Candler County Forms Economic Development Issue Work Group
The inaugural meeting of the Candler County Economic Development Issue Work Group was held on Monday, May 12th. Regional representatives of Georgia Power, Georgia Department of Economic Development, and Georgia Southern University were on hand and met with local stakeholders to help identify gaps in community resources for attracting and retaining business and industry. The group identified two immediate needs — marketing and online presence and the lack of a community economic development professional. Next steps identified included performing a “web charrette” in which this group would analyze the existing web proposals and make recommendations for further revisions and developing a comprehensive marketing plan and accompanying implementation budget.

Archway to Assist Board of Education with Charter System Development
At their May 12th meeting, Candler County School Superintendent Dr. Tom Bigwood requested assistance from the Executive Committee in forming an Issue Work Group to address the upcoming conversion to a Charter System of Schools. The conversion process requires community involvement and input. Archway will assist Dr. Bigwood and the Board of Education with community input sessions.

Candler Community Health & Wellness Issue Work Group Address School Based Clinic
When the new Candler County Pre-K – 8th school complex opens in August, so will a new, school-based telemedicine clinic. On May 14th, Archway facilitated a group discussion of local stakeholders to identify remaining issues and formulate a strategy to address them. Equipment and clinic space are provided, but there are concerns about financial sustainability for clinic staff, as well as marketing the clinic to parents.

Forming Partnerships with Georgia Southern University
On May 5th, Dr. Mel Garber, Archway Partnership Director, Dr. Sue Chapman, Archway Coordinator of Operations, Dustin Durden and Steven Snell, Candler County Archway Partnership Co-Chairs, and Betsy McGriff, Candler County Archway Professional met with Dr. Charles Patterson, Vice President for Research and Economic Development at Georgia Southern University. The group discussed the Archway model for community development and the potential for strengthening regional partnerships between Candler County and resources located at Georgia Southern. Patterson will represent GSU on the Candler County Executive Committee going forward.

Candler County Seeks Assistance with Recreation Department Structure
As the Candler County Board of Commissioners assumes ownership of the Metter-Candler Recreation Department, County Administrator Bill Lindsey sees the need for restructuring both the Department staffing model and the Board structure. He has requested Archway assistance in drafting by-laws for the Recreation Advisory Board, as well as assistance in collaborating with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government in initiating a wage-study for a professional recreation director. Both of these projects will assist the County in strengthening the department.
Candler Plans Revamped Leadership Program
The Leadership Candler Class of 2011 was the catalyst that led to the formation of the Candler County Archway Partnership. Class members Dustin Durden and Steven Snell, who now chair the Candler Executive Committee, want to enhance that experience for other emerging leaders. The J W Fanning Institute will work with the Metter-Candler Chamber of Commerce and the Archway Executive Committee to create a vision and curriculum for a strong and sustainable Leadership Candler Program. The visioning component will include local focus groups to help identify leadership gaps and program expectations to increase local “buy-in” for the program. The planning will kick-off on May 28th.

City of Metter Receives Signage Design and Landscape Plans
Archway Graduate Assistants Andrew Bailey and Emily Hunt presented their proposals for community gateway signage and landscaping to the Metter City Council on April 14th. The signs were designed based on input from the Community Branding and Beautification Issue Work Group and feature design features that highlight existing historic elements in the community. These design efforts will set the tone for further community branding efforts.