Happy New Year! I am confident that we are all hopeful for a better year ahead. With the challenges of a global pandemic during 2020, our Chamber Executive Team made the decision to keep our leadership in place for 2021 as we work through this time together. Therefore, with a few exceptions, the Board of Governors and Executive Committee will continue serving our Chamber in the same capacity as the previous year. That’s why you are seeing me again on the cover of our annual business plan!

As we reflect on 2020, we can all agree that it is a year that will go down in the history books as unprecedented. Our hearts have been broken for those who have lost loved ones to Covid-19. Our thoughts go out to others who have suffered significantly to keep their doors open or even been forced to close their business. In this past year, we’ve seen a nation challenged over politics and serious social issues. We’ve had to rethink the way we do business. Our professional and personal lives have been forever impacted as well, and we continue to learn how to navigate in our changing environment.

In the spirit of moving into 2021 with renewed energy and perspective, let’s focus on the good that has risen from the depths of our challenges. We have seen businesses find innovative ways to remain open, maintain work for their employees, and continue to provide their goods and services to our community. We have seen leaders rise to the occasion and provide guidance and resources. We’ve seen support from our civic groups increase to help with the additional demand on our non-profits who provide essentials to those in need. We’ve seen our spiritual leaders continue to offer hope and encouragement.

For me personally, the one thing that has strengthened over the course of this time is my pride in our community. We have the absolute best community with the very best people. Together, we WILL get through this, and for that reason, I look forward to 2021 with great enthusiasm! I am pleased to serve as your Chairman again this year and look forward to coming out on the other side of this time as a stronger, more resilient Chamber.

Scot Ward
Chair, 2021 Board of Governors
Our Council System

Your Chamber’s goal is to address the various needs of the Conyers-Rockdale community. To accomplish this, your Chamber focuses its efforts in three councils:

1. Economic Development Council
2. Community Development Council
3. Member Services Council

Each is composed of committees and task forces to accomplish the goals outlined in this publication.

Economic Development Council

A strong business community means a healthy economy and better quality of life. The Chamber’s Economic Development Council addresses this goal by bringing more businesses to our area and strengthening the economy for existing businesses and new entrepreneurs. Goals for the Economic Development Council include:

- Promote Rockdale County as a potential business destination through the distribution of our Quality of Life Magazine, providing relocation information for businesses and individuals.
- Enhance economic development activity by serving as a liaison with other economic-related organizations such as the Conyers Rockdale Economic Development Council (CREDC), the Development Authority of Rockdale County, and City and County Governments.
- Develop a stronger public/private partnership with the City of Conyers and Rockdale County.
- Maximize efforts to attract visitors to our area by marketing Conyers and Rockdale County to potential visitors through print advertising, including joint promotional efforts with the City of Conyers CVB.
- Provide Chamber members the opportunity to list job openings on the chamber website.
- Promote Conyers and Rockdale County to potential visitors by providing and distributing the Chamber’s official street map.

Community Development Council

Strengthening our business community translates to a better economy and quality of life for the Conyers-Rockdale area. The Community Development Council will work to build and maintain productive relationships between your Chamber and local, state, and federal governments and their various agencies.

The Council will also continue to provide strong programs for future community leaders and recognize community achievers. The Council will continue to strengthen education through Partners in Education. In 2021 the Community Development Council will:

- Represent the needs of the business community at the local, state and federal levels of government, and with all appropriate governmental organizations. Seek input from membership on major legislative issues.
- Keep membership up to date with key legislation and other activities of interest to business that takes place during the 2021 State Legislative Session.
- Strengthen public/private communication by:
  - Conducting political forums/events
  - Ensure adequate representation from all sectors on Governmental Affairs Committee

(see COMMUNITY Page 3)
• Show support and appreciation of our local law enforcement agencies and first responders by partnering with businesses and other community groups to host events in their honor.
• Continue to provide the Leadership Rockdale program which identifies and inspires potential community leaders who are willing to become involved and help solve community concerns and to acquaint these leaders with major community issues and the complexity involved in finding solutions for ongoing challenges.
• Continue to support the efforts of the Leadership Rockdale class with the annual Leadership Legacy community service project.
• Continue to develop programming and communication avenues for Leadership Rockdale Alumni to stay connected with each other and the community.
• Recognize the volunteers and leadership at the Chamber’s 67th Annual Meeting.
• Host we3 Women’s Conference which seeks to engage, educate and empower women in business. At this conference, we will present a deserving individual with the “Woman of the Year” award.
• Continue to award the Annual “Education Partner of the Year”, recognizing an outstanding supporter of our public schools.
• Continue to work with Rockdale County Public Schools to enhance the Partners in Education program by marketing the RCPSpartner.com website, where projects and other opportunities in need of support are promoted.
• Continue to support RCPS Foundation and Rockdale Career Academy with representation on their Board of Directors.

The Member Services Council is charged with ensuring your Chamber grows in the numbers and dollars necessary to best support the programs that serve our community. It is also responsible for developing networking opportunities and services to members. This year the Council will:
• Provide quality member-to-member contact through monthly Network Luncheons, Business Trade Show, Chamber After Hours and quarterly Jump Start Your Morning and Business Builder Lunch events.
• Promote member businesses by producing an on-line Member Business Directory which lists all members at no charge and provides an opportunity for additional promotion through advertisements.
• Educate our new members on how Chamber programs benefit their business, how to use those benefits to their fullest advantage, and the importance of becoming involved through New Member Receptions.
• Communicate your Chamber’s accomplishments, positions on important issues, and benefits of membership through professional quarterly e-news, emails, and other social media outlets.
• Market your Chamber and maximize acquisition of new members using volunteer referral program and staff resources.
• Continue to develop new programs that bring more value to employers and their employees for their membership investment paid to your Chamber.
• Provide two-way communication between members and chamber leadership to discuss community and business concerns through monthly Twelve at Twelve Luncheons.
• Reduce high shrinkage rate of membership in our Chamber through the Member Action Program (MAP) which concentrates on two aspects of membership: (1) The activation and/or education of a new member (2) Retention of the year old member.
• Provide extensive exposure to member companies at no cost and attract new customers to their business through our member-to-member discount program called Hot Deals.
• Increase business leads for chamber members through business leads groups. These are business referral networks that help businesses interact and increase sales.
• Promote new members and support current members through our Ambassador program. Ambassadors serve a very important function of the chamber by visiting members and representing your Chamber at Ribbon Cuttings and Grand Openings.
• Host the annual Golf tournament which helps fund Chamber programs.
• Conduct a personal visitation program called Operation Thank You to express the Chamber’s appreciation to our business members.
• Enhance small business owners’ knowledge and productivity by conducting business Lunch & Learn events.
• Host annual Clays for Commerce as a networking and fundraising opportunity.

CHAMBER MISSION STATEMENT
We strive to provide leadership and be the catalyst for promoting and maintaining a pro-business environment, and to continue enhancing the quality of life for our community.
2021 Executive Committee

Chair
Scot Ward
Funeral Services

Treasurer
Ken Gaylord
BB&T, now Truist

Chair, Community Development
Toni Hannah
Georgia Power

Chair-Elect
Darlene Hotchkiss
Hedrick Family Dentistry

Chair, Economic Development
Craig Johnson
Kaman of Conyers

Chair, Member Services
Michael Hutcheson
Rockdale Coalition for Children and Families

Past-Chair
Faye Phillips
Corner Market

President
Fred J. Boscino,
GCCE
Conyers-Rockdale Chamber of Commerce

Your Board of Governors is responsible for assuring the programs the members have determined to be important are carried out successfully. The Board is comprised of an 8 member Executive Committee and 23 Board Members.

Constance Abbott
Kaiser Permanente

Muddessar Ahmad
Omega Builders

Frank Askew
Snapping Shoals EMC

Tim Baker
Edward Jones

Thua G. Barlay
Lueder, Larkin & Hunter, LLC

Dee Barnes
Evans Tool & Die

Stephen Boyle, Chairman
Rockdale County Development Authority

Steve Bromell
Pro Cutters Lawnscape, Inc.

Vince Evans, Mayor
City of Conyers

Leigh Gant
Georgia United Credit Union

Derrick Grissom
Hargray Fiber

Scott Hartsell
imijit.net Technology Solutions

Marty Jones
Conyers Rockdale Economic Development Council

Oz Nesbitt, Chairman
Rockdale County Commission

Mandy North, Chairwoman
Rockdale County Board of Education

Terry Oatts, Superintendent
Rockdale County Public Schools

Jody Porter
Pinnacle Bank

David Roper
Corner Market

Laura Sistrunk
Piedmont Rockdale Hospital

Bernard Stanford
United Community Bank

Toya Washington
Conyers Housing Authority

Willie Washington
LegalShield

Yvette Morton Williams
Conyers Best Laundry
Your Chamber’s ultimate responsibility is to you, our members, since the Chamber is comprised of, and mostly financed by, the membership.

The organizational structure, shown below, graphically illustrates how this occurs. Starting at the top of the chart, we show the general membership who serves three main functions:

1) You determine what programs the Chamber will undertake.
2) You finance these programs through your dues investment.
3) You staff the committees and task forces that work to accomplish the goals and objectives.

The graph shows that the committees are comprised of and draw from the general membership. The areas of responsibility are divided into three basic councils. Each committee has a chairperson who reports to the chair of the council. The chairs are members of the Executive Committee, which is responsible to the Board of Governors, who are ultimately responsible to the membership.

The President who is responsible to the Board of Governors, leads the professional staff. The staff assists the volunteers in carrying out their duties.
2021 Committee Chairs

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Craig Johnson, Chair
Kumon of Conyers

Entrepreneurial Academy
• Cynthia Davis, Chair
ALERT Properties

MEMBER SERVICES COUNCIL

• Michael Hutcheson, Chair
Rockdale Coalition for Children and Families

Ambassadors Committee
• Faith Bratlie, Chair
Faith Insurance Solutions

Golf Committee
• Alan Sherrill, Co-Chair
Conyers Flower Shop

• Scot Ward, Co-Chair
Scot Ward Funeral Services

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Toni Hannah, Chair
Georgia Power

Leadership Rockdale
• Claire Cline, Co-Chair

• Susan Paul Smith, Co-Chair
SPS Communications

• Scot Ward, Co-Chair
Scot Ward Funeral Services

Governmental Affairs Committee
• Darlene Hotchkiss, Chair
Hedrick Family Dentistry

Past Chamber Chairs

Jack Turner 1954-1959
A.R. Barksdale 1959-1971
James Culpepper 1972
F.W. Waldrop 1973
R.L. Montgomery 1974
T.O. Morgan 1975
Leonard Epstein 1977
Dr. William A. Weaver 1978
Harold Breazeale 1979
Ron Simpson 1980
Paul Christenbury 1981
Ed Holcomb 1982
Larry Mauldin 1983
Rick Ramsey 1984
Wayne Ingle 1985
Dan L. Hill 1986
T.A. Schmidt 1987
William Pridgen 1988
Archer R. Rose 1989
Robert W. Maddox 1990
E.A. Thomas, Jr. 1991
Samuel F. Wishon 1992
Michael P. Jones 1993
John T. Abbot 1994
Kim S. Hubbard 1995
Paul Mills Herndon 1996
Robert G. Coston 1996
John T. Higginbottom 1996
Fred R. Vick 1997
Suzanne E. Chappell 1998
Guy M. Dabbs, III 1999
Nelson E. Toebbe 2000
Larry D. Miller 2001
C. Dean Alford 2002
Chris M. Ingle 2003
J. Nelson Geter 2004
Danny Stone 2005
Betty Straw Brown 2006
Mike Hilleboe 2007
Don Cannon 2008
John Kelley 2009
Bill Daniel 2010
Mo Talley 2011
Lorraine Harrison 2012
Thua G. Barlay 2013
T. Pat Cavanaugh 2014
Deborah Armstrong 2015
Earl Wise 2016
Deanne “Dee” Barnes 2017
Tim Baker 2018
Faye Phillips 2019

Would you like to serve on a Committee?

Complete the enclosed Chamber Involvement Card and return to the chamber.
Serving as your Chair during 2020 was a great privilege. Despite being the middle of a pandemic, we managed to accomplish many of our goals and stay financially sound. Listed below are some of the highlights.

Please take time to review and take pride in all of these accomplishments.

- Enhanced member relations by challenging members to tell the story of the Chamber and refer new members. Thirty-six new members were the result of this effort through our referral program.
- Strengthened the Chamber’s membership base by bringing in over 84 new members.
- Encouraged business relocation and expansion by producing and distributing the Conyers-Rockdale Quality of Life magazine.
- Worked with Rockdale County Public Schools to promote the Partners in Education website that hosts a variety of opportunities for involvement with and support of schools in Rockdale County.
- Honored civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr., by supporting the 16th annual breakfast in his honor.
- Maintained communication with all other state chamber executives through participation in the Georgia Chamber of Commerce Executives Association.
- Secured 55 members as Pacesetter/Commerce Club members, which provided great benefits to those members as well as assisted in making our programs stronger and more successful than ever.
- Hosted the 4th Annual Clays for Commerce event and doubled the number of participants. This event provides a great day of fun and networking for our members, and is a great fundraiser to help support the Chamber’s mission.
- Supported four Leads Groups which offer business support, referrals and networking to over 120 small business members on a weekly basis.
- Provided expert instruction for individuals seeking to go into business for themselves through Entrepreneurial Academy.
- Held monthly Twelve at Twelve Luncheons, where participants met with Chamber, City, County and School leadership for an informal luncheon to express their community and business concerns.
- Promoted Conyers-Rockdale County and its tourist attractions to 1,000,000 visitors and residents through the Georgia on My Mind magazine.
- Responded to business relocation inquiries, providing professional commercial and real estate assistance.
- Maintained the Chamber website design by keeping members, visitors and community up to date with Chamber news and other helpful information.
- Graduated 35 from the Leadership Rockdale program. Exposure gained from the program allowed class members the opportunity to begin serving in leadership positions in various capacities throughout the community.
- Hosted 96 golfers at the Chamber’s annual Golf Tournament.
- Assisted business’ start-up by distributing the “Starting a Business in Rockdale County” informational manual.
- Maintained a strong working relationship with the City of Conyers, Rockdale County Board of Commissioners, Conyers Rockdale Economic Development Council and the Rockdale County Public School System.
- Offered member-to-member discounts through Hot Deals program.
- Held 3 Economic Development breakfast events, keeping business and community leaders informed.
- Ensured Rockdale County’s representation throughout the area and state by Chamber President’s participation on the Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, and Rockdale Rotary.
- Promoted members’ businesses and services by providing an online Membership Business Directory, featuring enhanced listings.
- Kept the membership updated on key issues and happenings during the 2020 Legislative Session via weekly emails.
- Created “Lead with Joy” activity for Leadership Rockdale Alumni. This program helped alumni stay connected while participating in activities that helped improve community, as well as stay mentally, physically and spiritually healthy themselves.
- Awarded ZaBy’s as Education Partner of the Year, recognizing the importance of business support of our schools.
- Celebrated new members with 19 ribbon cutting events. These events seek to welcome and introduce new businesses to the community and Chamber.
- Awarded the 3rd annual Ambassador of the Year, recognizing our most active Ambassador in 2019 - Donna Silsbee.
- Awarded Chamber Volunteer of the Year to Thomas C. Dean III for his many efforts to support the Chamber in 2019.
- In response to the pandemic, your Chamber:
  - Created a dedicated webpage for Covid-19 resources and kept it updated with relevant, factual information and helpful tools.
  - Partnered with our local Rotary Clubs to pull together a “thank you” campaign to show support for healthcare workers.
  - Created a dedicated Facebook page for businesses to promote and support all local businesses.
  - Worked with City, County and CREDC leadership to develop a survey to better understand the needs of the business community.
  - Formed a “shop local” campaign to reward individuals who did business with local merchants.
  - Organized and promoted webinars on various topics such as SBA Emergency Loans, CARES Act, PPP, Working Effectively from Home.

Again, these are just a few of the highlights. Congratulations on a great year!
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