

Advocacy: *Always an ally and voice for business*

At the Dawson County Chamber of Commerce, the mission statement is, "Cultivating a successful economic environment and a desirable quality of life for our businesses and community." At the heart of that mission statement lies one of the biggest Chamber member benefits—an advocate for your business.

"At the Chamber, we are always here to provide a voice and support for our members, whether that is at a local, state or federal level," Chamber President Christie Moore said. "One of our main objectives is to clear the path so you can do what you do best—build and grow your business."

In 2018 and 2019, the Dawson County Chamber Board of Directors took action to avoid or at minimum reduce the potential ramifications that county impact fees could have on the local economy. Chamber President Christie Moore spoke as the voice of business during Dawson County Commission meetings in favor of reducing the impact fees that were reinstated in August of 2018. After many meetings and presentations that included intense research and testimonies from local business owners, the fees were reduced to a rate that more competitively aligns Dawson County impact fees with those in surrounding and similar counties. "Had impact fees remained at the rate originally set, our community would not have been competitive in seeking the high-wage firms and industries we wish to recruit to Dawson County," Moore said. "We are now in a much stronger position to gain employers who can pay desirable wages which in turn improves the quality of life for our community."

The Chamber also works closely with Dawson County's state legislators to ensure laws are not enacted that would impede entrepreneurs and small business success in Georgia. In



A roundtable event hosted by the Dawson County Chamber is just one of the many ways the chamber works to be an advocate and ally for its members.

May, the Chamber hosted a Georgians First Commission Roundtable with Representative Kevin Tanner, Georgians First Executive Director Scott Hilton, local business leaders, and members of the Dahunega-Lumpkin Chamber. The roundtable allowed business owners the opportunity to discuss any issue that might be hurting the success of their business. Business leaders shared about issues ranging from local transportation concerns to tedious forms required by the state to the wage requirements structure in Georgia. The Georgians First Commission is a task force created by Governor Brian Kemp to review state regulations, policies, and procedures to streamline government, remove inefficiencies, and secure Georgia's place as the top state for small business in the country.

The Chamber has also worked closely on Special Purpose Local Option Sales

Tax (SPLOST) and Education-SPLOST campaigns. "We are continually working to decrease the property tax burden on our businesses and citizens. When 85 percent of sales tax dollars comes from people who do not reside in our county, we are ardent supporters of the SPLOST and ESPLOST initiatives as ways to remove undue burdens and provide a higher local quality of life," Moore said.

"While we have always been a voice for our businesses, this year we are working even harder to keep our members in the know on what we are advocating for to support them. We will continue to push for making Dawson County the best place to do business in what is already the number one state for business," Moore said.

For more information on advocacy programs at the Chamber call 706-265-6278.