



2009-2010 Annual Report

Dublin-Laurens County Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority

Our Mission Statement:

*“To make Dublin-Laurens County
a better place to live,
work, play, and retire!”*



Serving Cadwell♦Dexter♦Dublin♦Dudley♦East Dublin♦Montrose♦Rentz

Letter from the 2009-2010 Chairman



Jay Studstill Chair

To the Chamber Membership:

It has been a great ride this Chamber year.

As your 2009-2010 Board Chairman, I am proud to say that due to the hard work and leadership of Willie Paulk and her staff, Malehia Young, Kim Simmons, and Katy Morton, as well as your Chamber Board Members, an aggressive Program of Work has been completed.

Some special accomplishments include:

- Chamber re-accreditation with the United States Chamber
- Support for the creation of Career Academy
- Enhancement to the “Shop at Home” marketing program
- Selection of a firm for creating an enhanced web site
- Successful re-alignment with the Development Authority

Our community is blessed to have great leadership. This year marks the 20th year that Willie Paulk has served as our Chamber President. Much of our chamber’s success is due to her vision and positive image she exhibits when she represents our community.

Please join me in expressing our appreciation to Willie for a job well done these past twenty years.

Chamber receives accreditation from the US Chamber of Commerce





David Roberts **Vice Chair of Membership Services and** **Chair Elect**

The Dublin – Laurens County Chamber of Commerce has completed a challenging but eventful year this past year. Despite the tough economic climate, we have continued to serve our community and work towards a better future. We need everyone's involvement whether through ideas, volunteerism or business services to make our community a better place to "Live, Work, Play and Retire". Without the fore sight and contributions of

those who have come before us, Dublin & Laurens County would not be the wonderful community it is today. This is why we must continue to carry the torch onward.

We have been very blessed to have added 62 new members this year and enjoyed 17 Ribbon Cuttings and 4 Ground Breakings. New businesses, medical facilities and even a new industry in Mage Solar have made the decision to open their doors to do business in our community. We always welcome new members and encourage you to support your fellow Chamber members every chance you get.

The Business after Hours have been very well attended with an average attendance of 152 and Business and Breakfast events have had an average attendance of 96. If you are not utilizing these events as a means of networking to advertise your businesses services and build new relationships, you are truly missing out on an excellent opportunity to meet other business partners one on one.

The Shop at Home Program continues to grow. This year we have sold \$45,395.00 worth of Gift Checks which will directly impact our members businesses. All of the dollars spent here will turn over seven times so remember to purchase the Chamber's Shop at Home Gift Checks this coming year. Industry Appreciation Day was held on May 27, 2010 and, as always, was a beautiful day for us to honor the industries in our area. Special thanks to Rob Miller and John Mark Butler being so gracious to co-chair such a great event.

Our 58th Annual Meeting was held on October 21, 2010 at Gil Gillis' Ice House and was a unique event to say the least. Everyone enjoyed the video presentations along with the surprise special tribute video and an industrial road named to honor Ms. Willie in recognition of her 20 years of service to our community.

I cannot say "Thank you" enough for the continued support of our members and the investment you all make in towards the continued success of our community. May you all have continued growth and prosperity in your business and in life.



Past Chair Recognition **December 14, 2010** **McGrath Keen Sr. Conference**

Thank you to the Past Chairs of the Chamber of Commerce and the Development Authority who attended the December recognition and to all Past Chairs for your commitment and dedication to make Dublin-Laurens County a better place to live, work, play, and retire!

Pictured: Front Row: Lester Porter, Helen Harper, Marcia Dixon, Don Crafton, Walter McCall, June Moore, and Geva Alexander. Middle Row: Jay Studstill, Phil Thacker, Jerry Hall, James Hudson, Scotty Jones, Roger Folsom, Mike Cauley, and Mike Cummings. Back Row: Jeff Cannon, Guy Cochran, Louie Curry, Bob Walker, Scott Beasley, Frank Seaton, and James Malone.



George Roussel Vice Chair of Tourism

In 2008, the economic impact of tourism for Laurens County was \$63,910,000, ranking us 39th out of the 159 counties in Georgia. We in Laurens County are fortunate to have wonderful volunteers who serve and promote the great festivals and events that we have throughout the year. We also have visitors who enjoy our natural and outdoor attractions including the Oconee River, Hugh Gillis Public Fishing Area, wildlife management areas, hunting preserves, three beautiful golf courses, farmers market and the Southern Pines Regional Complex and Ag and Expo Center. Our centralized recreational facility is certainly one of the finest in the State.

During the past year, the Dublin-Laurens Recreation Authority moved their offices to the Welcome Center. This move created efficiencies for both the Authority and the Chamber. The Welcome Center is staffed full-time. Georgia Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Chris Clark visited our community in September and spoke about the variety of outdoor attractions available to our citizens and visitors alike. We also held a tourism retreat in February and have completed our map tablet project. This project is a great tool in attracting visitors to Dublin-Laurens County. The City of Dublin received a resource team visit from the Georgia Tourism Division's Product Development Office, a statewide program administered through the Department of Economic Development in November. Dublin was selected to participate in this new initiative that will provide technical assistance to communities interested in developing its tourism potential. We look forward to their suggestions. In closing, I want to thank the numerous volunteers who work towards making Dublin and Laurens County a great community. Thank you all for your service.

Emily Kight Vice Chair of Community Development

It has been an honor to serve on the Chamber Board for the past three years and especially to serve as the Vice Chair of Community Development for 2009-2010.

The Chamber has worked hard to help our community prosper during challenging economic times. With our strategic interstate location in central Georgia, tourism and interstate visitors are an important economic force for our county. Our goal is to get visitors to stop, to stay, and to spend. Visitors bring with them increased sales and additional tax revenue. According to a Georgia Chamber of Commerce study, more than 60 million people visit Georgia from around the world each year. The Community Development and Tourism section works through its seven committees (Education, Governmental Affairs, Main Street Dublin, Keep Dublin Laurens Beautiful, Military Affairs, Welcome Center and Tourism) to help the community attract a larger share of these visitors.

By teaming with local merchants, government agencies, and volunteer groups, we are just beginning to scratch the surface of possibilities. Working together, we are continuing to develop our natural community strengths. It has been an honor to be a part of the team.





Willie Paulk President

In 1994 your Chamber of Commerce was accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. At that time we joined an elite group of accredited chambers throughout the U.S. as only 10% of all chambers carried the accredited seal.

What is the accreditation and what does it mean to us?

The U.S. Chamber states that accreditation means that a local or state chamber of commerce has been recognized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for having sound programs, organizational procedures, and that it continually contributes to positive change in their community.

The U.S. Chamber began this program as a means of recognizing chambers who wanted to make sure they were performing effectively using a list of criteria and utilizing the chamber board, staff and membership.

The accreditation covers the following areas: organization, program of work, finance, communications, plant and equipment, human resources/staff, and governmental affairs.

Why do we want to be accredited?

It is a means of assessing our strengths and weaknesses and challenging us to be the best that we can be. I have always loved Theodore Roosevelt's saying: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are". We feel the "accreditation seal" means that we are an effective chamber that operates above and beyond minimum standards.

I received a phone call from Mr. Win Hallett, Board Member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, who conveyed congratulations saying "you and your team are to be commended for taking on the task of accreditation. There are still only about 10% of the chambers in the United States that are accredited".

Thank you to all who were a part of this accreditation process in 1994; 1999; 2004; and 2010. We will continue to take the challenge to improve as a means of reinforcing our mission statement "to make our area an even better place to live, work, play and retire!"

Twenty years! Where has the time gone? Thank you for allowing me to come to work every day to enjoy working with a professional and talented staff – Malehia, Kim and Katy, a dedicated board of directors; and a diversified membership that has supported us both financially and with their talents to achieve our goals each year.

A very special thank you to Chairman Jay Studstill and the Executive Committee for their leadership. I never knew we had such a variety of "good actors!" The videos were great and will be enjoyed for years to come. Thanks Jay, David, George, Emily, Charles and Spence.

To Jimmy, Kathy, Scott, Guy, Roger, James, and Walter: I was overwhelmed by the accolades and gifts you gave me at the Annual Meeting: the beautiful Frabel sculpture; the Willie Paulk Parkway sign; and, the 1990 Willie Paulk Interview video. All of them "Priceless!"

It has truly been a pleasure to work with all of you. Thank you for allowing me to continue working with all of you, Cal, Joseph, and Mike, in my new position as Executive Advisor to the Development Authority.

To the membership: please accept my sincere and humble thanks for your confidence and friendship these past twenty years. I'm looking forward to many more!



Pictured above: Kim Simmons, Membership Coordinator; Malehia Young, Office Manager; Katy Morton, Communications and Marketing Coordinator and Willie Paulk, President.

Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority Report

The Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority had a very successful 2010 with many great achievements to better our great community. The board is comprised of seven excellent volunteers including: Jimmy Allgood, Chairman, Kathy Sweat, Vice Chairman, Scott Beasley, Chairman, Guy Cochran, Roger Folsom, James Malone, and Walter McCall. In addition, we have several great support personnel that allow us to run the daily functions including Joseph Sumner, Legal Counsel, Mike Cauley, CPA, Willie Paulk, Executive Advisor, and Katy Morton.

It is always wonderful to see the culmination of hard work and dedication of the staff, volunteers, and community by the announcement of a new industry in our community. We were very pleased to be able to announce a major location for Dublin and Laurens County for 2010 with the location of Mage Solar USA. This facility will be a beacon to attract investment, jobs, and visitors to our community. This facility represents the company's North American Headquarters, Solar Training Academy, and manufacturing operation. This will mean not only 350 jobs, \$30 million capital investment, but also countless numbers of students, customers, and foreign employees visiting the site and Laurens County. We say a heartfelt thank you to Mage and so many of our citizens that assisted in the location process and continue to help daily as Mage grows and integrates itself into our community. Further, we say thank you to the State of Georgia and the OneGeorgia Authority for their EDGE grant to help the company as it locates here.

The DLCDA is also tirelessly working to attract other industries to Laurens County. We have been fortunate to develop many great relationships with consultants, industries, and our state partners that have allowed many companies to consider us for their next location. We have been extremely busy answering questions on our community, sites, workforce, and education. Our community is competing well with other communities in our state, the Southeast, and the Nation. We look forward to your help as we host prospects and future residents of Laurens County in their search process and hope to have more great announcements for 2011.

Our existing industrial base is always our most important target for growth in Laurens County. These great companies employ our citizens, live in our community, and assist whenever we call upon them. We are here to assist them and help them grow and expand. The existing industries of Laurens County will be the source of countless new jobs and investment for our community for years to come. If you have the chance, please thank them for their presence in Laurens County and the impact they have on our community.

The Development Authority is constantly improving our industrial sites to make them more attractive to business and industry that could locate facilities in Laurens County. In the effort, we completed our industrial access road and truck entrance into our Interstate 16 Industrial Site allowing for better visibility and functionality of the site. This project was made possible by a ~\$500,000 equity grant from OneGeorgia. OneGeorgia is not only a great partner for us but all of rural Georgia with its headquarters right here in Dublin. We continue to clear property along Firetower and Best Buy Roads as we seek to find companies that will great jobs on these sites. These actions are vitally important to show companies that the sites can support their operations.

As we have begun in recent years, we continue to explore trade shows that allow us to meet and discuss Laurens County with companies growing and looking for new locations. In October, we partnered with Mage Solar and the State of Georgia to attend Solar Power International 2010 in Los Angeles, California. This show is the largest solar trade show in the United States and provided us an excellent opportunity to meet with suppliers and potential partners for Mage and with companies interested in opportunities on the East Coast. We were very pleased with the contacts and interest in Georgia. We will continue to look for opportunities to share our great community with businesses that will thrive here.

As you can see, 2010 was a very productive, building, and successful year, but we have many more projects to work, areas to improve, and jobs to create. We look forward to working with many of you in 2011 and please contact us if we can do anything to help you, your business, or follow a lead you may have.

Thanking you all for your support and assistance,

Cal Wray
President



Jimmy Allgood
Chairman



INSIDE ■ Death Row Inmate's Attorney Urges Stay In Execution/Page 3a



Dear Abby: Special...
 Claira Livingston: Love...
 Brad Madsen to perform...
 Our Take: Williamson...
 Jack Kay: You don't...
 Saving You



Governor Sonny Perdue (c) cuts the ceremonial ribbon held by members of Mage Solar, the Dublin-Laurens Chamber and Development Authority, State Senator Ross Tolson and State Representative Debbie Partridge. (Photos by Joey Wilson)

Solar Panel Synergy

Green Industry, Jobs, To Get Big Boost From New Mage Solar Facility

By JAMON HALL/STAFF WRITER

With Governor Sherry Nitzsche, and state and local members of Mage Solar on hand, Governor Sonny Perdue and State Senator Ross Tolson and State Representative Debbie Partridge cut the ribbon for the new Mage Solar facility in Dublin, Va. The facility, which will produce 100 megawatts of power, is expected to begin operation in 2013.

City Prayer Walk Set For Saturday

By TRAVIS WOLF

This weekend, citizens and city leaders plan to take their voices to the streets - and to God. A community-wide prayer walk is planned for Saturday, September 25, at 10 a.m. The walk, open to the public, will start at Dublin City Hall and end at the City of Dublin-Laurens County Courthouse and back.

Trojans To Don 'Joanna' Stickers At Football Game

By DENISE LEWIS/STAFF WRITER

WILMINGTON, Va. - Grid girls will likely make every game sitting on the bench Friday evening at the Allen Fieldhouse, but not from the southern side. The Trojan football players will be wearing something special on their helmets as they step onto the field, an image that many are already familiar with: the silhouette of Joanna Madsen.

YOU DOCS
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 Dr. Deborah Drake:...
 DWLE: Kindergarten...
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 GOT AN OPINION? TELL IT! CALL 272-0375



A packed house was on hand for the special ribbon cutting ceremony Wednesday. (Photo by Joey Wilson)

WELFARE
 WELFARE CHILDHOOD CANCER
 9/24/10

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority To Hold Sign Up For Walk

Special To The Courier Herald

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. is an internationally recognized, non-profit organization built on Christian principles and committed to public service. The chapter, located in Dublin-Laurens County, carries that commitment with its program that promotes economic and educational development, and physical and mental health for our community.



MAGE Solar Panel Installations at Southern Pines Complex and County Commissioner Annex



Dublin-Laurens County welcomes MAGE Solar with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



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