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Chamber, FAMU Offer Certification Classes

The Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce and Florida A&M University announced a partnership to offer the Construction Management Development Program (CMDP) certification classes in conjunction with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The classes, which will enable small businesses to competitively place bids for statewide contracts, will be offered in Quincy by the Chamber beginning February 2, 2009.

“These classes give our local small businesses the opportunity to survive and possibly grow during an increasingly difficult economic period,” said Michelle Burdick, the Chamber’s vice president of membership. “We’re pleased to be working with FAMU on this project to give these businesses the chance to compete for state contracts that would normally be out of reach.”

Successful completion of the classes qualify the businesses to become certified with the FDOT and be eligible to compete for any government contract within the state of Florida. The collection of certification courses include instruction in business management, construction accounting, construction mathematics and estimating, contracts, specifications, and law, plan reading for FDOT construction and scheduling for FDOT construction. Areas of additional advising may include project planning methods, bidding and estimating, job costing and scheduling, and contract negotiation and plan reading.

Financial counseling and bonding assistance will also be available through FAMU’S Bond Guarantee Program (BGP) to assist certified disadvantaged business enterprises to meet the standards of traditional surety bonding and financial institutions. Like credit backing, bond guarantees minimize the risk taken by sureties and provide a solid financial foundation to unseasoned disadvantaged business enterprises seeking contracts with the state of Florida. A ninety percent guarantee will be available and awarded for contracts \$250,000 or less, and an eighty percent guarantee for those contracts over \$250,000, capped at \$500,000.

Companies offering services solicited by the FDOT and other state departments include but are not limited to: fencing, guardrail, landscaping/mowing, maintenance, janitorial services, painting, traffic

control, architecture, business and financial management, consultants, materials supply, highway construction, asphalt paving, building, construction/modification, steel, concrete, trucking, erosion control, drainage and earthwork. Gadsden County small businesses specializing in these or similar fields should consider taking advantage of the offered courses.

Registration has begun for the first two classes: Business Management and Scheduling. Classes are scheduled for February 2 through March 13 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Chamber located at 208 North Adams Street in Quincy. Download the registration form, program application, and

needs assessment form online at www.gadsdenfla.com by selecting Community Events from the online events calendar. Participants will be required to submit a completed and notarized program application and needs assessment form on the first day of classes. All forms can be obtained online or by calling (850) 627-9231 or emailing michelleburdick@tds.net.

For more information on the Construction Management Development Program or Bond Guarantee Program, visit website www.cmdp-bgp.com. Specific questions can be addressed by calling (850) 561-2040.

Chamber Continues to Promote Gadsden County

The Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce thanks its business members, partners for their continued support and participation throughout 2008 and into 2009. In spite of the slowing economy, the Chamber's 2008 membership increased by more than ten percent in response to its ongoing efforts to emphasize the positive attributes of visiting, living and working in Gadsden County.

In the upcoming year, the Chamber will focus on promoting Gadsden County by continuing to distribute business and community information via the Chamber Chatter electronic newsletter, the monthly Chamber Page in the Havana Herald and the Gadsden County Times, the Chamber's website, www.gadsdenfla.com and its newest publication, the Gadsden County, Florida: Community Guide (due to be released approximately January 31, 2009). The Chamber will also persist with



its long term purpose of encouraging stable economic growth and retention of businesses located in Gadsden County. Since the Chamber is regularly the first point of contact to obtain area information, close relationships with partners such as WORKFORCE plus, Enterprise Florida, Florida's Great Northwest, VISIT FLORIDA, Florida A&M University Small Business Development Center and Tallahassee Community College are a key factor in its accomplishments.

Membership retention and growth and the support of existing Gadsden County businesses will be the main focus of the Chamber in 2009. As in the past, promoting Gadsden County in a positive light will be an extension of that focus. The current businesses not only continue to provide much needed services in our area but also provide jobs that allow our citizens to work and shop near their

homes. The tough economic times may make it more challenging for the results of the Chamber's efforts to appear but the staff, board of directors and members are committed to the challenge.

Howard McKinnon, the Chamber's chairman stated, "The chamber's staff and board is committed to providing our available resources to assist our members and fellow citizens in meeting the challenges of 2009's economic slow down. We have an important role to play and we take it very seriously."

Although promotional opportunities presented by the Chamber publications and member programs like the Go Gadsden! leads group, small business counseling sessions, after hours networking events and the recently created Member to Member Discount Program initially benefit current Chamber members, the Chamber hopes the optimistic marketing of the entire county will allow the local communities and nonmembers to garner their share of the recognition.

The Chamber is a non-profit membership-based organization committed to supporting the importance of a vital and prosperous business community while working to build a healthy economy and improve the quality of life for all Gadsden County citizens. Its day-to-day operations are sustained by current members: other non-profit groups, small and large businesses, individuals and families, places of worship, and some of our local cities and towns. The Chamber has obtained additional support to promote economic development and tourism in Gadsden County through grants because of the dedication of its small staff, board of directors and economic development partners.

For more information or to join, please call (850) 627-9231 or visit their office located at 208 North Adams Street in Quincy. Information is also available online at www.gadsdenfla.com.

Go Gadsden! Leads Group Meetings Continue

The Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to continue offering the Go Gadsden! leads group, a members only benefit. This leads group was created to give Chamber members access to additional opportunities for building more relationships to obtain new business referrals.

Our next two meetings are: February 11 and February 28 at 8:00 a.m. at the Gadsden Historical Society (aka Women's Club) building located at 304 West King Street in Quincy. Go Gadsden! meets every month on the second and fourth Wednesday morning (excluding holidays) from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Every meeting will be at the Gadsden Historical Society building.

Each Go Gadsden! member has the chance to introduce themselves and their business briefly at each meeting and schedule a presentation to promote their products or services to members of the leads group as well as attending guests. Almost every industry category is currently available so sign up today to save your spot!

Short on time or staff to represent your business? You're welcome to attend two Go Gadsden! meetings each year as a guest to have an opportunity to network and bring focus to your organization.

For Go Gadsden! guidelines and participation fees, contact Michelle Burdick at michelleburdick@tds.net or (850) 627-9231.

Go Gadsden! Members

The following members are current participants of the Go Gadsden! leads group. All Chamber members are encouraged to attend the regular meetings to learn about their fellow members as well as join to represent their industry. Members are subject to change.

Go Gadsden!



AIR CONDITIONING & HEAT

Air Control Heating & A/C, Inc.
850-562-1234

INSURANCE: COMMERCIAL

Croley Insurance and Financial Services
850-386-1922

ART & CULTURE

Gadsden Arts Center
850-875-4866

INSURANCE: LIFE-HEALTH

Tucker Life-Health Insurance, Inc.
850-926-2200

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce
850-627-9231

INSURANCE: SUPPLEMENTAL

AFLAC
850-570-1659

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

WORKFORCE *plus*
850-617-4533

MEDIA: RADIO

WGWD 93.3 FM
850-210-3674

FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

Premier Bank
850-627-8330

MEDIA: CHILDREN'S LITERACY

Kidsville News! FL
850-980-0524

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Prudential
850-491-2605

MEDICAL: PRIMARY CARE

Gadsden Medical Center
850-298-6011

Health Plan Organization

Capital Health Plan
850-523-7333

NON-PROFIT: HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

United Way of the Big Bend
850-414-8825

IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION

Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc.
850-528-0454

Identity Theft Awareness Workshop for Business Owners FREE Seminar

Are your dedicated employees putting your customers at risk? Business owners and managers, as well as individuals in the community, are encouraged to attend this free seminar. Not only will participants receive tips on preventing their own

identity from being stolen but business owners will be given refreshers on laws requiring them to protect their customers' private information.

Workshop participants will be informed about how to decrease individual exposure to identity theft and minimize a company's risk of violating federal identity theft legislation. The seminar will also clarify how businesses can avoid becoming recipients of fines up to one million dollars and ten years in jail.

Each workshop has limited space to allow time for a personalized question and answer sessions. Individuals can attend the workshop scheduled for February 18 from 11:00 am to noon. Pre-registration is required by 2 p.m. on February 12. Companies can schedule an in-house seminar at their place of business or at the Chamber. Call (850) 627-9231 or email michelleburdick@tds.net.

Chamber Member Offers Personal Safety Seminar for Teens and Adults

Alpha UPKUDO, located at 1412 Florida Georgia Highway in Havana, has scheduled a personal safety seminar on February 21 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for teens and adults. Participants will learn how to use simple and common sense techniques to defend themselves. Persons with disabilities will benefit greatly from the CANE-DO system of self defense learning how to use a cane, walker, wheelchair or simple items such as pens, shoes and umbrellas. The seminar will include handouts with safety tips to all attendees.

Register by phone at (850) 514-4334 or email masteranne@upkudo.com to reserve your space. The fee is \$10 per person WITH the \$25 coupon downloaded from the internet at www.upkudo.com.

Alpha UPKUDO is a current member of the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce and often sponsors free or low-cost health, fitness and self-defense seminars for children and adults. Grand Master Gary Lee Baker, a world champion fighter and founder of UPKUDO karate will be conducting one such seminar on February 28 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Spectators will be shown the mental and physical aspects of karate and point sparring during this presentation from a true professional. Call (850) 514-4334 or email masteranne@upkudo.com for more information.

CHP Brings Health Program to Quincy



Capital Health Plan, a member of the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce, proudly presents The Savvy Senior, a series of lunch and learn programs for older adults who want to learn more about creating and maintaining health, happy, and active lifestyles. The next meeting is scheduled for noon on February 26 at the Gadsden Historical Society/Women's Club located at 304 West King Street in Quincy. All adults wishing to learn how to create and maintain a healthy lifestyle are encouraged to attend.

Depression and Older Adults is presented by Esaias Lee, MD. Dr. Lee is staff physician at Capital Health Plan. Anna Johnson is one of the most familiar faces in Tallahassee as the former morning host for WCTV's "Good Morning Show."

There is no charge; just bring your lunch. Drinks will be provided.

Please RSVP to (850) 523-7333.

Havana's TeligentEMS Received Coveted Award

Northrop Grumman has named TeligentEMS LLC, a leading small business provider of electronic manufacturing services, as the recipient of the prestigious Northrop Grumman Supplier "2008 World Class Team Award." The award recognized TeligentEMS for excellence in the manufacturing of complex electronic circuit card and mechanical assemblies, which Northrop Grumman uses in a variety of military and non-military applications. TeligentEMS, a current member of the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce, is located in Havana, just north of Tallahassee.

Chris Eldred, the president of TeligentEMS said, "We have always excelled through superb customer service, product quality, competitive pricing and delivery performance. TeligentEMS performs as a partner rather than a supplier. This perseverance and commitment produces continuous and consistent positive results for Northrop Grumman."

Northrop Grumman uses quality, delivery and service criteria accumulated over a twelve-month period to make the determination of which suppliers will be recognized. Eldred added, "We did not know we were being considered for the award until Northrop Grumman officials notified us of their decision." He continued, "I'm proud of what our company has accomplished and gratified that our hard work received recognition."

Eldred and several TeligentEMS officers traveled to Los Angeles to receive the Award in person. Mike Geraci, TeligentEMS's vice president of manufacturing and engineering said,

"Northrop Grumman takes their partnership with small businesses very seriously and this awards program is one of the ways Northrop Grumman recognizes excellence." John Stansberry, the vice president of operations, also noted, "Northrop Grumman fully supports the Supplier recognition process from the top down; corporate and division representatives from every sector were present during the entire two day event."

TeligentEMS was selected for the award by Northrop Grumman from over 16,000 suppliers who provide goods and services to Northrop Grumman. In closing, Eldred said, "This award is one of the highest given in our industry. It is truly an honor for all of the employees of TeligentEMS."

About TeligentEMS

(www.teligentems.com)

TeligentEMS is an ISO9001:2000 and Small Business certified, ITAR registered electronic contract manufacturer offering customers Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) including mechanical, electronic, and system level assembly, emphasizing extensive Radio Frequency as well as Digital and Analog PCBA's for Military, Homeland Security and Commercial customers alike. Services include prototyping, new product introduction, material procurement, supply chain management, circuit card assembly (CCA), in-circuit testing (ICT), flying probe (FPT), functional testing, final system box build, depot repair, order fulfillment services, printed circuit board development and functional test development.

TDS High Speed Connectivity Impacts Gadsden County

It's a positive ripple affect we should all pay attention to in these challenging economic times - broadband Internet. It leads to increased productivity, spurs business development, and provides job growth in the all-important small business segment. For communities like Quincy, focused on stimulating economic growth, having the ability to demonstrate local investment in technical and telecommunications infrastructure is a strong business attraction strategy.



In light of the current economic climate, TDS, a current economic development council member of the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce, is looking to lead the way, helping communities turn the productivity corner with technology investments. A look back at the past 12 months reveals TDS Telecom® has invested locally, as well as nationally, in significant network upgrades and enhancements, exciting new product launches, and growing number of broadband deployments.

In the Quincy area, TDS has invested more than 1.5 million dollars in local infrastructure including:

- More than \$330,000 in fiber-to-the-premise deployments in Quincy;
- New Regional Data Center for all TDS business customers, located in Kingsland, Ga.;
- Fiber optic cable installation from Quincy, Florida to Attapulgus, Georgia which will provide the bandwidth to deliver advanced services to remote areas of Gadsden County and Attapulgus, Georgia.

"We understand the important community benefits broadband connectivity affords our commercial and residential

customers," states Dave Wittwer, president and CEO of TDS Telecommunications Corp. "High speed broadband Internet connections level the business playing field and enable anyone, anywhere to start, grow and evolve a successful and healthy small business. Our top corporate goal at TDS is to empower individuals and businesses with the power of broadband and the limitless capabilities it brings to our valued customers."

Recently, the company started building a multi-million dollar 10Gigabit (10G) Ethernet network connecting its locations in 30 states. The project will provide 222-1000X more bandwidth capacity for customers. The network's impact to businesses in the TDS footprint will be significant according to TDS.

"The 10G network will provide our markets enough bandwidth to last the next 15 years and we'll be able to scale it much larger, as needed. That's an enormous amount of reliable connectivity for customers and a clear broadband-focused roadmap for the future," states Wittwer.

According to TDS, existing technology is also advancing quickly, enabling network engineers to maximize Internet speeds over existing landlines (copper). "Five years ago, TDS could not move Internet traffic over landlines at dynamic speeds of up to 10 mbps, but new technology advances in network electronics at each end of our copper lines are increasing broadband speeds exponentially. We are reaching out further into rural areas; areas we couldn't previously serve without these technology upgrades," states Wittwer.

Currently 90 percent of customers in Gadsden County have access to TDS Broadband.

Nationwide, TDS has about 86 percent of its markets deployed with high speed Internet and is aggressively pursuing opportunities to offer the remaining 14 percent access. "Just like the landline, full rural deployment of broadband should be a national priority and expanding the federal universal service fund to include broadband technologies as a supported service is in the best interest of our customers and the nation," states Frank Holcomb, TDS local Market Manager.

In addition to network and technical investments locally, TDS has actively supported local efforts in 2008 to help build a stronger community through the use of charitable investments and volunteerism. And with the company's recent announcement to roll out a new volunteerism program starting January 1, 2009, TDS full-time employees will be getting involved in the community even more. (The company is offering employees 16 hours per year paid time off to volunteer).

"TDS remains a strong community advocate. It's at the core of our corporate vision and is unwavering. We understand how important it is to support the people who we live, serve and work with each day in this community," added Holcomb. "I'm pleased to report TDS invested more than \$30,000 back into the community this year. Some of the highlights included:

- Sponsoring Gadsden County Schools Teacher of the year and The Superintendents Academic Achievement Awards.
- Donations to the American Cancer Society, March of Dimes and Gadsden Arts

- TDS Annual Bass Fishing Tournament event

As 2008 closed and 2009 quickly builds steam, one thing is certain -- technology will be an important piece of the productivity puzzle that can help solve many of the economic woes of our current economy.

TDS Telecommunications Corp. markets communications services to business and residential customers in 30 states through its brands TDS Telecom® and TDS Metrocom®. With nearly 1.2 million access line equivalents in service, TDS Telecommunications Corp. connects customers to phone, broadband, and digital television service in hundreds of rural, suburban, and small metropolitan communities. TDS Telecommunications Corp. employs approximately 2,700 people and is headquartered in Madison, Wis. Visit www.tdstelecom.com and www.tdsbusiness.com for more information.

TDS Telecommunications Corp. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Telephone and Data Systems™ (NYSE: TDS, TDS.S) headquartered in Chicago. A Fortune 500® company, Telephone and Data Systems' strategic business units, TDS Telecommunications Corp. and United States Cellular (NYSE: USM) operate primarily by providing wireless, local telephone and broadband services. As of June 2008, the TDS™ family of companies employs approximately 11,800 people and serves approximately 7.4 million customers in 36 states. Visit www.teldta.com for more information.

BBB® Foundation Seeks Entries for Annual Awards

Your Better Business Bureau® Foundation of Northwest Florida is currently accepting nominations and entries for the 2009 Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics.

Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics - The Torch Award recognizes businesses and charities that insist on exceptionally high standards of

behavior in dealing with customers, vendors and employees.

To be considered for the 2009 Torch Award, a business or 501 (c)(3) charity must have been in business for at least one year with the same ownership and may not hold an "F" rating with your BBB. **BBB Accreditation is not required to enter**, however, applicants must be physically located within the BBB|northwest Florida's service area.

Customer Service Excellence Award - Your Better Business Bureau® Foundation of Northwest Florida's Customer Service Excellence Award recognizes individuals who go above and beyond in their customer service activities.

Any business within BBB|northwest Florida's service area may nominate employees for the Customer Service Excellence Award by providing specific examples of how the individual has provided excellent customer service



beyond what may be required by his or her job.

Student Ethics Scholarship - A total of nine high school students will be named as BBB Student Ethics Scholarship winners and will receive \$1,000 scholarships for their commitment to ethical behavior and personal integrity. High school juniors and seniors within BBB|northwest Florida's service area may apply for the scholarship.

Local leaders from business and academia will serve as judges and award the scholarships based on criteria including leadership, community service, academic achievement and an essay response on building character.

The application deadline for all awards is **March 27, 2009**. Award recipients will be recognized at a series of luncheons to be held in May.

For entry forms and suggestions for completing an entry or nomination for the awards, please visit www.nwfl.bbb.org/TorchAward or call (850) 429-0002 or (800) 729-9226.

Ramp Reconstruction Work at US 90 in Midway

Beginning Monday, February 2, and ending Friday, February 6, eastbound I-10 traffic exiting at milemarker 192 will not be able to make a direct left turn onto US 90 westbound. C. W. Roberts contracting crews will reconstruct a portion of the eastbound I-10 off-ramp at the US 90 interchange. Westbound US 90 motorists exiting the ramp will travel east and make a safe legal U-turn on US 90.

This work is part of the \$24 million construction contract to resurface I-10 from State Road 267 (SR 267) to west of SR 10 (US90) in Gadsden County. C.W. Roberts Contracting is the prime contractor; work began September 2008.

For more information, contact Tommie Speights, the district public information director at 888-638-0250 ext. or tommie.speights@dot.state.fl.us.