



# VISION 2020 SHARPENS FOCUS IN 2008

Since 2004, the Chamber has made Vision 2020 — a groundbreaking community visioning process — a top priority. From conducting the “Be Something Different” community survey in 2005, to leading the work of 11 different community committees in 2005 and 2006 to explore all aspects of our quality of life, to delivering the recommendations of those committees in 2007, and finally to forming and leading four “Think Tanks” in 2007 and 2008 to find ways to implement recommendations, the Chamber has played a leading role in helping the citizens of Coweta County make their collective vision for the future become reality.

For the past year, the four Think Tanks have worked tirelessly on priority areas of education, healthcare, economic development and community development. Here’s what they’ve accomplished so far:

## GETTING COWETA’S CHILDREN OFF TO A GREAT START

### EDUCATION THINK TANK

1

**Co-Chair** - Dr. Joe Harless, *Organizational Consultant*

**Co-Chair** - Blake Bass, *Coweta County Schools*

**Priority:**

Improve early childhood development resources and prevent high school dropouts

**Accomplishments:**

- Established the Commission for Early Childhood Development, and produced goals and plans for creating a high quality center for early childhood development in Coweta County that will become a model for the state.
- Provided on-going assistance to the Commission for Higher Education in the quest to attract and establish three high priority curricula for post-secondary education in Coweta County. To date, two curricula have been established; the third will be completed in the near future.
- Established a Ninth Grade Campus at each Coweta high school to help prevent drop-outs.

## PREPARING FOR THE GROWING DEMAND FOR HEALTH CARE

### HEALTH CARE THINK TANK

2

**Co-Chair** - Michael Bass, *Piedmont Newnan Hospital*

**Co-Chair** - Mark Whitlock, *Central Educational Center*

**Priority:** Develop technologically advanced, convenient healthcare facilities

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Worked to find sources of capital investment for a local hospital, culminating in the investment by Piedmont Healthcare, Inc. of approximately \$200 million for a new acute care hospital, scheduled to break ground in October 2008 and open in late 2010 or early 2011.
- Conducted a needs analysis for physicians and established recruiting program. A physician needs assessment was completed in June, 2006, and indicated that 157 additional physicians will need to be recruited into Coweta County by December 2010 to meet anticipated demand.
- Identified new and existing practices that are or will actively recruit new medical personnel into the county. More than 30 new physicians have been recruited in the last 12 months.

## BUILDING COWETA'S ENVIRONMENT FOR PROSPERITY

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3

**Chair** - Larry Callahan, *Pattillo*

**Priority:** Engage community in economic development

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Held discussion forum with heads of government agencies to discuss key issues.
- Identified key economic drivers: transportation, airport, hospital, industrial development, conference center.
- Held multiple meetings to educate public on airport options.
- Held discussion forum on comprehensive plan.
- Encouraged County to project financial implications of comprehensive plan.
- Developed and gave to the county a tool for completing such a financial projection for the next 20 years.

## ENGAGING THE COWETA COMMUNITY

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4

**Co-Chair** - Randy Cardoza, *AGL Resources*

**Co-Chair** - Theron Gay, *Coweta County*

**Priority:** Improve communication with the community around issues rated as highest concerns: cultural and recreational, community safety, daily life and convenience, environment, housing and public services. (In many cases, concerns expressed by citizens are being addressed or are based on misconceptions. Better communication can rectify both of these problems.)

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Incorporated ongoing communications into all areas of community concern.
- Called for ongoing updates on the City, School System, County, and Chamber websites.
- Worked closely with our local media, highlighting local news and events.
- Emphasized that communications is an ongoing process and requires continuous effort to keep the information flowing.
- Sought and shared information about water quality, capacity and usage; historic preservation; and cultural amenities, parks, walking trails and bike paths.
- Secured information to address concerns about water quality, capacity and usage.
- Brought to light building codes addressing historic preservation.
- Collected and shared information from local governments about planned recreational and cultural facilities.

