Historically the regional unemployment rate has been 1% or higher than state and national rates. A change occurred in 2009 and continued in 2010. The regional rate was slightly higher than the national rate but slightly less than the state unemployment rate. The 2010 average annual rate of unemployment for the River Valley counties ranged from a high of 14.4% for Schley County to a low of 7.4% for Harris County. It could be stated that while the regional unemployment levels have typically been much higher than the state and nation, for the year 2010 the region was no worse off than the state and nation.

In 2000, the regional unemployment rate was an average 4.64% as compared to the state rate of 3.5% and national rate of 4%. Within the 2000 period, the annual rate for the counties ranged from a high of 8.1% for Clay County to a low of 3.1% for Harris County. Georgia DOL data demonstrates for 2010 a range of unemployment rates from 16% to 7.4% within the region. The chart below shows a steady increase in unemployment rates during the evaluation period.

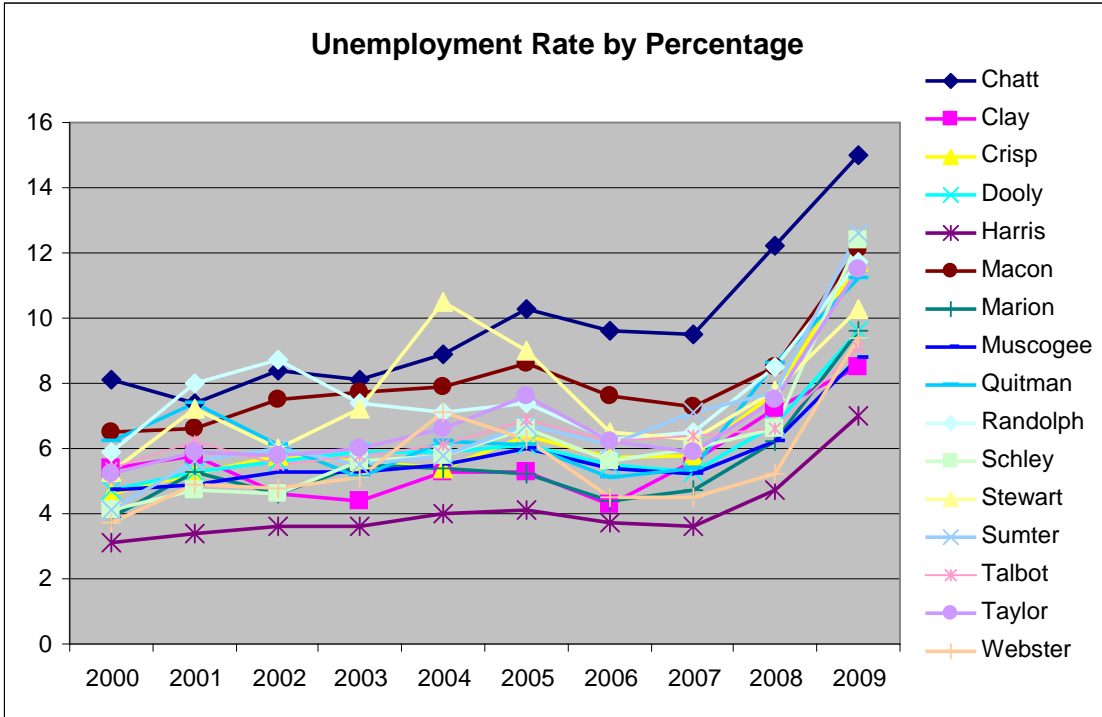
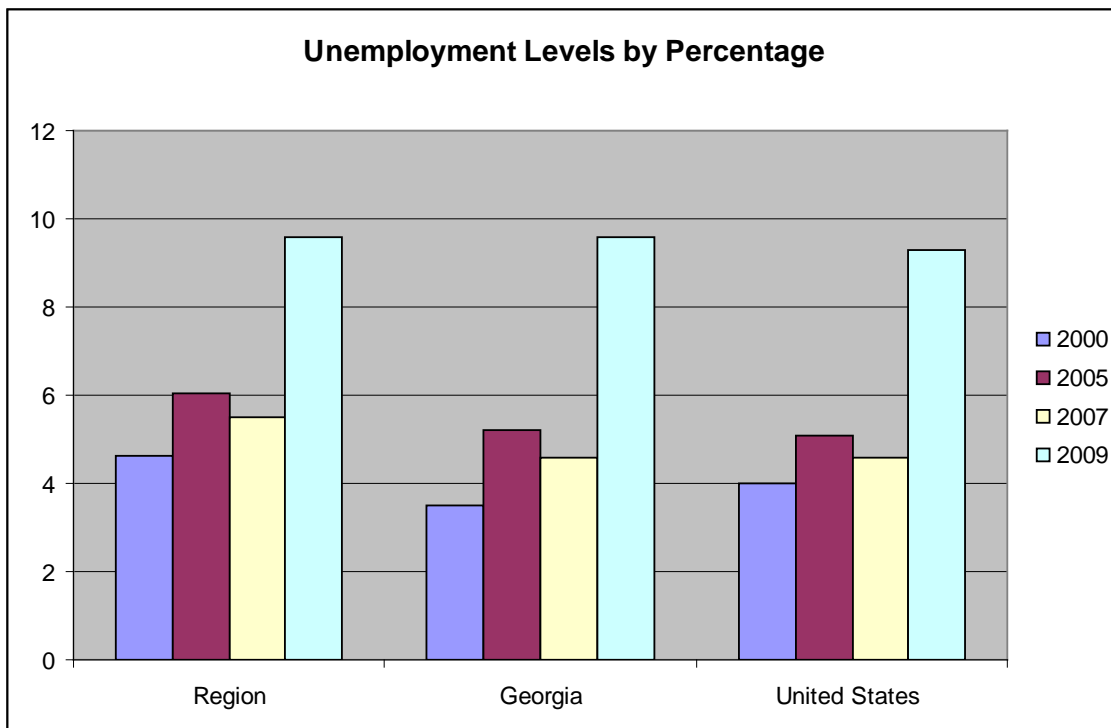


Figure 5

Unemployment rates for the region have increased steadily over the past ten years. Each year Muscogee County accounts for approximately 50% of the unemployed number in the region. Harris, Crisp, and Sumter Counties account for the numbers above 1,000 in unemployment number during the year 2010.

Figure 6

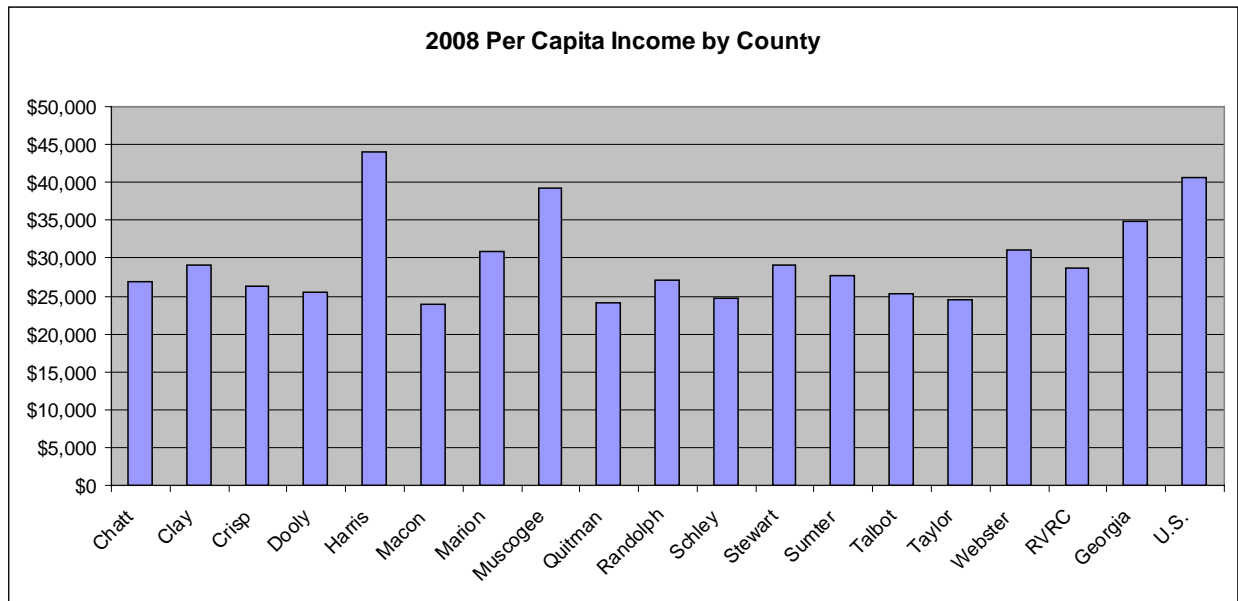


Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Per Capita Income

Per Capita income (PCI) is determined by dividing the total amount of income earned in an area by the number of residents including a portion of the population that might not be generating income such as children and the elderly. The River Valley Region overall experiences a lower per capita income (PCI) level than that of the United States and the State of Georgia. In 2008, seven of the sixteen counties had a PCI that was less than or equal to 76% of the state PCI and 66% of the national PCI. In 2008 only Harris County and Muscogee County were at or above the PCI for the state. All other River Valley counties were significantly lower.

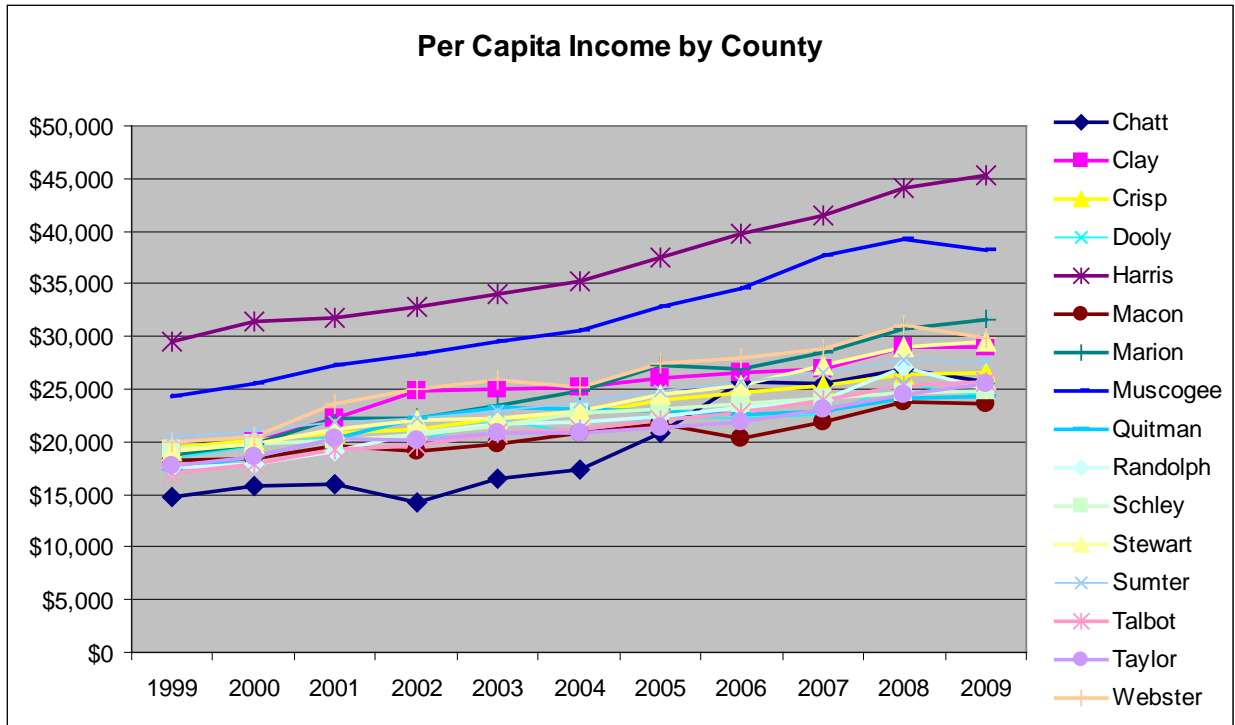
Figure 7



Source: Georgia County Guide 2008

Each county of the region has demonstrated positive per capita income growth rates. There is a minimum PCI increase from 1999 to 2008. The positive growth for each county ranges from a 32.93% increase to a 86.36% increase.

Figure 8



Source: Georgia County Guide 1999 – 2008 and 2009 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

River Valley Region Highest and Lowest Per Capita Income											
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Highest	\$29,482 Harris	\$31,372 Harris	\$31,842 Harris	\$32,893 Harris	\$34,061 Harris	\$35,299 Harris	\$37,463 Harris	\$39,695 Harris	\$41,469 Harris	\$44,066 Harris	\$45,330 Harris
Lowest	\$14,709 Chatt	\$15,757 Chatt	\$16,051 Chatt	\$14,188 Chatt	\$16,508 Chatt	\$17,436 Chatt	\$20,864 Chatt	\$20,257 Macon	\$21,866 Macon	\$23,869 Macon	\$23,663 Macon
Difference	\$14,773	\$15,615	\$15,791	\$18,705	\$17,553	\$17,863	\$16,599	\$19,438	\$19,603	\$20,197	\$21,667
%	50.11%	49.77%	49.59%	56.87%	51.53%	50.60%	44.31%	48.97%	47.27%	45.83%	47.80%

Source: Georgia County Guide 1999 – 2008 and 2009 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

The numbers demonstrate the gap between the richest county and the poorest county has declined over the time period. So while the rich have gotten richer, the poor have gotten richer at a faster rate.

Wage Rates

In general the average weekly income level of the River Valley region is much lower than the state average and slightly less than the national average. In 2009, the Georgia average weekly wage for all industries was \$824 whereas Macon County, the county with the highest earning weekly wage in the region, was only \$727. Four counties in the region actually experienced a

negative growth rate in the week wage rates. While the region overall experiences much lower income levels than the state, the ratio has kept pace with the state increase and maintained improvements in a positive growth rate overall.

All Industry = Private and Governmental Employers	Weekly Wages	Weekly Wages	Weekly Wage	Change
County	2004	2008	2010	2008-2010
1 Chattahoochee County	\$435	\$636	\$798	\$162.00
2 Clay County	\$441	\$628	\$539	(\$89.00)
3 Crisp County	\$472	\$531	\$550	\$19.00
4 Dooly County	\$486	\$547	\$543	(\$4.00)
5 Harris County	\$431	\$510	\$521	\$11.00
6 Macon County	\$552	\$587	\$608	\$21.00
7 Marion County	\$439	\$490	\$503	\$13.00
8 Muscogee County	\$598	\$693	\$719	\$26.00
9 Quitman County	\$442	\$502	\$494	(\$8.00)
10 Randolph County	\$464	\$550	\$548	(\$2.00)
11 Schley County	\$530	\$610	\$629	\$19.00
12 Stewart County	\$428	\$541	\$606	\$65.00
13 Sumter County	\$503	\$553	\$561	\$8.00
14 Talbot County	\$525	\$560	\$625	\$65.00
15 Taylor County	\$527	\$595	\$574	(\$21.00)
16 Webster County	\$458	\$550	\$576	\$26.00
Georgia	\$728	\$819	\$848	\$29.00

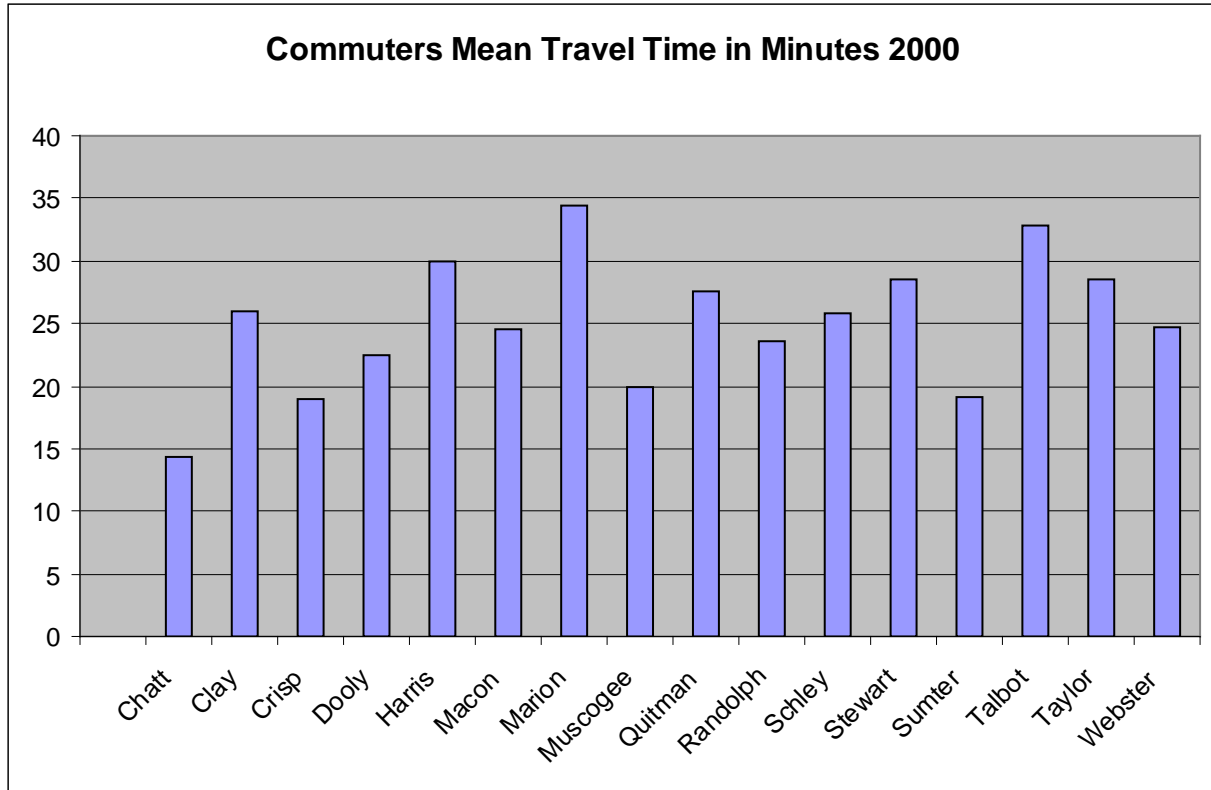
Source: Georgia Department of Labor

When wage rate data is evaluated between the years 2008 and 2010, there is a wide range in the region from an average net increase of \$162 to a decrease by \$89. All told, the weekly wage rates range from 58% of the state average to 95% of the state average.

Commuting Patterns

Within the River Valley region, there is a total of 7,995 miles of road (all modes). Commuting within the River Valley region has three main purposes: work, education, and leisure. Columbus-Muscogee County, the City of Americus, and Crisp County are the largest employment centers. Since the River Valley Region is primarily rural, most residents commute to and from their place of work. Residents in Chattahoochee County have the shortest commute time in the region, 14.3 minutes. Marion County residents have the longest commute time, 34.4 minutes.

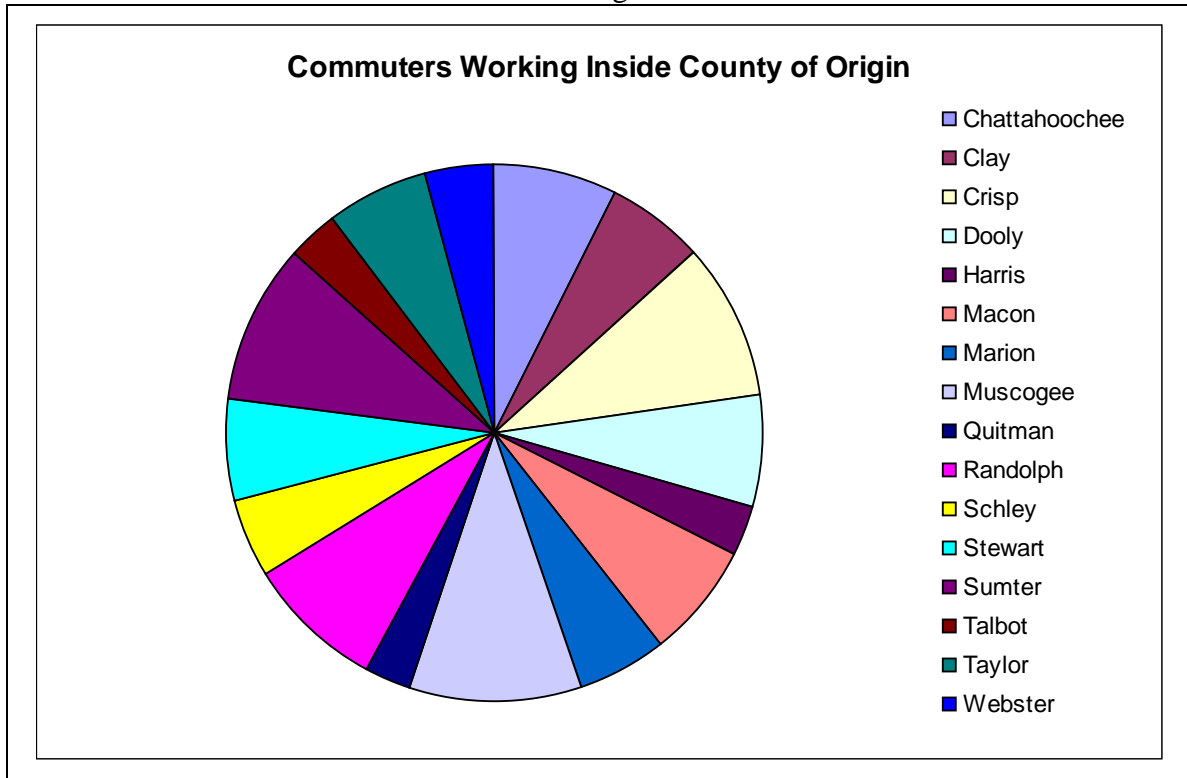
Figure 9



Source:

In the 16 county region, Muscogee has the largest percent of residents working and residing within the same county, 86.6%. Sumter is next in line with 83.4% of residents living and employed within the same county. Crisp has 79.4% of residents who live and work in the county. This is largely due to the fact that Muscogee, Sumter and Crisp are the employment centers for the region.

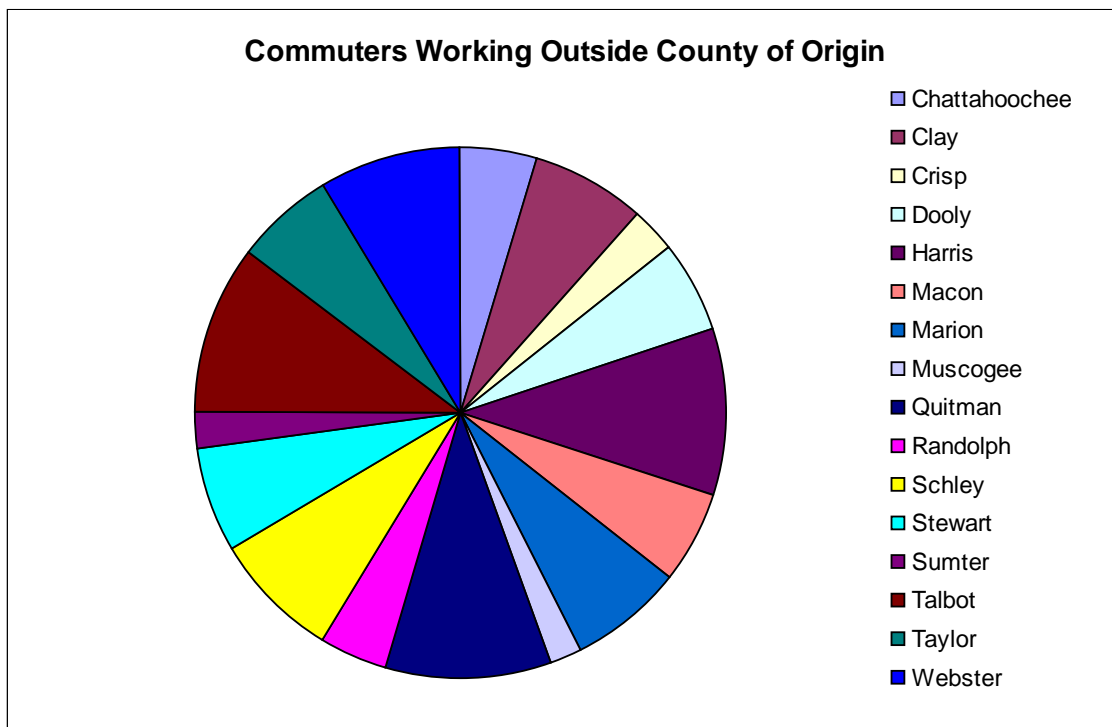
Figure 10



Source: Georgia County Guide 2012

In the River Valley Region, Quitman County has the most people who work outside of their county of residence, 76.4%. Talbot is next with 76% of residents working outside the county. Harris County follows with 75.7% of residents employed outside of the county.

Figure 11



Source: Georgia County Guide, 2012

Regional Trends

Regional economic trends have not improved much. The population of the Region has not grown significantly since 2000. The educational level per individual in the Region has significantly increased but still lags far behind the state and national levels. The region is primarily an agricultural-based economy seeking to improve economic diversity and maintain a quality lifestyle. The critical issue with this goal is the lack of qualified workforce to fill higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs. Although the number of employed individuals has decreased for the past few years, the number of employers providing jobs has increased during the same 2000 to 2009 time span. Sales for the region have tended to increase for the 2000 to 2005 time period with a slight decrease in 2008.

Issues

The issues confronting the Region remain much the same. The population of the Region has not grown significantly since 2000. As to the level of education for the population, the amount of education per individual has significantly increased but still lags far behind the level of the state and the nation. The critical issue is that the workforce is not well prepared for the higher skilled jobs which equate to higher paying jobs. The region is primarily an agricultural based economy seeking to improve the economy and maintain a quality lifestyle. Sales for the region have tended to increase for the 2000 to 2005 time period with a slight decrease in 2008. Although the number of employed individuals has decreased for the past few years, the number of employers providing jobs has increased during the same 2000 to 2009 time span.

Opportunities

The number of employers in the region has increased. However, work still needs to be done to strengthen and enhance the economic base. Efforts toward quality education and training for skilled jobs should be improved. Local and regional leadership programs for all ages should be enhanced. The many natural resources in the region and the agricultural character of much of the area are a draw for tourists. Combining the rural qualities with well-maintained small downtowns should be used as an economic catalyst in the region. Local government spending should be focused on improving the small-town character of the communities (i.e. sidewalks, lighting and crosswalks).

Issues

- Stagnant population
- Educational attainment within the River Valley region lags far behind state and national levels
- Workforce is unprepared for higher skilled jobs
- Need higher paying jobs
- High unemployment rate

Opportunities

- Increase in number of employers
- Strengthen and enhance the local economic base

- Provide quality education/training
- Promote tourism as economic catalyst
- Prioritize local government spending toward sidewalks, lighting and crosswalks
- Support local and regional leadership programs
- Preserve rural character as tourism draw
- Capitalize on natural resources

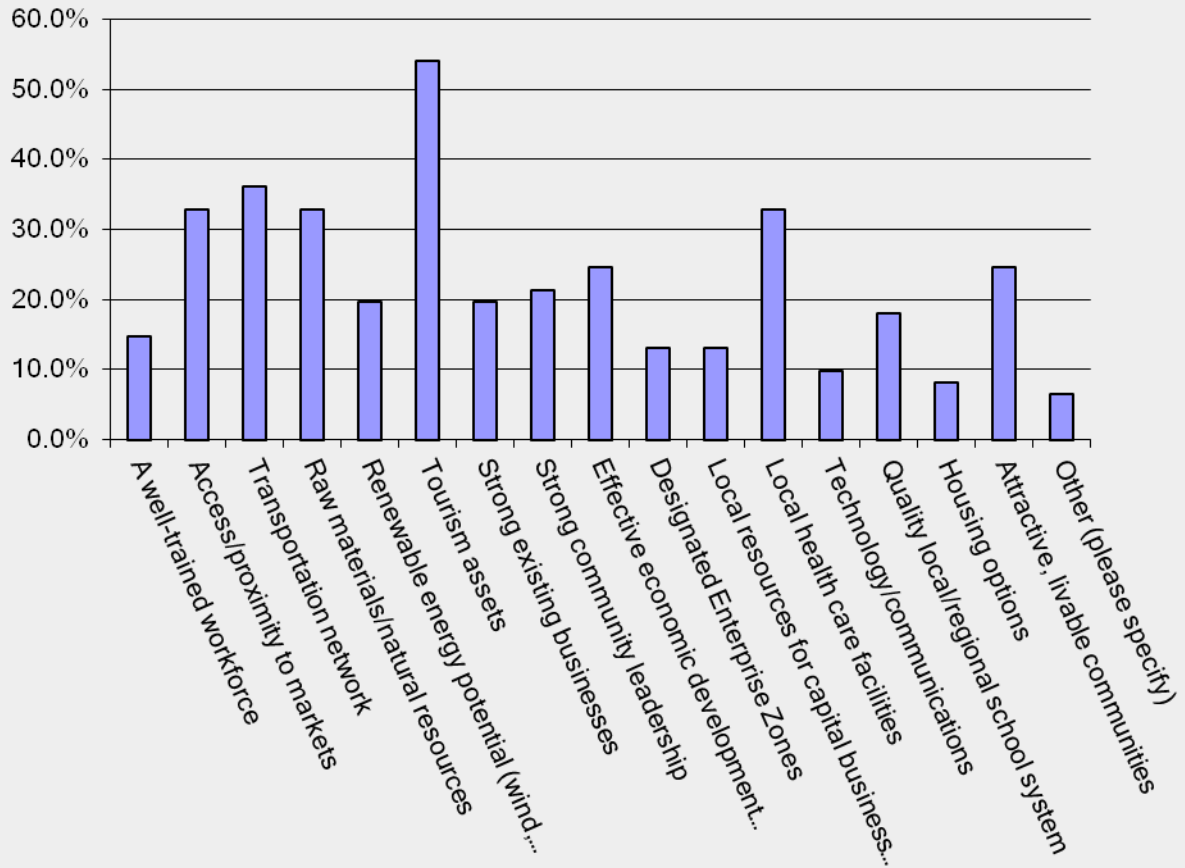
Question #1

Economic Development Self -Assessment Survey

Your County's Economic Strengths: Please select up to five (5) from the following that you think best characterize the greatest economic development strengths of your home county.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A well-trained workforce	14.8%	9
Access/proximity to markets	32.8%	20
Transportation network	36.1%	22
Raw materials/natural resources	32.8%	20
Renewable energy potential (wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, biomass)	19.7%	12
Tourism assets	54.1%	33
Strong existing businesses	19.7%	12
Strong community leadership	21.3%	13
Effective economic development organization	24.6%	15
Designated Enterprise Zones	13.1%	8
Local resources for capital business loan funds, etc.	13.1%	8
Local health care facilities	32.8%	20
Technology/communications	9.8%	6
Quality local/regional school system	18.0%	11
Housing options	8.2%	5
Attractive, livable communities	24.6%	15
Other (please specify)	6.6%	4
<i>answered question</i>		61
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)
1	Jun 1, 2012 6:22 PM	Albany Tech & Andrew college
2	May 25, 2012 8:18 PM	Crossroads of two U.S. highways with access to I-185
3	May 25, 2012 7:10 PM	Schools in Stewart County are getting National responses
4	May 25, 2012 2:33 AM	Small and rural; no traffic

Your County's Economic Strengths: Please select up to five (5) from the following that you think best characterize the greatest economic development strengths of your home county.

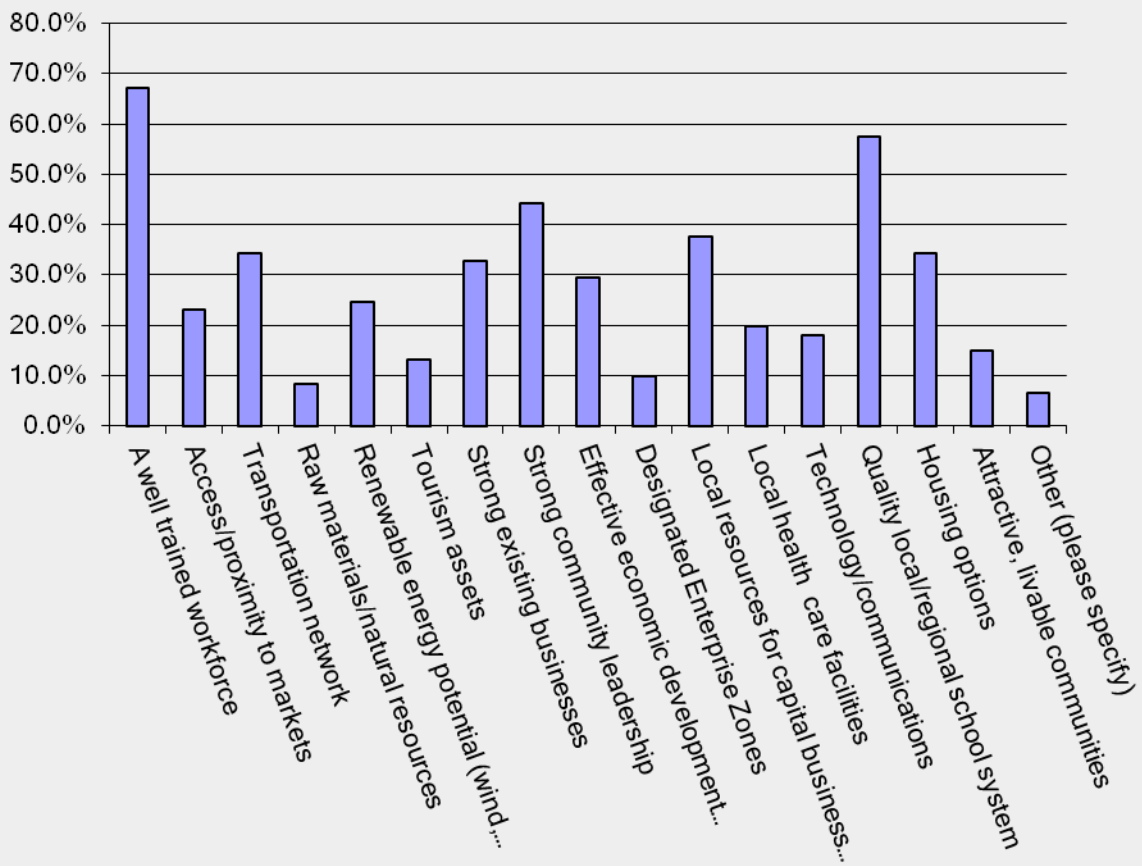


Question 2

Economic Development Self-Assessment Survey

Your County's Economic Weaknesses: Please select up to five (5) from the following that you think are the most significant economic development weaknesses or deficiencies in your home county.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A well trained workforce	67.2%	41
Access/proximity to markets	23.0%	14
Transportation network	34.4%	21
Raw materials/natural resources	8.2%	5
Renewable energy potential (wind, solar, geothermal)	24.6%	15
Tourism assets	13.1%	8
Strong existing businesses	32.8%	20
Strong community leadership	44.3%	27
Effective economic development organization	29.5%	18
Designated enterprise zones	9.8%	6
Local resources for capital business loan funds, etc.	37.7%	23
Local health care facilities	19.7%	12
Technology/communications	18.0%	11
Quality local/regional school system	57.4%	35
Housing options	34.4%	21
Attractive, livable communities	14.8%	9
Other (please specify)	6.6%	4
<i>answered question</i>		61
Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)
1	Jun 4, 2012 7:44 PM	Don't have enough big businesses, mostly very small
2	May 25, 2012 8:18 PM	School Board & County Commission are dysfunctional
3	May 25, 2012 1:24 PM	Drug Activity & well trained people leave the community because of lack of job opportunity
4	May 25, 2012 2:11 AM	Manufacturing is weak due to the untrained workforce.

Your County's Economic Weaknesses: Please select up to five (5) from the following that you think are the most significant economic development weaknesses or deficiencies in your home county.



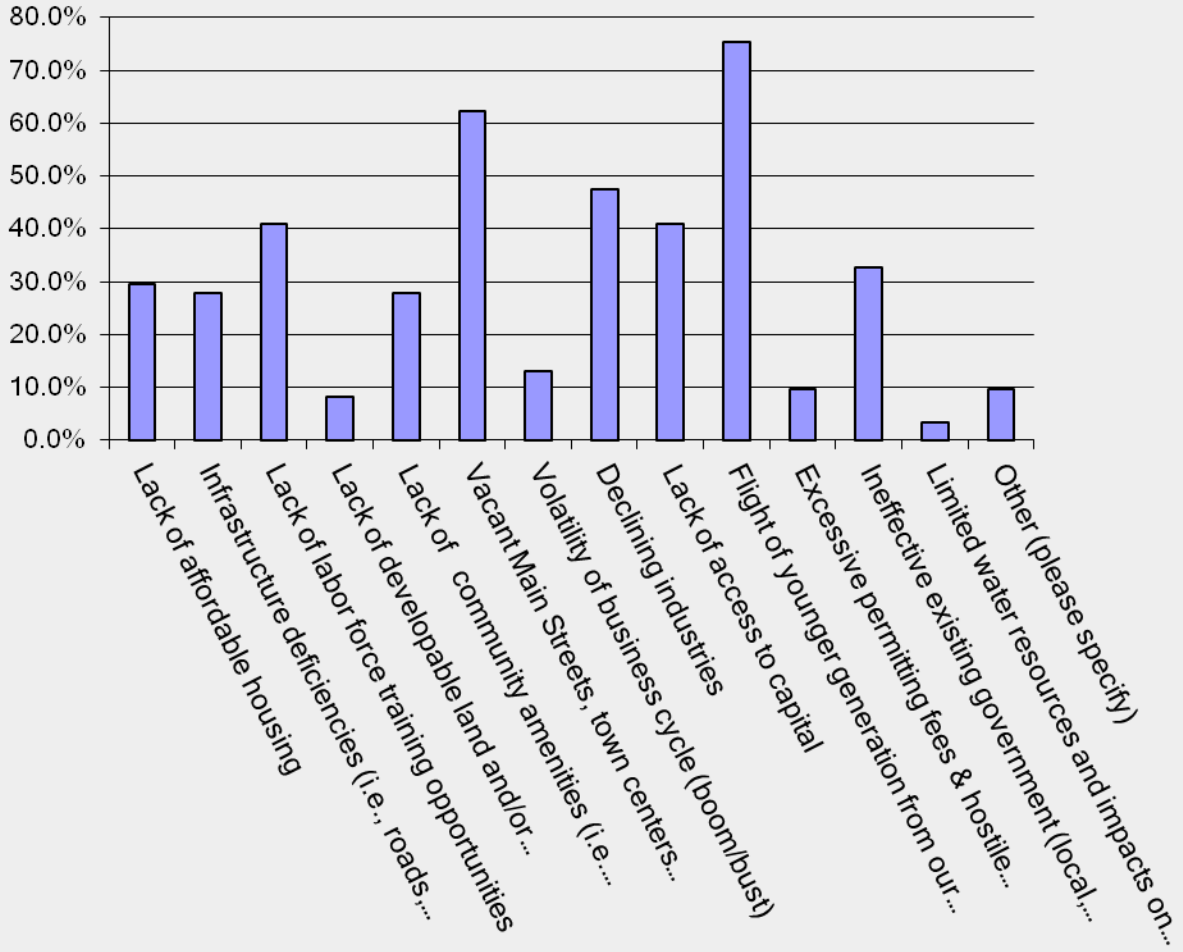
Question 3

Economic Development Self-Assessment Survey

Economic Threats or Limitations: Please select up to five (5) from the following that you think most threaten or limit the economic development potential of your home county.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of affordable housing	29.5%	18
Infrastructure deficiencies (i.e., roads, water/sewer, gas, rail, broadband)	27.9%	17
Lack of labor force training opportunities	41.0%	25
Lack of developable land and/or suitable buildings	8.2%	5
Lack of community amenities (i.e. Parks, community center, etc.)	27.9%	17
Vacant Main Streets, town centers and/or shopping areas	62.3%	38
Volatility of business cycle (boom/bust)	13.1%	8
Declining industries	47.5%	29
Lack of access to capital	41.0%	25
Flight of younger generation from our community	75.4%	46
Excessive permitting fees & hostile regulatory environment	9.8%	6
Ineffective existing government (local, state, federal)	32.8%	20
Limited water resources and impacts on local industries and/or agriculture	3.3%	2
Other (please specify)	9.8%	6
<i>answered question</i>		61
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)
1	May 29, 2012 9:31 PM	Lack of day care
2	May 29, 2012 6:15 PM	Property tax freeze
3	May 29, 2012 2:47 PM	County School systems having to do things that State mandates
4	May 25, 2012 1:24 PM	Those seeking to better themselves leave, those living off drugs or government
5	May 25, 2012 2:11 AM	Drug trafficking
6	May 25, 2012 12:49 AM	Terrible school system

Economic Threats or Limitations: Please select up to five (5) from the following that you think most threaten or limit the economic development potential of your home county.



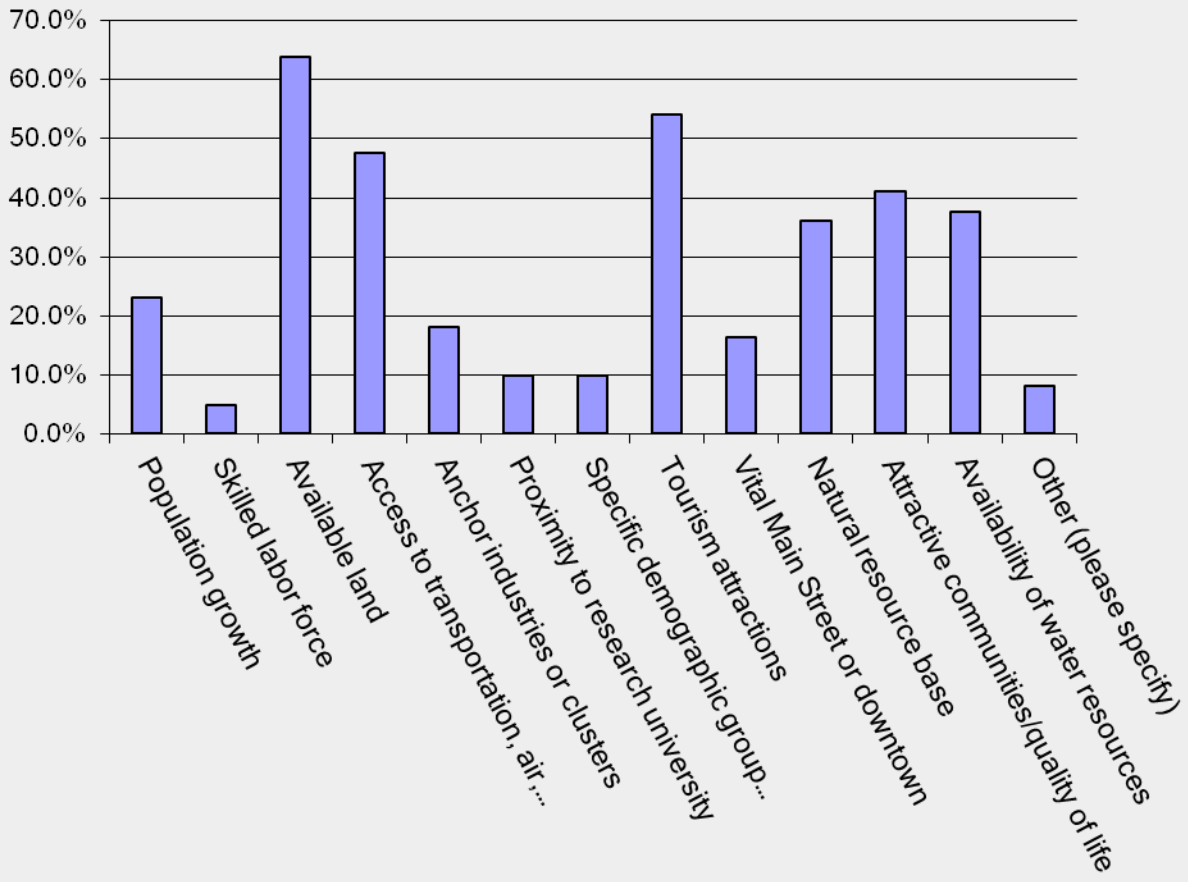
Question 4

Economic Development Self -Assessment Survey

Economic Opportunities: Please identify the economic opportunities that provide the most potential for your county. Please select the top five (5) opportunities.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Population growth	23.0%	14
Skilled labor force	4.9%	3
Available land	63.9%	39
Access to transportation, air, highway, rail	47.5%	29
Anchor industries or clusters	18.0%	11
Proximity to research university	9.8%	6
Specific demographic group students, retirees, etc.	9.8%	6
Tourism attractions	54.1%	33
Vital Main Street or downtown	16.4%	10
Natural resource base	36.1%	22
Attractive communities/quality of life	41.0%	25
Availability of water resources	37.7%	23
Other (please specify)	8.2%	5
<i>answered question</i>		61
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)
1	Jun 1, 2012 3:41 PM	Inland port
2	May 31, 2012 1:50 AM	None
3	May 28, 2012 6:48 PM	Don't understand question....what we have or wish for?
4	May 25, 2012 7:07 PM	Historic significance
5	May 25, 2012 4:45 AM	We have the best school system in Ellaville, GA

Economic Opportunities: Please identify the economic opportunities that provide the most potential for your county. Please select the top five (5) opportunities.

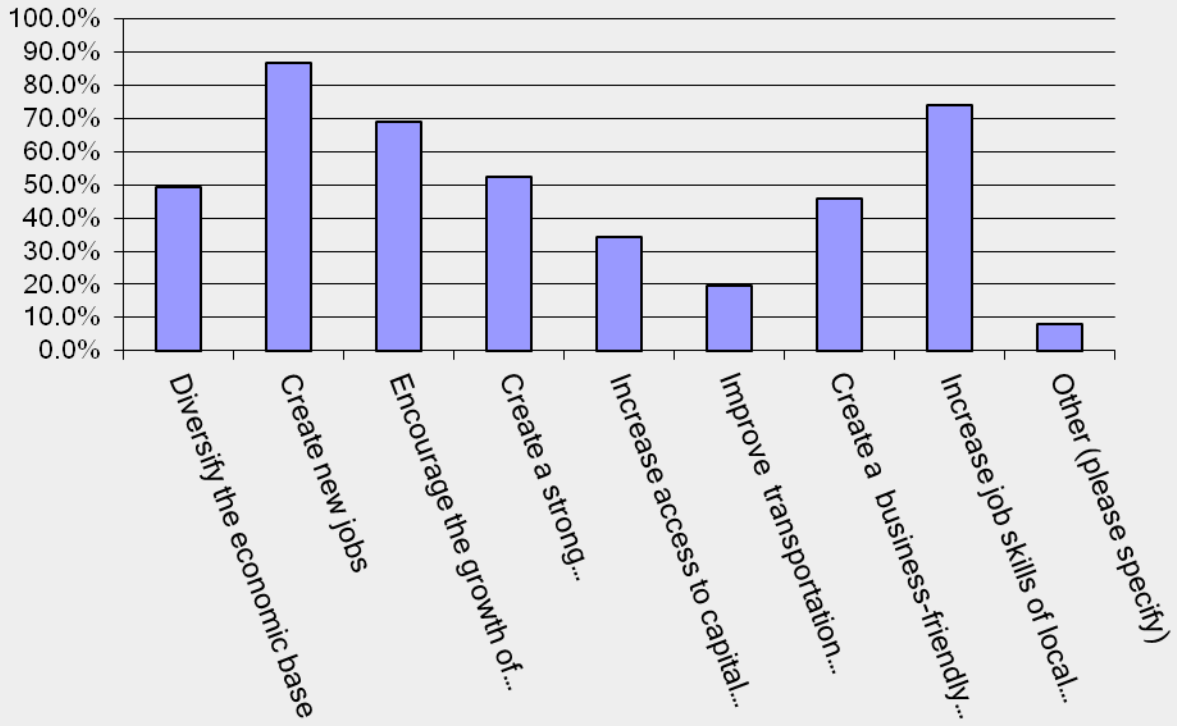


Question 5

Economic Development Self-Assessment Survey

Economic Development Goals: What should be your home county's top measureable goals or strategies for economic development? (What would the county like to achieve?) Please select up to five (5) strategies.			
Answer Options		Response Percent	Response Count
Diversify the economic base		49.2%	30
Create new jobs		86.9%	53
Encourage the growth of existing businesses and industries		68.9%	42
Create a strong entrepreneurial climate		52.5%	32
Increase access to capital for new and existing businesses		34.4%	21
Improve transportation infrastructure		19.7%	12
Create a business-friendly climate		45.9%	28
Increase job skills of local labor force		73.8%	45
Other (please specify)		8.2%	5
<i>answered question</i>			61
Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)	Categories
1	May 29, 2012 6:15 PM	Encourage people to move by not freezing the property tax	
2	May 25, 2012 7:07 PM	Develop leadership skills for city and county officials	
3	May 25, 2012 1:24 PM	Curb alcohol, drug, and morality problems	
4	May 25, 2012 4:45 AM	Jobs FOR EVERYDAY PEOPLE , JUST PLAN PEOPLE	
5	May 25, 2012 12:49 AM	Improve school system	

Economic Development Goals: What should be your home county's top measurable goals or strategies for economic development? (What would the county like to achieve?) Please select up to five (5) strategies.



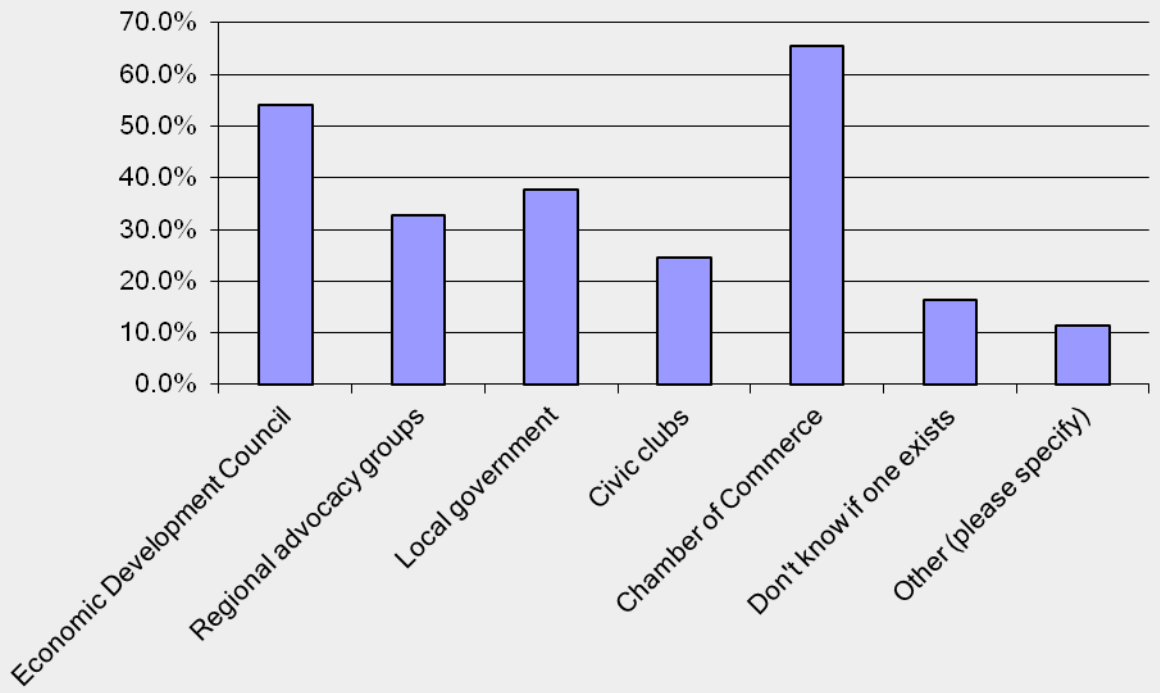
Question 6

Economic Development Self -Assessment Survey

Public/Private Partnerships: Partnerships between business and government can be important to improve the economic climate. To your knowledge, what partnerships have formed in your county to work together to solve economic development issues? Check all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Economic Development Council	54.1%	33
Regional advocacy groups	32.8%	20
Local government	37.7%	23
Civic clubs	24.6%	15
Chamber of Commerce	65.6%	40
Don't know if one exists	16.4%	10
Other (please specify)	11.5%	7
<i>answered question</i>		61
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)	
1	May 25, 2012 8:18 PM	County development authority	
2	May 25, 2012 7:07 PM	Dda	
3	May 25, 2012 5:02 PM	They exist but are not doing anything.	
4	May 25, 2012 3:39 PM	Entrepreneur Friendly designation and Work Ready Certification process completed	
5	May 25, 2012 1:28 PM	The Better Home Town of Richland and to a very lesser extent the DDA in Lumpkin	
6	May 25, 2012 4:45 AM	County commissioners with court house	
7	May 25, 2012 2:33 AM	Family Connection	

Existing Public Private Partnerships in Your Community



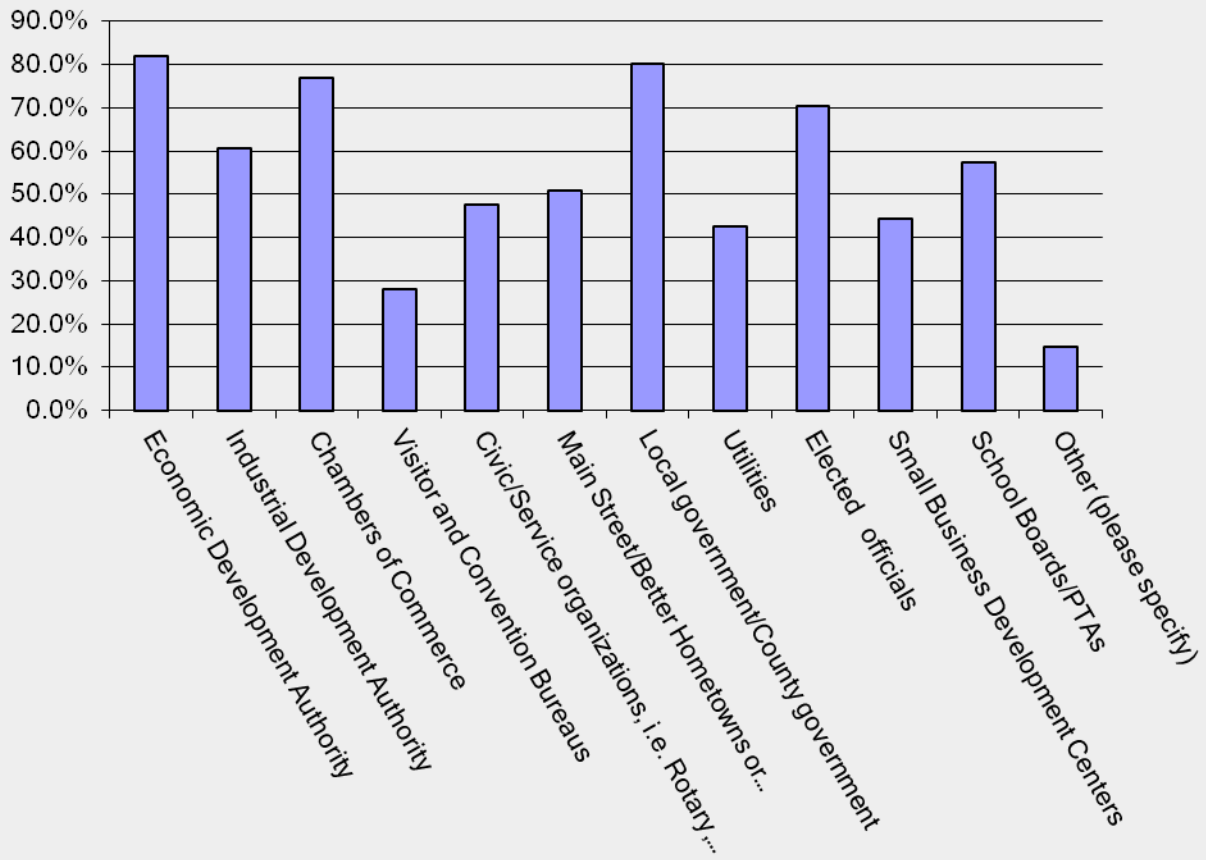
Question 7

Economic Development Self-Assessment Survey

Local Partners in Economic Development: What key community organizations should be involved in the creation and implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)? Check all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Economic Development Authority	82.0%	50
Industrial Development Authority	60.7%	37
Chambers of Commerce	77.0%	47
Visitor and Convention Bureaus	27.9%	17
Civic/Service organizations, i.e. Rotary, Kiwanis	47.5%	29
Main Street/Better Hometowns or downtown marketing organizations	50.8%	31
Local government/County government	80.3%	49
Utilities	42.6%	26
Elected officials	70.5%	43
Small Business Development Centers	44.3%	27
School Boards/PTAs	57.4%	35
Other (please specify)	14.8%	9
<i>answered question</i>		61
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)	
1	May 31, 2012 11:08 AM	Local colleges	
2	May 30, 2012 9:00 PM	Georgia state parks & historic sites agency	
3	May 30, 2012 1:40 AM	Private citizens	
4	May 26, 2012 1:26 AM	Local family connection collaborative	
5	May 25, 2012 3:39 PM	Family connection	
6	May 25, 2012 3:25 PM	Tourist attractions	
7	May 25, 2012 1:24 PM	Outside business people	
8	May 25, 2012 2:33 AM	Youth and families; Family Connection	
9	May 25, 2012 2:11 AM	Colleges	

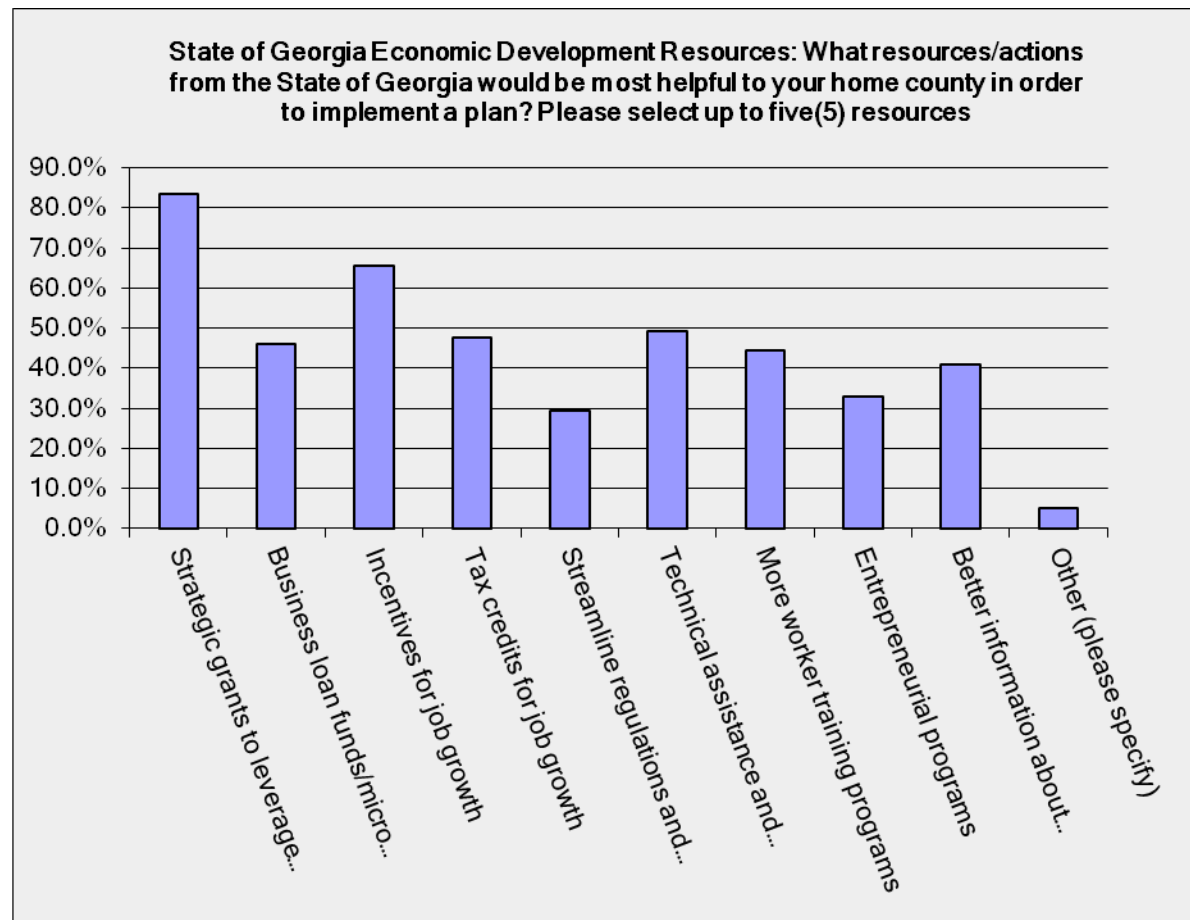
Local Partners in Economic Development: What key community organizations should be involved in the creation and implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)? Check all that apply.



Question 8

Economic Development Self -Assessment Survey

State of Georgia Economic Development Resources: What resources/actions from the State of Georgia would be most helpful to your home county in order to implement a plan? Please select up to five(5) resources			
Answer Options		Response Percent	Response Count
Strategic grants to leverage economic development projects		83.6%	51
Business loan funds/micro loans/access to capital		45.9%	28
Incentives for job growth		65.6%	40
Tax credits for job growth		47.5%	29
Streamline regulations and permitting		29.5%	18
Technical assistance and assessment visits to develop local action plans		49.2%	30
More worker training programs		44.3%	27
Entrepreneurial programs		32.8%	20
Better information about existing state programs		41.0%	25
Other (please specify)		4.9%	3
<i>answered question</i>			61
Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)	Categories
1	May 25, 2012 5:02 PM	All a complete waste of time and money.	
2	May 25, 2012 3:25 PM	Grants to improve tourism	
3	May 25, 2012 12:49 AM	Department of Education involvement in local school system	



Question 9

Economic Development Self-Assessment Survey

One Action That the State Could Undertake: If there was ONE action that the State could undertake to help advance economic development in your home county, what would it be?

Answer Options	Response Count
	61
<i>answered question</i>	61
<i>skipped question</i>	0

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	Jun 12, 2012 8:48 PM	Better communication/collaboration between existing agencies.
2	Jun 10, 2012 9:03 PM	Assessment services to determine which arenas for growth are the best fit for this community.
3	Jun 8, 2012 2:01 PM	Diverse business development plan
4	Jun 5, 2012 5:02 PM	Job opportunities
5	Jun 5, 2012 1:55 PM	Provide assistance in returning Byromville to a positive community
6	Jun 5, 2012 1:50 PM	Create an environment conducive to drawing and creating new business: legal, physical, educational.
7	Jun 4, 2012 7:44 PM	Abolish the Tier system with which our county appears to have plenty of money and everything we want/need
8	Jun 1, 2012 6:22 PM	Show our county to business / industry prospects looking to locate in Georgia
9	Jun 1, 2012 3:47 PM	Job creation
10	Jun 1, 2012 3:41 PM	Be pro-active
11	Jun 1, 2012 12:42 PM	Improve school system
12	May 31, 2012 12:03 PM	Understanding the needs of small towns.
13	May 31, 2012 11:08 AM	Support the Work Ready program for all industry including funding for advanced training
14	May 31, 2012 2:30 AM	Provide financial support to undertake the problems in the community such as infrastructure, jobs and businesses
15	May 31, 2012 1:50 AM	Let taxes be used to buy land in some small counties.
16	May 30, 2012 10:06 PM	Job incentives
17	May 30, 2012 9:00 PM	Provide us with a full time director for Economic Development efforts.
18	May 30, 2012 2:46 PM	Take over K-12 education in our County
19	May 30, 2012 10:39 AM	Create new jobs and job training/education
20	May 30, 2012 1:40 AM	Work force training
21	May 29, 2012 10:19 PM	Open an engineering school at Columbus State University.
22	May 29, 2012 9:31 PM	Help get a day care center in our area
23	May 29, 2012 6:50 PM	Major road development
24	May 29, 2012 6:15 PM	Tax incentives to lure new manufacturing jobs
25	May 29, 2012 6:02 PM	Shorter turn around on application for assistance with projects.
26	May 29, 2012 2:56 PM	The State Department of Economic Development is focused on whatever the client says they want and need. If the state could help to direct some of the companies to rural areas and put resources in place to overcome the handicaps that small counties have, then more development could be pushed down. Rural counties will never be able to generate much development from within
27	May 29, 2012 2:47 PM	Put Business Leaders on the State School Board.
28	May 29, 2012 1:32 PM	Increase stability of local businesses
29	May 29, 2012 1:03 PM	Technical assistance/assessment visits to develop local action plans
30	May 29, 2012 11:31 AM	Cut the red tape and harassment of business

31	May 28, 2012 6:48 PM	Unfortunately this needs to happen at the local level, but perhaps the State could provide incentives.
32	May 27, 2012 1:42 PM	Increase technical school training/required for non-employed
33	May 27, 2012 9:44 AM	Tax credit for job creation
34	May 26, 2012 1:26 AM	Job opportunities
35	May 25, 2012 9:46 PM	A grant or some kind of incentive for opening a business in a small Rural county.
36	May 25, 2012 8:18 PM	State has plenty of programs in place. It is up to the local gov'ts, Chamber, and Development Authorities to be take advantage.
37	May 25, 2012 7:10 PM	To Help older business to achieve growth as well as new ones
38	May 25, 2012 7:07 PM	provide adequate funds for education
39	May 25, 2012 6:25 PM	create effective and low cost marketing tools with training of local officials to utilize the marketing
40	May 25, 2012 5:32 PM	incentives for job creation, tax credits
41	May 25, 2012 5:02 PM	Stop funding poverty!!! It's our biggest industry.
42	May 25, 2012 3:39 PM	Create programs that specifically target the NEEDS/GAPS in rural communities such as workforce development & entrepreneurial programs for youth/adults with continued support in technology, lab work, etc. to strengthen skills learned in the classroom.
43	May 25, 2012 3:25 PM	Develop tourism of Marion and surrounding county attractions to advertise a "tourism trail" for this unique area of Presidential Pathways. ie. Pasaquan, little grand canyon, plains, Americus and Columbus.
44	May 25, 2012 1:59 PM	Placing term limits on elected officials. If there is never a change in leadership there will be no change on the community.
45	May 25, 2012 1:28 PM	Since this is officially the "poorest county in the State", ANY possibility of any kind of industry wanting to locate in the State should be welcomed to Stewart County with open arms and open pocket books from the State/County. The willingness to help provide whatever helps that business to flourish and grow needs to be provided.
46	May 25, 2012 1:24 PM	Make it mandatory that Biblical principles be taught all through school, The lack of it is killing our community. Schools go overboard to avoid it.
47	May 25, 2012 12:57 PM	Funding Industry that would stay
48	May 25, 2012 12:51 PM	Create multi agency opportunities for economic growth such as when a prison is closed work with the judicial system and create drug diversion and treatment centers for the region.
49	May 25, 2012 12:26 PM	Loosen restrictions on the artisan spirits distilleries.
50	May 25, 2012 12:19 PM	Job training programs
51	May 25, 2012 11:24 AM	target declining rural areas
52	May 25, 2012 4:45 AM	Jobs and more jobs
53	May 25, 2012 4:19 AM	Education.
54	May 25, 2012 3:30 AM	Create incentives for businesses to move outside of metropolitan areas.
55	May 25, 2012 2:33 AM	Spread jobs throughout the state
56	May 25, 2012 2:11 AM	Fewer regulations. We are not Atlanta.
57	May 25, 2012 12:49 AM	Take over active involvement and evaluation in school system
58	May 24, 2012 11:57 PM	SPONSOR AND PROMOTE UNIFICATION OF COUNTIES. WE HAVE MUCH TOO MUCH OVERHEAD FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS EVERY 30 MILES. NEED ABOUT 1/3 OF THE COUNTIES WE HAVE NOW.
59	May 18, 2012 10:46 PM	Financing Assistance
60	May 18, 2012 8:02 PM	provide web marketing assistance for entrepreneurs
61	May 18, 2012 7:45 PM	--