Monthly Key Accomplishments – January 2011

The BCC: Bridging Campus to Community
Participants:
Barbara Grogan, Sumter Archway Professional
Mandy Young, Director, Community and Economic Development, City of Americus
40+ BCC Members (SGTC and GSW Faculty, Staff and Students, as well as community members)

Supporting and enhancing the development of a college town environment in the community is an ongoing task of the Sumter Archway Partnership. After exploring several avenues of research and data gathering, the Partnership moved forward with forming The BCC: Bridging Campus to Community. The BCC is comprised of roughly 60 individuals, representing the faculty, administration, and student bodies of both South Georgia Technical College and Georgia Southwestern State University, as well as actively engaged community members. The BCC has meet on several occasions, exploring opportunities for social and service events which provide opportunities for town and gown engagement, as well opportunities to build relationships throughout the community businesses and higher education. Recently, the BCC began the process of developing an internship program which will be community-wide, and encompass many of the specific fields of study at both colleges. The intent of the program is to encourage college students to complete internship hours in the community, and to hopefully retain them as they graduate and look for full-time employment. Additionally, the local businesses will be further exposed to the skills and talents possessed by local college students. Along with developing an internship program, the BCC is moving forward with developing a “volunteer database” which will provide a listing of local volunteer options for college students and community members. Along with these efforts, the BCC is also making plans to more actively engage the community members in “Preview Days” at GSW, introducing new students to the local businesses.

Economic Development: Strategic Planning Process
Participants:
Barbara Grogan, Sumter Archway Professional
Sumter Archway Executive Committee
Americus City Council
Sumter County Board of Commissioners
Americus-Sumter Payroll Development Authority

The Sumter Archway Partnership began economic development discussions at the beginning of 2009, working to define what areas of economic development in which they would focus. After two years of discussions among the Executive Committee, Americus City Council, Sumter County Board of Commissioners and the Americus-Sumter Payroll Development Authority, the participants defined four areas of future growth for the community: Inland Port Logistics, Healthcare, Higher Education, and Tourism. Archway facilitated a community input session related to these topics, and the Archway Professional met with formally organized boards associated with these topics to gain insight from their perspectives. After gathering information, the Executive Committee moved forward with defining
specific goals to be accomplished (addressing community-wide planning and zoning issues and creating an inventory of economic development assets) and the Committee is in the process of defining who will lead and participate in these efforts. Additionally, the Executive Committee has been tasked with determining how participants will be approached, and how their buy-in to the full process will be secured. The information gained from discussion and input sessions, as well as the specific goals to accomplish have been captured in an Economic Development Strategic Planning Process document. The document will be the basis of future discussions and actions.