



## **2010 Public Policy Focus Agenda**

***2010 continues to present major challenges for Coweta County as businesses, families and lawmakers contend with an ongoing recession. The most important priorities for our county and state are to remove obstacles to the success of existing businesses, new investment, and actions which best position Coweta County to take advantage of a future economic recovery.***

***2009 saw the realization of several goals long supported by the Chamber and by our community, including:***

- ***Progress towards Piedmont Health Care's new Newnan Hospital campus;***
- ***State Certificate of Need authorization for the Cancer Treatment Center of America's Coweta campus;***
- ***Ongoing expansion of Interstate 85 and exit 47 interchange and progress towards a Poplar Road interchange;***
- ***Major progress towards the construction of a West Georgia Technical College Coweta Campus; and,***
- ***The start of development on the Chattahoochee Bend State Park.***

***The Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce believes that Coweta County's business leaders, political leaders and citizens have unique opportunities in 2010 to pursue goals that will contribute to long-term prosperity and economic development. With that in mind, the Chamber Board establishes the following Public Policy Positions as its 2010 Focus Areas:***

**Local Economic Development** – The Chamber supports the formation of a local Economic Prosperity Council that will regularly bring together Coweta's major business and governmental leaders to discuss regional and local economic development issues. (*reference II.2*)

**State Taxation and Economic Development** – The Chamber supports the 2010 legislative priorities of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce in regards to state taxation and economic development policy. The Chamber will work with state leaders in 2010 to ensure that job creation and economic recovery are not stifled and that Georgia's budget deficit is addressed in a way that considers our state's competitiveness, encourages local job growth, and stimulates economic recovery. Among those positions are:

- Reduction of the state's capital gains tax on business to provide for increased capital investment in Georgia.
- Elimination of the inventory tax, which currently puts Georgia at a competitive disadvantage with our neighboring states.
- Renewal of the cap on sales tax for energy used in the manufacturing process
- Prevention of Georgia companies from being subjected to the expense and burden of multiple sales tax audits.

- Allowing investment of a portion of Georgia's public pension funds in private equity to provide additional capital for business ventures in the state.
- Funding Georgia's Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan to support successful long-term planning of this finite resource.
- Supporting the goals of the Governor's Water Contingency Planning Task Force with regard to conservation, capture and control measures needed to meet the water supply gap that would exist should U.S. District Judge Magnuson's ruling go into effect in 2012. *(reference IV.1, IV.3)*

**Transportation** – The Chamber supports the Regional Business Coalition’s call for state legislation that will make a clear impact on traffic congestion and freight movement by enhancing funding at the state level, and allowing state voters to consider constitutional authorization of a regional Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. Georgia’s economy is dependent on a transportation network that provides reliable mobility for both its people and its products. Current state funding cannot keep pace with the amount of infrastructure that needs to be built to ensure a reliable network. As a result, Georgia and the metro Atlanta region in particular, will continue to fall behind its competitors unless a significant investment in transportation infrastructure is made. Through the efforts of a grassroots coalition of transportation, environmental, business and citizen groups known as the Get Georgia Moving Coalition, the General Assembly has the clearest opportunity to engage in meaningful policy action on this issue in a generation. *(reference I.5) (reference III.4)*

**Health care** – The Chamber supports projects that further Coweta County’s development as a regional health care provider. The Chamber will support Piedmont Health Care’s construction of a new hospital campus on Poplar Road, and construction of Cancer Treatment Center’s Coweta Campus on Newnan Crossing Boulevard West. The Chamber will support other health care investments that improve services to Coweta County’s citizenry and that position the county as a regional health care destination, including efforts to expand local post-secondary educational programs to ensure a viable workforce for healthcare providers. *(reference I.3)*

**Technical college campus and local college programs** – The Chamber will support the funding and construction of a full-service Coweta County campus of West Georgia Technical College, and will support the WGTC Foundation’s campaign for the Coweta Campus. Expanding post-secondary programs for Coweta citizens and constructing facilities for those programs will deliver enormous, long-term benefits to the community. The Chamber’s support reflects its continued community partnership with WCTC and the Coweta County School System by the Central Educational Center. *(reference V.3, V.2, V.4)*

# **Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce**

## ***Public Policy Positions***

### **I. Growth and Planning**

***The Chamber recognizes the immense challenges facing our community and the importance of joint public/private collaboration to meet immediate needs and to coordinate long range planning to meet the needs of the future.***

1. The Chamber SUPPORTS cooperation between the seven municipalities, County government, County authorities, and the County Board of Education by providing forums to discuss common community challenges and promoting strategic partnerships between local governments and agencies to address those challenges.
2. The Chamber SUPPORTS local government's reassessment of the structures of local elected bodies, internal management structures, personnel needs, service delivery methods and professionalized standards that will meet the needs of community growth and help our governments promote prosperity and future investment in Coweta County.
3. The Chamber SUPPORTS the improvement of local health care services and facilities, to meet the needs of Coweta County's growing population, as a base for local employment, and as a driver for economic development.
4. The Chamber SUPPORTS ongoing research and planning to develop Conference Center facilities in Newnan and Coweta County, to fill the need for local professional and civic meeting space and to serve as an economic development asset.
5. The Chamber SUPPORTS the construction of Interstate exchanges at Poplar Road and at Amlajack Road to better meet the transportation needs of Coweta's residential and business growth, and to realize the regional impact of institutions in the area.
6. The Chamber SUPPORTS improvements to the Newnan-Coweta Airport to better position the facility to meet Coweta's growing business and community transportation needs and to serve as a driver for economic development.
7. The Chamber SUPPORTS the ongoing work of the Think Tanks (Economic Development, Healthcare, and Education) that were commissioned to integrate the Vision 2020 Committee's recommendations into the plans and budgets of Coweta's public and private entities. The Chamber will continue to evaluate the long-term success of the Vision 2020 community improvement efforts
8. The Chamber SUPPORTS the continued implementation of the municipalities' and the county's comprehensive Land Use, Transportation, and Water and Sewer

plans. The Chamber will encourage and support joint planning and collaboration between county and city governments and other appropriate agencies, and the development of common strategies and strategic partnerships to meet the challenges of managing future growth and promoting local prosperity.

9. The Chamber SUPPORTS the review of local impact fee structures to ensure that they meet the needs of the community's growth in a manner that is fair to current residents and businesses, and that supports continued economic development and prosperity of the community. Coweta's governments use a variety of impact fees to support infrastructure enhancements, including fire support, police support, and public facilities, roads, and utilities.

## **II. Economic Development**

***The Chamber supports a unified voice for economic development in Coweta County. The organization is committed to assisting in community economic development efforts that broaden the tax base, that create jobs, and support the expansion of existing industries.***

1. The Chamber SUPPORTS the formulation of a strategic planning model for the purpose of identifying and recruiting industries that will create a diverse economic and tax base for Coweta County.

2. The Chamber supports the formation of a local Economic Prosperity Council that will regularly bring together Coweta's major business and governmental leaders to discuss regional and local economic development issues.

3. The Chamber SUPPORTS open communication, active cooperation, and the formation of strategic alliances between the business community, county and city governments, and other governmental entities, for the purpose of promoting a shared vision for economic development, retaining existing industry, and recruiting new industry and investment in the local economy.

4. The Chamber SUPPORTS the growth of small businesses. The Chamber continues to support Entrepreneurs Thrive in Coweta program. The ETC! will develop services and programs to assist in the growth and retention of small business.

5. The Chamber SUPPORTS efforts to attract film, video, and music projects to Coweta County and to create the business environment and infrastructure that support these industries.

6. The Chamber SUPPORTS an aggressive tourism and community marketing effort to take advantage of the historical, scenic, and cultural aspects of Coweta County.

7. The Chamber SUPPORTS the funding, construction, and operation of the Chattahoochee Bend State Park.

8. The Chamber WILL establish objective measurements by which elected officials' support of the Chamber's Public Policy Agenda may be monitored.

### **III. Regional Issues**

***The Chamber understands many of the issues we face are being faced by our neighboring counties and that the solutions will require broad regional applications.***

1. The Chamber SUPPORTS Coweta County's membership and participation in regional planning and development structures which best support the planning needs of Coweta's various governments, and which promotes the most relevant regional partnerships and alliances for Coweta County.

2. The Chamber SUPPORTS GRTA, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, the Chattahoochee-Flint RDC, Quality Growth Coalition and practical legislation to help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.

3. The Chamber SUPPORTS alternative solutions to relieve emissions and traffic congestion such as telecommuting, flex hours, etc.

4. The Chamber SUPPORTS the Regional Business Coalition's Public Policy Initiatives, including:

- *Regional Transportation Needs and State Funding - Georgia's economy is dependent on a transportation network that provides reliable mobility for both its people and its products. Current state funding cannot keep pace with the amount of infrastructure that needs to be built to ensure a reliable network. The result is that Georgia, and the metro Atlanta region in particular, will continue to fall behind its competitors unless a significant investment in transportation infrastructure is made. Through the efforts of a grassroots coalition of transportation, environmental, business and citizen groups known as the Get Georgia Moving Coalition, the General Assembly has the clearest opportunity to engage in meaningful policy action on this issue in a generation. It should seize that opportunity.*

*The Regional Business Coalition supports legislation that will make a clear impact on traffic congestion and freight movement by enhancing funding at the state level and providing options such as a regional SPLOST for regions that have significant needs.*

- *State Water Plan and Reservoir Development Funding - The General Assembly made progress last year on the water issue by passing the*

*state water plan and legislation to expedite the construction of reservoirs in the metro Atlanta region. For these efforts to bear fruit, however, they must be fully funded. Otherwise, the information that is needed to make key decisions at the regional planning level will not be available and the effort to speed up construction of reservoirs critical to the region's water supply will be cut short. In times of tight budgets, funding for items such as planning and design of needed infrastructure are often the first to go. This would be short-sighted policy and only put Georgia in a deeper hole regarding our current water situation.*

*The Regional Business Coalition supports fully funding the State Water Plan and restoring the grants to local governments for reservoirs. The RBC further supports expanding the amount of money available to local government's for these critical reservoirs when revenues allow for such expansion.*

#### **IV. State Issues**

***The Chamber works closely with our local delegation on issues that are important to Coweta County, the Region and the State.***

1. The Chamber SUPPORTS a comprehensive review of Georgia's tax code and the development of a balanced approach of state funding that considers consumption, property, and income tax structures.  
Georgia's tax code should provide stable funding for state and local governments while also preserving the home rule of local governments. In particular, the Chamber supports:
  - *Reduction of the state's capital gains tax on business to provide for increased capital investment in Georgia.*
  - *Elimination of the inventory tax, which currently puts Georgia at a competitive disadvantage with our neighboring states.*
  - *Renewal of the cap on sales tax for energy used in the manufacturing process*
  - *Prevention of Georgia companies from being subjected to the expense and burden of multiple sales tax audits.*
  - *Allowing investment of a portion of Georgia's public pension funds in private equity to provide additional capital for business ventures in the state.*
  
2. The Chamber SUPPORTS state legislation that will make a clear impact on traffic congestion and freight movement by enhancing state transportation funding and providing localized options such as a regional SPLOST for regions that have significant needs.
  
3. The Chamber SUPPORTS the full funding and implementation of the fact-based State Water Plan advocated by the RBC to address the needs across Georgia. The Chamber also supports funding of Georgia's Comprehensive

Statewide Water Management Plan to support successful long-term planning of this finite resource, and the goals of the Governor's Water Contingency Planning Task Force with regard to conservation, capture and control measures needed to meet the water supply gap that would exist should U.S. District Judge Magnuson's ruling go into effect in 2012.

4. The Chamber OPPOSES the state's removal of 2009 state homestead tax exemption grant to local governments, and will monitor legislative action on the 2010 status of the grants.

## **V. Education**

***The Chamber recognizes the positive impact of educational achievement of students and the development of a skilled workforce to enhance the retention of existing industries and the recruitment of new industries to Coweta County, as well as to the overall economic development of the county.***

1. The Chamber SUPPORTS increased education funding for K through 12. The Chamber SUPPORTS the Commission for Early Childhood Education's efforts to establish to improve prerequisite skills, knowledge and social behaviors of Coweta County children that are optimum for a high level of achievement in grades K-3.

2. The Chamber SUPPORTS the continued growth of the public and private post-secondary satellite institutions in Coweta County, including West Georgia Technical College, the University of West Georgia, Brewton-Parker College, and other institutions, as well as the recruitment of and investment in new post-secondary institutions in Coweta County.

3. The Chamber SUPPORTS the funding and development of a larger, full-service satellite Coweta County Campus of West Georgia Technical College.

4. The Chamber SUPPORTS the growth and enhancement of the partnership among the Coweta County School System, West Georgia Technical College and the business community represented by the Central Educational Center.

5. The Chamber SUPPORTS the Work Force Development programs offered by various entities such as Quick Start (through West Georgia Technical College) and Certified Work Ready (through West Georgia and the Coweta County School System).

6. The Chamber SUPPORTS the Coweta County Board of Education's evaluation of Charter System status for possible adoption by our county school system, as a method of public school operation that allows greater flexibility and maximum local control over standards and school improvement methods.

6. The Chamber SUPPORTS the following State legislative priorities advocated by the Coweta County Board of Education:

- *support for the principle of local control of education accompanied by high standards of accountability*
- *support the authorization and encouragement of increased school and school district policymaking and budgeting;*
- *support for a review by the State Board of Education of the local costs and impacts of state rules and mandates;*
- *support for the prohibition of new unfunded and under-funded state mandates, support for an educational funding partnership between state and local school districts that is both legally binding and automatically adjusted for growth and inflation;*
- *support the state capital outlay funding to continue at current levels for regular and exceptional growth school systems;*
- *support for the strengthening of local board authority;*
- *support allowing school systems to enter into lease-purchase agreements to provide for school facilities;*
- *opposition for shifting existing education funding to private entities which do not have to meet the same accountability standards of the Georgia public school system.*