Pursuant to notice duly given, the Board of Directors of the Georgia Department of Economic Development met on November 3, 2021 in Valdosta, Georgia.

Attending Board Members

1. Mark Bassford  
2. Dennis Chastain  
3. Jaclyn Dixon Ford  
4. Drew Ellenburg  
5. Randy Hatcher  
6. Allen Hodges  
7. Julie Hunt  
8. Garnett Johnson  
9. Jay Neely  
10. Mat Swift  
11. Steve Syfan  
12. Jay Wells

Chairman Jay Neely called the GDEcD Board Meeting to order at 2:00 pm. He introduced Board member Mark Bassford who welcomed the board to his hometown of Valdosta.

Next, Andrea Schruijer, Executive Director – Valdosta Lowndes County Development Authority, welcomed the Board with a community introduction. Andrea stated that economic development is a team/community/state partnership and they are very thankful to the Department for being #1 for Business so many years in a row. In 2021 they were #9 in fastest job recruitment since COVID19.

- Largest number of jobs – April 2020 to January 2021 (food processing)
  - 2008 | Martins Famous Pastry  
  - 2020 | growth in industry – 13 new and existing industry projects  
  - 2021 | 7 projects - $94 million in investment and 210 jobs with state partners

They owe their success to having a unique board of directors and a team of local, state, and schools that all understand economic development.

Next up, Jose De Diego Arozamena, Founder & CEO – Arglass, spoke about their company and locating in Valdosta:

- In 2019 began construction  
- 150 jobs; $123 million in investment  
- Family business  
- Glass is the packaging of the future
  - Recyclable  
  - Healthy  
  - Safe
• They were a greenfield industry start up that took time to find financing - support and assistance from the community was critical through the financial process
• Glass is delicate and it takes expertise to handle so training was critical
• They are here to grow
• Coming soon - a 2nd furnace, +$140 million in investment, 150 jobs

Next Kristy Saley – Wireglass, introduced panel members to speak regarding their experience with private/public workforce investment partnerships. Panel members:

Tommy Stalvey, Senior Vice President - Ace Electric, Inc.
DeAnnia Clements, Interim President - Wiregrass Georgia Technical College
Jason Van Nus, Work Based Learning & Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator - Lowndes High School

Tommy Stalvey – Ace Electric, Inc.
• 2nd generation at Ace (not Ace Hardware!) – a family owned business
• In the late 80s, they lit their first round of Walmart stores where they built a profile
• In the early 90s, while still doing Walmart stores, they built an office in Columbus
• They started from the ground up and used apprentices for open positions
• They now have six locations in the South East
  o Statesboro
  o North Carolina
  o Jackson, TN – design build
  o Atlanta
  o Macon
  o Valdosta
• They have experienced great success and have 920 exceptional employees with healthcare benefits
• Building centers such as – Walmart, Amazon, Autos – Big 3, Arenas
• In the top 200 electrical companies in the USA
• Their relationship with the local high school and Wiregrass is a crucial part of their hiring process and keeping their employees
• Workforce development
  o In 2018 – they worked on a plan on how to get the best employees before they get out of school
  o They met with Wiregrass to come up with a program to use students
  o Came up with a plan for on the job training and education
  o Ace took on 5 apprentices, 2 dual enrollment students
  o The students are can register with the Department of Labor before they graduate which helps jump start them towards being a journeyman
  o The relationship with the high school and Ace is great - the Ace program is very popular and has 31 students
• Jason Van Nus
  o At that time, high school students working on a job site was risky
At 16-17 years old they can work in the field because of HB402, which has incentives in Georgia, discount work based learning – up to 4% off total workman comp.

Students are released from high school for a job that relates to courses where they learn and practice while on the job.

Talent retention is staying local to help build local companies.

There are 17 hazardous occupations that normally a person under the age of 18 cannot do.

Ace was able to go to high school students for help during the critical labor shortage.

They are placed in the field where they learn:

- Soft skills
- Work 4 days a week
- Attend class at Wiregrass under the Ace curriculum 1 day a week
- There are 4 full time employees in critical areas before Ace’s competition knows that they are ready to be hired
- They receive 2 years that counts towards their apprenticeship program through the Department of Labor
- There is a waiting list every year
- High wage apprenticeships while also getting a jump start on earning their hours to become journeymen
- A 20 year old can make “family money” with a 2 year head start
  - Start pay is $10 an hour
  - Most students have no debt, goes in technical college with only 2 years left to be a journeyman - their GA dual enrollment is paid for
  - Once a journeyman, they can make up to 6 figures - travel crews can make $100,000

The first year, 76 students applied, after the vetting process, 28 students were accepted:

- That number was reduced to 21 students after school attendance was considered
- 14 of the students were teacher recommended
- 12 students did the industry tour – they lost 2 in that process and 1 moved
- 9 students were left – Ace hired them all as summer interns

Ace ended up wanting the students instead of full time employees because of the work ethic they had learned and to keep their talent local.

The long term goal is to do the same type of program in other cities but they need the buy in from the high schools and technical colleges

- If others will accept the model – the proof of concept is there
- It will keep the students local

Ace now has a pipeline of students and no other recruiting is needed.

A work release program through the technical college is all that is needed.
Next, we heard a presentation from the following panel from Valdosta State University regarding rural workforce development solutions and how the University is partnering with others to meet regional workforce demands.

Dr. Richard Carvajal, President - Valdosta State University  
Dr. Robert Smith, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Dr. Rodney Carr, Vice President for Student Success  
Dr. James Pace, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Services  
Darrell Moore, Executive Director, VSU Center for Regional Impact

Dr. Richard Carvajal, President - Valdosta State University
- Chris Clark once did a tour of what life would look like in 2030 if there were no changes made to what we were currently doing which brought up the following concerns
  - South GA had long lagged behind
  - The only change post the Great Recession is THINGS GOT WORSE and the future outlook didn’t get any better
  - Millennial & Generation Z will move to metro areas
- As the new President for South GA’s flagship regional comprehensive university, Dr. Carvajal knew they had a responsibility to lead
- Like many, we were left knowing change for this place we call home was needed
- South GA is blessed with great higher education providers
- VSU is the only one missioned to serve ALL South GA (41 counties)
- We are now getting more students to the finish line and making better after graduation

Darrell Moore, Executive Director, VSU Center for Regional Impact
- Started in 2018 - center for South Georgia regional impact
- Rural communities – investment
- January 2019, 150 projects
- Census was counted – helped with issues, resources, impact on the local community
- Archways provide services and resources to identify talent – learning opportunities for students and employers have a chance to identify talent
- Adel redevelopment project helped with better development downtown - market plans for the brewery and restaurants
- Spring program to address common statewide issues, focus groups
- Complete self-assessments – 10 rural communities to participate
- Retired economic development professors volunteer with the goal of keeping students in the community
- Students on campus, state, community

Dr. Robert Smith, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- We are constantly thinking of new programs to meet industry needs and the needs of the community and broader region
• We are responsive to these needs
  o Typically, a student picks a major and later connects with a job, but our model rules
    ▪ Attract new students
    ▪ Meet with the community to learn what the need is and prepares the students for those jobs
    ▪ Allows them to better connect when freshmen with a list of career paths
  • We talk with business leaders and have advisory groups
  • Hands on learning, working with real businesses, internships

Dr. James Pace, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Services
• Quality of life and access to healthcare
• Nursing – college of nursing/health science – healthcare unites us all and is vital to the quality of life in each sector
• Bachelor of Science in Nursing – 140-150 students per year
  o High school traditional – 4 years
  o Accelerated degree in another field
• Master of Science
  o Family NP
  o Physical mental health
  o Advance certification program
• DNV Program
  o Leadership roles
  o Pipeline
  o Critical shortage of nurses need qualified faculty with doctoral level
• Post masters
  o Goal was 10 – 24 this Fall
  o 1,600 students
  o Highly recruited across South Georgia
• April 2021 launched the E-Degree
  o Efficient, cost worthy, innovative
  o Marketing is digital to specified group that never finished their college degree and now traditional college doesn’t meet with their lifestyle
  o Georgians go to university online, outside of Georgia
  o The E-Degree is quick and affordable – 8 degrees in our area
  o The university pays for the tests and breaks down all barriers
  o Students can login any time – there are no semesters
  o Two courses at a time
  o Goal was 88 students – now have 200
• In March 2020 there was panic – very scary to come back
  o We provided enrollment coaches for all online and face-to-face students
  o $299 per credit hour, laptop, materials – no graduation fees
Dr. Rodney Carr, Vice President for Student Success

- Non-traditional and innovative – are we doing all we can do to get them to the finish line?
- 40% of our students are first generation college students – how do we keep them?
- Full time professors
  - Advisors committed to the students every semester
  - Learning new management system
    - When they log in they are offered a tutor if they score bad on tests
  - 4 year graduate rate increase
  - All work together to develop workforce business needs to supply the workforce that is needed

Chairman Neely called on Dr. Richard Carvajal, President - Valdosta State University and Co-Chair One Valdosta-Lowndes Steering committee and Christie Moore, President at Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce to talk about the One Valdosta Strategic Plan.

- A need was identified
- A great community, but room for growth
- Georgia Power comes forward with an idea – a formal community strategic planning process
- City, County, Chamber, Development Authority
- South GA Medical Center & VSU Added
- VisionFirst selected as consultant to help
- Big Goals: Spur on Economic Growth / Jobs & become the clear economic capital of South Georgia

Creation of the plan

- Feedback Sought – 80 personal interviews, nearly 600 survey responses, listening sessions with community/business leaders
- Diverse feedback leads to diverse recommendations
- Goal - finish our work & launch in spring ’20
- Used the halt to step back and reassess given new challenges & opportunities post-COVID
- Steering Committee ultimately votes unanimously to move forward and write a Plan Addendum
- Addendum includes “Big Wins” and more-focused Goals, together with plan to raise money to fund implementation

Our focus

- Economic Growth is One Valdosta Lowndes’s primary goal
- In the new economy, that means recruiting & retaining talent, especially younger workers
- Gen X: “In my day…” / then a seismic shift
• Millennial & Gen Z value vibrant downtowns, greenspace, diversity, others of same age, quality of life
• That’s why the OVL Community & Economic Development Plan is very focused on enhancing quality of life

Coming Soon!
• A new VISION: to be a united and forward-thinking community
• A new tag line: ALL IN
• A new home: OVL becomes an initiative of the Chamber
• New Leadership: Chamber hires a Director & an Advisory Council is formed
• Work Begins!

What & Why Recap
• Started in 2017, the OVL planning effort is nearing completion & almost ready to launch
• Plan responds to diverse input with diverse ideas
• Plan includes goals that improve quality of life to recruit and retain especially younger workers
• Ready supply of qualified workers leads to job creation & economic growth
• Valdosta / Lowndes County have been on a roll economically coming out of COVID
• OVL ensures that our forward momentum will continue

Next, Chairman Neely called on Pat Wilson, Commissioner – Georgia Department of Economic Development to present the Commissioner’s Report

Commissioner Wilson stated that education and workforce are critical to what we do. Workforce is the only thing that can slow us down right now and communities working together really helps. Rural Georgia can participate like they have never been able to before.

Thanks to Dr. Carvajal and Valdosta State University and all of our speakers today. Education and workforce are critical to the future of Georgia and growing and attracting business.

Pat introduced Regional Representative for Region 11 - Elizabeth McLean. Elizabeth is one of our on-the-ground staff members located in each region working with businesses of all sizes on behalf of our department.

Lori Hennesy is our Tourism Marketing Manager for Regions 8, 10, and 11 – working with our tourism partners to market these beautiful and unique areas of our state.

They help make sure our operations remain seamless and connected.

Thanks to Jay for introducing her earlier, but another special welcome to the newest member of our board, from Tifton: Julie Hunt.

Department updates:
I hope you’ve had some time to review our board book, and our team stands ready today and always to answer questions and hear feedback.

To run through a few top items, since many of us are visitors to Valdosta for this meeting, I’ll start with Tourism – the subject of our last board meeting!

**Explore Georgia**

Explore Georgia’s tourism campaign, “Ready. Set. Georgia.” continues to experience tremendous success. Website traffic to ExploreGeorgia.org reached 17 months of record-breaking performance. Audience growth and engagement of our social channels far outpaced that of competing destinations. As much of the campaign remains adjustable based on consumer sentiment, we’re able to rapidly adapt and respond.

**Film**

Not only did Georgia have a record year of $4.1 billion in direct spend by the industry in FY21, just last week, Governor Kemp announced that MBS Equipment Company, the largest studio-based equipment company in the world for film, television, and events, is opening its new East Coast headquarters in Georgia at Trilith Studios in Fayette County. And, Georgia-based Gray TV has purchased Third Rail Studios in Doraville and will be incorporated into the new facility—becoming “Iconic Studios at Assembly.”

**Georgia Council for the Arts**

Georgia Council for the Arts has awarded more grants this year than ever since joining the GDEcD umbrella in 2011 from a combination of federal COVID-19 relief dollars, National Endowment for the Arts funding, and funding from the Georgia General Assembly.

To compare numbers:

- In FY12, GCA distributed a total of 113 grants
- During FY21, we received 499 grant applications and were able to fund 288 grants.
- During FY22, we’ve received applications for 361 applications and are funding 333 of these applicants.

Our creative communities have reported a $62.5 billion economic impact, generating roughly $37 billion in revenue and accounting for about 200,000 jobs in the state. Getting these organizations back on track is vital to our communities and overall economy.

**Center of Innovation**

The Georgia Center of Innovation is also involved in the creative communities economy. With the Center’s IT team and new focus on creative technologies, they’ve been
working on a pilot Georgia Creative Communities Project, which will work with 4 Georgia communities to bring to them resources that will help them grow their local creative technology industries.

- The first cohort is focused on esports and includes participation from Clayton County, Fayette County, Gwinnett County, and Muscogee County.

Chris Chammou, COI’s new director of Ag Technology, is continuing to work consistently with the team at the Georgia Grown Innovation Center in Metter.
- This site is a unique asset for rural innovation and is making a difference for businesses in that region.
- This engagement has already opened the door for 3 new projects in that region, all focused in some aspect of agricultural technology.

The Center of Innovation itself is continuing to innovate and reported a more than 16% increase and new record of 700 engagements with Georgia businesses and industry organizations – helping them move further, faster. The Center of Innovation is also currently working on an in-state marketing push, and I’ll cover more of that in the marketing update.

Global Commerce

During the first quarter of FY21, our Global Commerce division:
- Assisted 87 companies with locations or expansions,
- Creating $2B in investments, and
- More than 9,100 jobs.

- In Lowndes County over the last year, we’ve announced new projects like **Correct Craft** ($1.7M, 90 jobs) and **Bimbo QSR** (bakery) ($36M, 70+ jobs) would locate here.

We also announced during the quarter that we again earned “Top State for Doing Business” for the 8th year in a row from Area Development trade publication. Last week, we announced that SK Group subsidiary SKC is establishing a first-of-its-kind glass-based semiconductor-part venture. This is a $473 million, 400-job project in Newton County. It directly supports the desperately needed domestic manufacturing of semiconductors. It’s also a prime example of how investments into our academic assets not only drive economic development in Georgia, but can also contribute to finding solutions to global problems.

International Trade

On Friday, Deputy Commissioner Mary Waters, will be traveling to Washington, D.C., to accept an unprecedented **fourth** President’s “E Star Award” for Export Services from the U.S. Department of Commerce. We earned this award last year, but the ceremony was postponed. Mary has also taken the helm as President of State International
Development Organizations, Inc. (SIDO) for the 2021-2023 term. This is the premier U.S. organization dedicated to supporting state international trade agencies and state international trade development.

**Marketing, Communications, & International Engagement**

Our marketing team created and released two new videos. One is supporting our marketing efforts for the Georgia Center of Innovation.

- It helps reintroduce the Center through a lighthearted narrator who really shows what “innovation” can mean, and how accessible and achievable it is.
- Sometimes, when people think of the concept of innovation, they picture something unattainably high-tech – the iPhone, or an electric vehicle.
- We want them to understand that this team can help them innovate – just by finding a simple solution to an everyday problem that provides some value and utility for their small business.

The other video is on behalf of our International Trade division and clarifies the details of how a company can apply for our Go Global Georgia grants.

- These are relatively small grants that make a big difference for a company thinking about starting to sell their product into a new country.
- We’ve found these companies have a LOT of questions, and this video gets that conversation started.

They continue to support all areas of the department.

I also spent time recently in the UK, Ireland, and Germany on economic development missions meeting with diplomatic partners, companies with existing businesses in Georgia, and prospects.

In closing, I also want to thank our local hosts, Andrea Schruijer, our Board member Mark Bassford, and the Rainwater Conference Center and their wonderful staff for having us here today.

To our board, your efforts make a difference to Georgia, and we appreciate your input.

Chairman Neely called for a vote to approve the August 2021 Board Meeting Minutes. Steve Syfan called for the motion; Garnett Johnson seconded; minutes were approved.
Georgia Department of Economic Development
Board Meeting – November 3, 2021

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

[Signature]
Jay Neely
Board Chairman

[Signature]
Dennis Chastain
Board Secretary