

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2009 - 2013

### WARNER ROBINS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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**A Project of the Strategic Planning Task Force**  
Task Force Chairman: **Paul Hibbitts**  
Internal Affairs Division Vice Chairman: **Kathy Balletto**  
Chamber Chairman: **Neil Suggs**

# INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ABOUT THE PLAN

This is the Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan for the years 2009 - 2013. This strategic plan was developed by the Internal Affairs Division with inputs from the Chamber Staff, Directors from all the Chamber Divisions including the Senior Executive Advisory Council and local business leaders.

The Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce is a membership/investment organization. Its purpose is to help members become more profitable and realize a return on their investment in the Chamber. The Chamber accomplishes this by representing and promoting the interests of its members and the business community.

## BACKGROUND

The Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce completed its most recent Goals Conference in November, 2007. The Chamber went into this Goals Conference on the heels of a series of successful initiatives. Among these successes was the finalization of the sale of the Chamber's previous headquarters and completion of the purchase and renovation of the Chamber's new headquarters with official move on June 28, 2007. In addition new equipment and additional staff resources were acquired and we realized a growth in membership. During this period we also hired a new chief executive.

At the 2007 Chamber Goals Conference, the consensus of the participating members was to undertake a renewed five-year strategic planning process to help the Chamber map a clear direction during the time of dynamic community and organizational change. A strong committee of Directors, Senior Executives and Chamber Staff was formed, and, through an intense and comprehensive process new strategies and action plans were proposed.

## MISSION STATEMENT

**The business of the Chamber is business.**

The Chamber is a volunteer, membership-supported organization working full-time to preserve, enhance and expand the opportunities for orderly growth of the business, industrial, and professional communities. Our objectives are to preserve and increase jobs, capital investment, and opportunities for economic growth.

## VISION

The community looks to its Chamber to provide visionary business leadership in protection, preservation and diversification of the economic base; development and expansion of supporting infrastructure; and enhancement of the overall quality of life for the citizens of the Robins Region. The Chamber works in cooperation with elected and appointed officials and other agencies to achieve consensus and maximize the effective use of resources.

## WHAT WE VALUE

- Committed and engaged members
- A sense of community spirit
- Inclusiveness
- Regional cooperation
- Meeting member needs

## MEMBER VALUE PROPOSITION

We understand the reason businesses join a Chamber is to improve their profitability. More specifically, businesses join a chamber to (a) become smarter (b) become more visible and (c) become better connected. The most sought after benefits include networking/advertising opportunities, access to training and other resources that can improve their businesses, and having a voice in community issues. We intend to provide these benefits in such a way that the value of membership is clear to every single member.

## OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Our Chamber should be operated as an ethical, financially stable, member-driven business organization that represents the needs and expectations of our membership.

The non-dues revenue generating projects and special events that we plan and conduct are designed to support the needs and expectations of the membership and to balance the budget. Project budgets are prepared prior to implementation and financial performance is summarized at their conclusion.

Our Chamber's resources are organized and employed so as to accomplish our Mission and our Annual Programs of Work. Chamber resources may only be committed in support of the Chamber's programs and its members.

Our Chamber continually strives to ensure that our Board is demographically and geographically representative of our organization's membership and our community.

Our Chamber is a catalyst in identifying and integrating emerging community leaders into Chamber activities; providing them mentoring and leadership experience; and encouraging them to seek leadership roles in the public and private sectors.

Our Chamber strives to support and/or facilitate critical community initiatives that fall within the realm of our mission, particularly where it is clear that the involvement of the Chamber is critical to the success of these initiatives. We work in partnership and in consensus with other stakeholder organizations on these initiatives.

## MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

- The need to manage and plan for the growth taking place in our community.
- The ongoing necessity of continuing to improve the financial position of the Chamber
- The need to continually improve and build upon the products and services available to our members.
- The need to strengthen the relationships between the Chamber and our partners in the community - to protect and advance the quality of life.
- The need to generate discussion and input from Chamber Board and community on name and branding, focus and mission, marketing and communication.
- The need to assess the opinions of our members on the issues they face and the perceived value they receive from their Chamber membership.
- A need to establish a 501(C)(3) non-profit charitable organization to fund and make self-sufficient our Education Scholarship Program and to meet other long-term capital needs of the organization.

## STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTICIPANTS

The Chamber recognizes that its stakeholders in the Strategic Plan are:

- Members and their employees
- Community at Large
- Governments
- Regional and State Level Partners
- Chamber Directors
- Staff

## STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

Paul Hibbitts, Team Chairman

Neil Suggs, Chairman, Warner Robins Area Chamber

Rick Drury, Chair-Elect, Warner Robins Area Chamber

Kathy Balleto, Vice Chairman, Internal Affairs, Warner Robins Area Chamber

Shaw Blackmon, Vice Chairman, Educational Affairs, Warner Robins Area Chamber

John Howell, Vice Chairman, Governmental Affairs, Warner Robins Area Chamber

Walter Randall, Vice Chairman, Community Affairs, Warner Robins Area Chamber

Terry Smith, Vice Chairman, Economic Affairs, Warner Robins Area Chamber

Ed Rodriguez, President and CEO, Warner Robins Area Chamber

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

## 1 - SERVE AS THE VOICE OF BUSINESS

### GOAL

The Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce must serve as the region's premiere business advocacy organization and a valued forum for policy initiatives related to enhancing the business environment.

### TACTICS

- Serve as a vehicle for identifying emerging business issues and communicating them to members.
- Adopt positions in pivotal pro-business issues and work to forge a consensus with other business advocacy organizations in the Robins Region. Particular emphasis should be placed on issues that affect the ability of the Robins Region to be competitive with other regions in our state and beyond.
- Maintain both a physical and relationship presence at meetings of and with members of various governmental bodies, including County Commission, city councils, the General Assembly, the School Board, and other key boards and commissions.
- Maintain productive relationships with major industrial sectors in the Robins Region, including the ongoing support and recognition of Robins Air Force Base and our growing Aerospace industry.

## 2 - PROVIDE VALUE TO MEMBERS

### GOAL

The Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce must strive to provide its members with a valuable package of services and benefits unavailable anywhere else, ensuring their membership remains a sound business investment.

### TACTICS

- Communicate the value of the Chamber to its various stakeholders through the development of a comprehensive communications plan. All communications should be relevant, timely, and technologically-efficient.
- Enhance all communications efforts through the development of a branding approach that will promote all services provided by the Chamber to its members and to the community.
- Strive to make Chamber communications two-way, utilizing surveys, polls, and other interactive forms of communication to generate member buy-in and involvement.
- Position the Chamber as a premiere organization in serving as an educational resource to its members.

### **3 - BE A REGIONAL LEADER**

#### **GOAL**

The Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce must strive to serve as a unifying force for progress throughout the Robins Region, working closely with other regional entities and fostering cooperation with organizations working to promote the betterment of our community and working as partners with organizations working to market our community to the outside world.

#### **TACTICS**

- Ensure that the Chamber's programs and promotional activities stress the importance of a unified regional approach.
- Serve as the lead business organization in the Robins Region in advancing and communicating the importance of Robins Air Force Base as the region's economic engine.
- Foster regular communication and interaction with other regional organizational entities.
- Work in conjunction with economic development and tourism development organizations in supporting infrastructure needs designed to help achieve these development goals.



## **4 - SERVE AS CHAMPIONS OF EDUCATION**

### **GOAL**

The Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce must operate as the Robins Region's principal business community advocate of a strong educational system.

### **TACTICS**

- Forge cooperation with educational entities, including the School Board and local colleges and universities, technical college, public & private.
- Work with educational institutions in identifying workforce educational needs.
- Maintain viable Leadership programs (adult and youth) and work toward the eventual self-sustainment of these programs. Expand the influence of these programs by encouraging graduates to seek higher levels of community involvement and by developing alumni associations.

## **5 - LEAD THE WAY IN COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT FOR THE ROBINS REGION**

### **GOAL**

The Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce must continue to operate as a premiere business vehicle for community enrichment and civic pride, fostering a quality of life that ensures the Robins Region remains the best place in Georgia in which to conduct business.

### **TACTICS**

Continue our role in community boosterism and support of civic pride building activities.

Maintain our tradition as a go-to organization in supporting quality-of-life and morale building programs for the community-at-large and for Robins Air Force Base.

## 6 - MAINTAIN FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY & SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES

### GOAL

The Warner Robins Area Chamber of Commerce must in all its endeavors strive to operate as an efficient business itself, utilizing sound business principles, operating with a diversified revenue stream and an expense control system that ensures financial strength and long-term viability for the organization.

### TACTICS

- Grow the Chamber's membership base based on annually-set goals, and regularly review the Chamber's dues structure with an eye to both fairness to the membership and suitability for sustainment of the Chamber's mission.
- Develop a plan to formulate long-term capital funding objectives.
- Diversify and grow the Chamber's annual operating revenue in order to accomplish goals and to depend less on membership fees. This includes the development of new events and projects that increase revenue within the realm of our organization's mission.
- Place a high priority on developing and implementing a comprehensive retention plan.
- Be a regional leader in the use of technology to advance the Chamber's and its member's interests.
- Work toward maintaining and upgrading our Accreditation through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, with the eventual goal of achieving the five-star level.