

EDC introduces new marketing strategy, goals for the year

By Dave Hodges
Democrat business editor

Energized by signs of an improving economy, the Economic Development Council of Tallahassee-Leon County is ready to help the Tallahassee area make a "quantum leap" in business expansion in the coming years, chairman Karen Moore said Thursday.

The EDC's first board meeting of 2012 was devoted to introducing the new theme, a revised and enhanced website, and how the public-private partnership will approach economic development in the area.

The effort combines the nurturing of startups and existing companies, as well as promoting the region to site selection professionals across the country. Moore noted that the EDC's marketing theme in recent years was "Be a Part of Our Secret."

"Well, I decided the secret's out," Moore said. "We know how great things are doing in our area, and it is time for a quantum leap."

The initiative will promote resources available to EDC investors and stakeholders, as well as site consultants. The centerpiece is an updated website — taledc.com — that covers such basics as incentives and resources for businesses, statistics on the area, permitting require-

ments, and a "map room" showing all the various business parks and industrial sites in the area.

The EDC has compiled a database of more than 600 site selectors nationwide. They receive periodically an electronic newsletter on Big Bend business develop-

ment activities. Moore said when the newsletter goes out, EDC executive director Beth Kirkland gets five to 10 phone calls from the site selectors about the area.

"It is having a direct impact on bringing knowledge about our region to those site selector folks," Moore said.

One of the EDC's priorities is fostering entrepreneurship and aiding local businesses with resources and technical assistance. Keynote speaker Eunice Cofie, CEO of the startup cosmetics company Nuekie, talked about her experience as a participant in the EDC's Entrepreneurial Excellence Program.

A Florida A&M University graduate, Cofie earned degrees in chemistry and molecular biology. Her company is developing a line of skin-care and cosmetic products especially for women of color.

The EEP classes gave her instruction on team building, marketing and finance.

"Words can't even explain how much I enjoyed that program," Cofie said. "I learned so much from the

speakers."

A class highlight was local business owners who came in to tell their own real-life stories, and a final event called "pitch night" where attendees took the podium to

explain their business plan and convince the class of their venture's feasibility.

"I received so much feedback that it helped me to take my company to the next level," Cofie said.



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