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Columbus Georgia
Chamber of Commerce
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“Your Chamber dividends are rising”
1988 ANNUAL REPORT

We’re
Talking Proud
Columbus

Chairman of the Board of Director’s Message
James D. Yancey, Chairman

December 31, 1988

Dear Fellow Member:

Several years ago we adopted the theme “We’re Talking Proud.” The purpose of this theme was to highlight some of the aspects of our area that we are so proud of and also to heighten and broaden the image of Columbus internally and externally.

Looking back over 1988 as the Chairman of the Chamber, I am very proud of where we have been in our progress of growth and development for this area. This Annual Report highlights just a few of the accomplishments of the Chamber. These accomplishments have paid dividends in 1988 and they will continue for many years to come. Thanks for your hard work and support of our membership and the leadership and staff within the Chamber.

Our Chamber is changing. We are diversifying our programs and expanding our services to our members. All of these changes are brought about for the sole purpose of making Columbus a better place to live and work. To carry out this mission, we will continue to take whatever steps necessary so we will continue to “Talk Proud” in Columbus, Georgia for generations and generations to come.

Sincerely,

James D. Yancey
1988 Chairman of the Board

1988 Executive Committee

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Chairman-Elect

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Charlie Cumiskey

Introduction to the Annual Report

In 1988 the Columbus Chamber of Commerce went through many changes, the hiring of a new president, creation of two new departments and ever growing committees and task forces. Each of these changes presented challenges to develop a better Chamber and community.

The dividends the Columbus Chamber of Commerce pays out each year do not always show up in the form of dollars and cents. These dividends are programs designed to meet the business as well as community needs. Each of the eight Chamber departments covers a sector of these needs.

Thus the Annual Report is a culmination of 1988's activities in each of the eight departments, or in other words, dividends for the investments of volunteered time and money.

Industrial Development Department

The industrial Development Department's primary goal is to assist in the creation of new manufacturing employment.

During 1988, the Department exceeded its goal by more than 50 percent with creation of more than 750 jobs.

Industrial job creation sent ripples throughout the economy. The impact of these new jobs meant an additional 1,800 indirect jobs; more than \$22 million in permanent income; \$75 million in capital investments; more than \$13 million in retail sales; and more than \$9 million in commercial banking deposits.

These are the dividends from the investments made in the Chamber. Every Chamber member is investing in Columbus' future with their membership investments and volunteering to work on committees.

These new and expanding businesses include: MUTECH – 400 jobs; Oneda – 100 jobs; Warren/Sherer – 150 jobs; Microsonics – 75 jobs; and Cable Concrete Structures – 20 jobs.

The most important element of this effort was the involvement of the volunteer leadership. The private and public sectors worked closely as a team to insure successful projects.

The department created a new marketing brochure to sell Columbus to the world. "Decision Columbus" rolled off the press in November and was immediately put to work. This brochure will be the flagship of industrial development recruitment for the Chamber. One month later, the "Decision Columbus" newsletter was sent out to Fortune 500 and 5,000 top businesses which fit Columbus' niche in the industrial development marketplace.

An important part of industrial development is maintaining contacts with statewide developers and national location firms. This was accomplished by establishing a close working relationship with Industry and Trade, Georgia Power and many other organizations. Additionally, the Industrial Development Department made numerous trips to Atlanta, New York and Chicago to market Columbus to national economic development organizations and targeted industries.

Corporate Office Development Department

The Corporate Office Development Department is responsible for selling Columbus as a place for establishing and expanding Corporate Offices. The committee that make up this department are: Business Expansions, Existing Marketing, Newsletter, "Key People," Transportation, and Image.

Completing its first year, the department developed a marketing plan for 1988 while setting a course of action that can be followed for several years.

This ground work will become the foundation of a successful branch of economic development in Columbus. The ultimate goal of the program is to help the business community become further diversified and stronger. The net return will be less unemployment and more dollars pumped into Columbus' economy.

The program centers around the "Decision Columbus" theme. It positions Columbus as an outstanding clerical/white-collar market aimed at consultants working to relocate corporate office facilities. To build on this theme, the Industrial Development and Corporate Office Development Departments joined together to create a quarterly newsletter that covers the aspects of both departments. This newsletter is distributed to consultants, developers, corporate prospects and chamber members.

In an effort to cover all bases, two 30 second economic development advertisements were broadcast to an estimated million viewers of the Columbus Steeplechase on ESPN Thanksgiving Day and rebroadcast Dec. 13. These advertisements will continue to be an important part of our economic development effort. Now in progress are the "Decision Columbus" fact sheets which will replace the sheets currently used.

An extension of this program was establishing relationships with publishers to spread Columbus' message.

A part of Corporate Office Development is addressing the future needs of executive air travel by participating in the special task force assessing the Columbus Metropolitan Airport. The department has been promoting development of the central business district through involvement with Uptown Columbus, Inc. as well as directly with developers and companies throughout the city.

Corporate Office Development has also worked on cultivating local relationships to aid Columbus employers in expanding their businesses and providing companies with the necessary data to accomplish their goals.

Research & Commercial Development Department

September of this year saw the creation of a new department within the Chamber of Commerce, that of Research & Commercial Development. This department has a two-fold mission to accomplish: First, to enhance and develop research information which can be used to create and retain jobs within the Columbus MSA; Second to actively seek commercial/retail establishments for expansion and location in the area.

One of the accomplishment since the creation of this new department includes the organizing of the existing Chamber of Commerce research data.

The department has also been involved in the creation of several computerized databases, spreadsheets and graphs. The major types of information include population

comparisons and trends in the area, civilian labor force information and composition, as well as unemployment statistics over an eight-year period; and, retail sales information, both totals within the area and comparisons on a total and per capita basis for all major Georgia MSA's.

Also included are spreadsheets demonstrating building permit history in Muscogee County for industrial, mercantile and store, and office space and banks, as well as total building permit information. The Chamber has also created its own office space directory for specialized reporting.

The Research Department has updated a variety of the marketing information useful for economic development and newcomer purposes. Since September 1, this department has handled more than 100 specific requests for information from businesses considering the area as a possible location. The department has also participated in the design of a membership retention survey conducted by students from Columbus College. Further, the department is instrumentally involved in close examination of the issue of low weekly wages in the area.

In October, the department attended the HUD-ICSC Downtown Retail Development Conference held in Atlanta. The Chamber had direct involvement with more than 100 major retailers and nationwide developers who could consider the area as a potential site for economic development.

In addition, the Research & Commercial Development department is working on a student marketing internship program. This department has committed itself to the creation of at least 100 jobs in the commercial development sector in 1989.

Membership Department

The Membership Department is made up of Executive Sales Team, Diplomat Corps and Business after Hours Committee.

Executive Sales Team

412 new members were added to the rolls of the Chamber in 1988 through the efforts of the Executive Sales Team, comprised of eight corporate volunteer teams.

The year's top producer was LEE LEE JAMES, of Columbus Bank & Trust. In second place was JENNIFER LEROY and in third was JON DODDS, both of Columbus Bank & Trust. Columbus Bank & Trust with a sweep of the top three places was the top team of the year, too. The team captain was KENT FLEMING. The other members of the team were GREG HENDERSON and SUSAN WHITAKER.

Once goals were set, the teams spent the next 10 months making sales to non-members of new and old businesses alike. At the end of the competition on Dec. 2, most of the teams had reached or exceeded their goals.

The following is the percentage of the goal they achieved: Columbus Bank & Trust-206 percent; St. Francis Hospital-160 percent; American Family Life-108 percent; Blue Cross Blue Shield-103 percent; First Federal-100 percent; Trust Company Bank-100 percent; First Union National Bank-58 percent and Georgia Federal-21 percent.

Diplomat Corps

Twenty Diplomats divided into five teams, visited more than 1,400 members of the Chamber last year, talking to them about their membership and through a survey receiving feedback about their needs. The Diplomat Corps, the goodwill ambassadors for

the Chamber, also attended and served as hosts and hostesses for Business After Hours, Eye-Opener Breakfasts and New Member Receptions.

WANDA MCNEIL, of Concerned Care at St. Francis Hospital, was the top diplomat of 1988. Following her in second and third places were CINDY ROWE, Waddell Realty and CHUCK GOODMAN, of Georgia Department of Labor. The top Diplomat Team was the "Roadrunners," headed up by MCNEIL. The team also included: DONNETTE TEEL, of Personnel Concepts, Inc.; MITCH SCRUGGS, of United Cities Gas Company; and JERRY WILLIS, of Cellular Fone, Inc.

Business After Hours

Business After Hours (BAH), was held monthly in 1988 with, fifteen businesses serving as host for the event. The program is designed to help members develop a network with other members. By year's end, more than 1,800 people had attended BAH.

A task force was established to look at BAH to see what, if anything, could be done to make it more beneficial to members. The committee surveyed members at BAH and other Chamber events as well. The findings of their survey and meetings resulted in changing the format for 1989 by holding the event at the Chamber. In addition, eight to ten members have the opportunity to co-sponsor each monthly event and provide a mini-trade fair atmosphere where members display their products or services.

Industrial Relations Department

The Industrial Relations Department councils and committees consist of: Community Growth Council, Governmental Affairs, Employer-Employee Relations, Industrial Relations Steering, Transportation, Merchants, and Business Council and Minority Business Affairs.

Each of these committees plays an important role in the development of Columbus' business community. Rather than paying dividends in the financial sense, they keep an alert eye on these areas to ensure the business community has up-to-date knowledge of what is happening and how the community should move forward on issues.

Community Growth Council

The council completed a white collar version of the Industry Retention Program. It covered a broad cross section of issues of concern for local service industries ranging from business profits and expansion needs to public services. The council is currently reviewing the results and developing a plan of action.

Governmental Affairs Committee

Throughout the year the committee monitored legislative issues both at the state and federal levels as well as, formulating policy statements on such issues as mandated benefits, motor fuel tax and minimum wage proposals. The committee sponsored meetings with various Legislative Delegation members during the Georgia General Assembly and joint meetings with the Consolidated Government and Delegation.

After the election, the department started work on the new Elected and Appointed Officials Directory. This publication provides easy reference for Chamber members in regards to contacting those officials who represent them at the local, state and national levels.

Two of the committee's biggest events this past year were: co-sponsoring and coordinating of the Annual Legislative Reception held in Atlanta Jan. 20 with more than

420 people in attendance; and the 35th Annual Pre-Legislative Forum Nov. 18 with more than 250 attendees.

Employer-Employee Relations Committee

The committee sponsored the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Workshop to update local employers in the area of Safety and Health Regulations in the workplace.

It sponsored an Employer-Employee Relations Update held in October to inform local personnel managers of key issues in discrimination law facing today's employers.

The committee co-sponsored the 12th Annual Labor Forum which focused on Employer-Employee Relations, AIDS in the workplace and new methods of Discipline and Discharge.

They also co-sponsored the annual Summer Youth Employment Program with the Urban League. This program supplied part-time summer employment to 75 disadvantaged youths.

Industrial Relations Steering Committee

The committee hosted nine Columbus Business and Industry forum meetings plus published a series of Employer-Employee Relations Bulletins. These bulletins were designed to be a supplementary informational tool on employer-employee relations issues.

Transportation Committee

The committee monitored the progress on portions of the Economic Development Highway as it pertains to Columbus and its future. To keep close tabs on local road improvement projects, public hearings were attended. This also included maintaining contact with key local and state officials concerning local public transportation.

The Transportation Committee worked closely in the formation of the Columbus Airport Task Force and is looking into ways air transportation could be improved.

Merchants and Business Council

The council sponsored ARCCO, Inc. for the Small Business Person of the Year Award in May of 1988. It continued to feature the Small Business Spotlight Award, a monthly recognition of a local small business at Eye-Opener Breakfasts. They sponsored two workshops, one on employee benefits programs for small business in the spring and one in the fall on personnel management in the small business area.

A new program was launched in 1988 called Executive Dialogue, where non-competing businesses meet once a month to discuss business issues. In November, three of these groups were up and running, each helping the other improve their business.

Minority Business Affairs Committee

The committee coordinated and participated in Minority Enterprise Development Week activities along with the Corporate Office Development Department. The Minority Directory was also a product of this cooperation.

Public Relations Department

The Public Relations Department consists of "Business Progress," monthly newsletter, "Decision Columbus," a quarterly economic development newsletter, printing of all Chamber projects, i.e. brochures to name tags, Image Committee and Media Relations.

The Public Relations Department was established in July to publicize and promote the work of all the departments of the Chamber of Commerce.

Formation of Department and Business Progress

A high priority was to redesign the current newsletter. A task force headed by BILLY WATSON (Columbus Ledger-Enquirer) selected a name and design format. Once completed, Chamber member printers were sent letters asking for bids on its publication.

The first issue rolled off the press in late September and for the first time included advertising. By years end, response to advertising in the Publication was overwhelming. Each issue made improvements on the previous ones.

An ongoing project was designed publication that would be used to recruit economic development prospects. It was decided by a committee that a brochure which would encompass both industrial development and corporate office relocation would be the right vehicle to get the message out.

As the brochures were being developed, the design was made distinctive, yet it fit in with other publications that were in the process of being designed and published.

The title "Decision Columbus" was then used to develop a quarterly economic development newsletter. Its goal was to continue to keep contact with prospects and send the message that Columbus is a good place to move and do business. It also communicates to Chamber members the expansion and new developments on the economic front. The first issue was mailed out in December, 1988.

Printing

By the end of the year, the Public Relations Department had worked on 15 printing projects for Chamber departments. Each publication strived to send the message, "you are important to us," to the members and be consistent with all other Chamber publications. In other words, the publications were tied together by our logo and when possible, by official colors.

Image Committee

The Image Committee participated in numerous activities locally and nationally to enhance the image of Columbus, Georgia. 1988 saw the continuation of the "We're Talking Proud" theme. A small alteration was made in the logo to distinguish us from the 13 other Columbus' in the nation.

Working on the home front, the image committee co-sponsored "Operation Tourist," an educational program for 60 hospitality industry employees. The group got a first hand look at 12 of Columbus' attractions and encouraged to become hospitality experts, making a positive influence on visitors.

In April, 35 travel writers from the Mid-West were entertained by the committee, Convention & Visitors Bureau and the City. The committee provided them with history books on Columbus and "We're Talking Proud" coffee mugs. The visit resulted in several articles being written about Columbus, including ones in "Southern Living," the Chicago," etc.

In August, the committee supported the visit of 141 Japanese college students in a six-week program sponsored by the East-West Foundation. It was an opportunity to show Columbus off to an international group.

Planning for Columbus Day started early in the year. The Chamber purchased 60,000 "Hey, It's Columbus Day!" stickers which were sold at cost to local companies

and provided to the students in Muscogee County Schools. The day's activities included a visit by Christopher Columbus, music by the Columbus College symphonic band and a "Wonderful Wednesday" barbecue lunch co-sponsored at the Government Center.

More than 300 people attended the lunch program from 12-2 p.m. "It was very good," said BUDDY MERRILL, Chairman of the Chamber's Image Committee (Georgia Power). "We hope it's the impetus for future developments of Columbus Day."

The committee also provided 11 "We're Talking Proud" sweatshirts to the 11 local runners participating in the 850 mile Veterans' Day Flag Run from Arlington National Cemetery to Columbus.

Media Relations

With the introduction of a Public Relations department came the development of Media Relations. With an increase in news releases being produced and relationships developed with the national media came more local and national coverage of Columbus. Several national papers carried stories on Columbus this past fall.

Two files were established to follow the development of releases and their use. One was a release file that held all of the releases sent out for the year and the second was a clipping file of stories actually run on the Chamber in the local, regional, national and international publications.

Stories on Columbus appeared on local media and one of the world's leading papers. A story on Columbus and Fort Benning's relationship was published in the London Times dated Nov. 4, 1988. The story helped to provide Columbus with national and international attention.

Sporting events also brought publicity to Columbus. Both the Columbus Steeplechase and the Stagg Bowl received national attention with shows on ESPN. ESPN estimated the Steeplechase had a viewership of one million people nationwide. Not to be left out was the Southern Open Golf Tournament which drew reporters from all over the southeastern region. These sporting events provided Columbus with media attention throughout the nation. In fact, a local golfer said when he was sailing on a cruise ship, that he heard results of the Southern Open on the British Broadcasting Company.

Columbus has much more to be talking proud about and the future holds more positive stories on Columbus' successes.

Public Affairs Department

The Public Affairs Department is responsible for the following committees: Education, Military Affairs, Leadership Columbus, Leadership Columbus Alumni, Eye-Opener Breakfast, EXPO '88 and Literacy. The department had a successful year, branching out to touch the lives of both Chamber members and the community as well. It increases the value of the stock we all have in Columbus.

Education Committee

The Education Committee sponsored the Student Teacher Achievement Recognition Program (STAR). Thomas York of Spencer High School was this year's winner. Joyce Marie Lee, also from Spencer High School, was chosen teacher as his STAR teacher. Ten local high school students were also recognized in this year's competition.

The committee sponsored the Georgia Occupational Award of Leadership Program (GOAL) in cooperation with Columbus Technical Institute. The local GOAL winner was Steve Bolin, a Data Processing student at Columbus Technical Institute. This program had more than 50 participants.

Ten Adopt-a-School partnerships were formalized in 1988. They teamed up schools with businesses to enhance the education process in Columbus. By year's end, a total of 15 schools had been adopted through the program.

An Academic Decathlon was held Dec. 3. The committee volunteered both time and financial support. This year's competition involved 57 students from Columbus.

Military Affairs

The Military Affairs Committee held six international Military Officers Luncheon/Orientations in 1988. More than 180 foreign soldiers participated in this program. The committee attended activities at Fort Benning throughout the year, including Change of Command, recognition and other ceremonies. A representative from Association of the United States Army and Retired Officers Association served on the committee, providing input on their organizations' activities.

The committee helped with Veterans Day activities by working with the Veteran's Council to sponsor an essay contest among area high school seniors; encouraging participation in the parade, special ceremonies, and welcome ceremony for the runners that participated in the first American Flag Run, an 850 mile run from Arlington, Virginia to Columbus, Georgia. The committee provided trophies to the annual ROTC Drill Meet held in Columbus.

It worked to encourage members of the community to sponsor students for both the Allied Officers and School of the Americas. Committee members hosted two receptions at the airport during 1988 for incoming personnel attending conference at Fort Benning. These programs help build and reinforce the relationship between Columbus and Fort Benning.

Leadership Columbus

The 1987-1988 Leadership Columbus graduated 35 students from the intensive ten month program. The program is designed to provide leaders for Columbus in the coming years. A total of 265 business leaders have graduated from Leadership Columbus. Local companies were contacted asking them to nominate candidates for the 1988-1989 Class.

A new program has been added to the 1988-1989 Leadership Columbus class. It was a team-building retreat held in September. The group is enthusiastically participating in the current program which will end in June 1989. The format was changed and updated in 1988-1989 to involve the participants in a hands-on program. It also encourages the participants to research materials ahead of scheduled meetings, as well as work together in both small and large groups as a team.

Leadership Columbus Alumni

The Leadership Columbus Alumni were encouraged to get involved as volunteers for boards and commissions in Columbus. Each of the alumni was furnished with the dates and openings and information on how to seek appointments. Many are now serving on committees, boards and commissions, making Columbus a better place to live and work.

The Alumni hosted a retreat for team-building and leadership training at Pine Mountain in May to improve their skills. Monthly meetings were held in September through May, providing a program of timely interest to members.

The Alumni sponsored the local GOAL student's trip to Atlanta for the statewide competition. Members of the Alumni Association are participating in the Adopt-A-School program by serving as a liaison committee, visiting businesses and schools to conduct surveys on partnership activities.

The Alumni sent a representative to the national meeting of Leadership Organizations. A Georgia Association of Leadership Organizations is being formed and a Columbus Alumni is serving on the organization committee.

The Alumni co-sponsored the Dec. 7 "Columbus Beyond 2000: A Town Meeting," which discussed Education, Economic Development, Amenities and Community Relations. The program provided the community an opportunity to talk about the direction Columbus should take in the future.

Eye-Opener

Eye-Opener Breakfasts in 1988 averaged more than 250 attendees who turned out once a month at 7 a.m. to network and listen to topics important to Columbus. Each meeting also provided recognition to volunteers representing the Executive Sales Team and Diplomat Corp. efforts, as well as the Small Business Spotlight, which recognized an outstanding small business. The Annual Small Business Person of the Year was featured at the May Eye-Opener Breakfast. Each month a Chamber member sponsored the breakfast.

A task force was formed to look at the overall Eye-Opener format. Changes were suggested in the sponsorship and the program to help it improve. These improvements will be phased in during 1989.

EXPO '88

EXPO '88 was the single largest event in terms of involvement of the Chamber for the year. The four-day event attracted more than 120 exhibitors and 15,000 visitors to see the best Columbus has to offer. EXPO '88 highlighted local businesses, products and services. A new addition was recognizing the 12 best exhibits with ribbons. A \$250 scholarship was awarded to a student at Columbus Technical School.

Literacy

The Chamber co-sponsored a Regional Drop-out Conference in the spring of 1988. The conference looked at the severity of the number of students dropping out of high-school, and brain-stormed to find programs that could be initiated to help identify drop-outs and intervene.

The Literacy Committee secured \$65,000 in grant monies to purchase an IBM Learning Laboratory to teach adults to read. The lab was dedicated in August. The Chamber's "Business Progress" also supported the program by running stories on the lab's capabilities.

On the same day as the lab's opening, a special Eye-Opener Breakfast focused on the literacy problem. Anderson Clark of the American Broadcasting Company's effort in literacy was guest speaker.

Private Sector Initiative Program

The Private Sector Initiative Program is an on-the-job training program that is partially funded by the federal government. It provides training to disadvantaged citizens to get them on the working rolls in Columbus. This program subsidizes salaries of the on-the-job participants providing them a job and businesses with a way to train employees.

This year's program which runs from July to June, reached 104 percent of its enrollment goal, 106 percent of placement goal and 131 percent of its average wage at placement goal. More than 47 disadvantaged citizens were placed through the efforts of this program.

Behind the scenes, the Private Sector Initiative Program solicits businesses to participate in the program to do their part in the upgrading of the skill level of economically disadvantaged individuals. This is done by word of mouth, door-to-door and telephone.

Potential trainees are secured through newspaper advertisements, referrals and word of mouth. They are tested by Vocation Rehabilitation Services in the areas of spelling, math, reading and interest inventory. These tests results are used to help evaluate selected training for that individual. Then the employee and business are matched together according to both of their needs.

"We feel that we have aided some of the economically disadvantaged citizens of Columbus," said HOWARD PENDLETON, Program Director. "The program has worked to upgrade their skills, helping to make them productive citizens in the community."

Annual Report Conclusion

The accomplishments of each of these departments is an indication of the dividends paid in 1988. Countless hours were spent at meeting, planning sessions and at events to make them possible. The teamwork of the board of directors, volunteers, members and staff continue to improve the Columbus Chamber of Commerce.

Like a finely tuned machine, when all the cogs mesh together; the Columbus Chamber of Commerce's departments meet the needs of the Columbus community. The Chamber is helping to build a better community where the investment of ideas, suggestions, involvement and participation reap dividends for the present and future.

The future of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce is limited only by the dreams and dedication of its members.