

Milledgeville-Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

A Legacy of Leadership

During the years following World War II, a wave of hopeful prosperity took over communities needing to rebuild the financial security weakened by the conflict. This movement caught hold in Milledgeville by sparking interest in connecting businesses with resources and customers.

On June 19, 1947, an invitation was printed on the front page of the Union Recorder Newspaper inviting all business and professional people, civic leaders, and others interested in establishing a Chamber of Commerce to attend a meeting at City Hall. The event was a rousing success with 175 initial members committing to funding the Chamber's first annual budget of \$2,500.

Chamber President and Chief Executive Officer Angie Martin reflects on the strong foundation built in those early years. "It is a great feat to look back to the original budget of just \$2,500 the Chamber started with in 1947, compared to that number now, which is over 15 times that amount, and to know that the stability of the Chamber, the valued Chamber staff and the incredible work the Chamber does is solely made possible through membership dues and community sponsorships. We literally could not do what we do without their support, both monetarily and in volunteering their time!"

The Chamber has a long history of staunch supporters who volunteer their time serving on the board of directors and as ambassadors. The directors represent a diverse cross-section of businesses in both size and sector. The Chamber Ambassador Program is a membership outreach and retention program designed to involve and inform members of benefits and happenings.

Martin reflects: "I knew the moment I joined the Chamber in March 2015 that I was following in the footsteps of some amazing community advocates and strong business leaders. The legacy of leadership with the Chamber presidents, board members, ambassadors and collaborators throughout the past almost 70 years has shaped the Chamber into who it is and what it functions as today."

Tom Glover, board chair and owner/president of Cogentes, joined the Chamber to not only advance his business but to enhance the community in which he lives. He shares: "Since moving my business to Milledgeville in 2009, I have seen the vital role that the Chamber plays in many aspects of the community, not just the business side. As a person who is concerned about the future of our community, I saw the Chamber as a great opportunity to get involved and truly make a difference."

With the business climate becoming more complex with each passing year, the Chamber's role in advocating for local commerce ensures that industry, as well as families, can live and flourish in our town.

"The Chamber plays a vital role in the vitality of our community," says Glover. "As the voice of business, the Chamber is responsible for ensuring that our business community thrives and is

part of the conversation with the local government in the overall direction we take as a community.”

Glover emphasizes that the Chamber, in this function, has an obligation to ensure the community as a whole provides an educated workforce and a business-friendly environment. “The Chamber has taken this role very seriously over the years and has been instrumental in helping attract and retain the businesses that we have in our county.”

Local business owners can be confident as they navigate the ever-changing commercial world that the Chamber will remain steadfastly by their side. Glover focuses on the future: “I think we have an outstanding leadership team that will help move our community toward great things in the years to come.”

For more information on the Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce visit their website at <http://milledgevillega.com>, drop by the office located at 130 South Jefferson Street, or call 478-453-9311.