



January 17, 2016

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Chattahoochee Main Street Hosts Successful *Galvanizing Gadsden* Event

CHATTAHOOCHEE, January 17, 2016 – The inaugural ***Galvanizing Gadsden*** Business Resource Symposium, held January 14-15 at the newly restored historic Apalachicola Arsenal Museum & Conference Center at the Florida State Hospital was a resounding success. All countywide entrepreneurs and business owners in attendance were directly connected with access to readily available information and business resources that will enable them to grow their respective ventures, create jobs in the community and increase capital investment.

Initiated and hosted by Chattahoochee Main Street, and widely advertised locally and regionally, ***Galvanizing Gadsden*** was sponsored and promoted by the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce, the Gadsden County Development Council, Talquin Electric Cooperative, FOCUS Credit Union, Envision Credit Union, Gadsden County Tourist Development Council, Florida First Capital Finance Corporation, and Quincy Main Street.

The first day of the event featured a keynote address from Cissy Proctor, the newly appointed Executive Director for the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, to kick off the second year of Gadsden County's participation in the Competitive Florida Partnership Program. The second day was highlighted by a keynote address by Michael Myhre, CEO and Network State Director for the Florida Small Business Development Centers (SBDC).

Attendees were given special insight from a panel of experts representing Florida First Capital Finance Corporation, Centennial Bank, FOCUS Credit Union and Envision Credit Union pertaining to business financing options and valuable recommendations and counsel for being properly prepared when applying for a business loan.

In addition, the availability of workforce training services was presented by CareerSource Florida Capital Region, work training and educational opportunities provided by Gadsden Technical Institute, and important steps to take when starting a business was offered by L&L Business Resource Center.

Small business resources and incentives were presented by panelists representing the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program, CareerSource

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Florida Capital Region, Talquin Electric Cooperative, and the United States Small Business Administration.

Additional presentations were provided by Opportunity Florida's Executive Director, Jim Brook, on the state of Gadsden County's economy in comparison to the surrounding rural counties in Northwest Florida, as well as showcase presentations of economic and community development initiatives taking place through Chattahoochee Main Street and Quincy Main Street.

The final panel discussion consisted of a group of local business owners sharing their experiences of starting and running a diversity of successful businesses in Gadsden County.

"The benefit of collaborating with all these organizations and individuals is the opportunity to overlay resources and expertise so it becomes a one-stop shop for the local businesses," said Robert Nixon, Business Retention & Expansion Consultant to the Gadsden County Development Council and Chief Program Executive for the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Service Center.

The two-day event was capped off with the **Galvanizing Gadsden** Awards Presentation to honor local businesses and individuals making significant contributions to the economic development efforts in Gadsden County. The list of distinguished recipients included:

**Emerging Businesses of the Year:** Sicamu and Lamb Pallet Company

**Hospitality Business of the Year:** WB's Sports Bar & Grill

**Tech Business of the Year:** Applied Fiber

**Manufacturer of the Year:** CDS Manufacturing

**Family-Owned Businesses of the Year:** May Nursery and Padgett's Jewelry

**Small Business of the Year:** Corry Cabinets

Community Champions

- Kim Gay (Talquin Electric Cooperative)
- Pastor Bob Wells (ChristTown Ministries)
- Roy Moore (Piggly Wiggly)

In honor of the late Nancy Gee, Chairperson of Quincy Main Street's Economic Restructuring Committee, the **Galvanizing Gadsden** Economic Development Champions are:

- Preble-Rish Consulting Engineers
- Bill Enfinger (President & CEO, FOCUS Credit Union)
- Steve Hittinger (S & S Investments)
- Frank Holcomb (TDS Telecom)

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***Galvanizing Gadsden*** was developed to support all business retention and expansion efforts in operation throughout Gadsden County. This unprecedented countywide event to bolster economic development was organized with the understanding that a strong existing local business base is the best business recruitment tool. It is planned to be an annual event, with the venue moved each year to a different location within the County.

Nixon went on to say “economic development is about relationships. Galvanizing Gadsden helps us deploy our resources strategically so that business owners can connect names with faces of resource providers to build their own relationships, which will hopefully transcend into more jobs being created and more capital investment into the community.”

To receive information about available business resources, please contact Chattahoochee Main Street at 850-663-2323 or [info@chattahoocheemainstreet.org](mailto:info@chattahoocheemainstreet.org).

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