Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce
Serving All of Beautiful Floyd County
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THE GREATER ROME CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PINNACLE

OUR CHAMBER MISSION: PROMOTE PROSPERITY IN OUR COMMUNITY FOR AND THROUGH BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

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Chamber Members Productive in Washington, D.C.

Members of the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce traveled to Washington, D.C., last month for the Chamber's annual Washington Issues and Opportunities Conference.

The group shared the Chamber's legislative agenda with *U.S. Representative* **Phil Gingrey** and *U.S. Senators* **Saxby Chambliss** and **Johnny Isakson**, focusing much of the dialogue on transportation, education, air quality issues and immigration. Meetings with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Highway Administration and the United States Department of Education were also held.

"It was a very meaningful Issues and Opportunities Conference," said *Chamber Chair* **Evie McNiece** ***(LR, '02)***, ***Accounting Solutions Plus***. "I saw the value of meeting face-to-face with our delegates and their professional staffs. I have seen these trips make a difference in the past and I think this one already is making a difference, thanks to the responsiveness of Congressman Gingrey and Senators Chambliss and Isakson."

Among the successes were commitments from the legislators that they would continue to work toward securing funding for transportation projects in Rome and Floyd County. Transportation-related topics of conversation included the proposed Highway 411 connector to Interstate 75, which was discussed at length during a meeting arranged by Congressman Gingrey with the Federal Highway Admnistration; the long-term southwest portion of the Rome Bypass project; and the aviation and avionics program at ***Richard B. Russell Regional Airport*** funded jointly by ***Floyd County***, the ***State of Georgia*** and ***Coosa Valley Technical College***.

The new aviation and avionics program was applauded for its opportunity to further diversify the economy and provide good jobs for good students who will become tomorrow's workforce.

A large group representing the Chamber attended the 2007 Washington Issues and Opportunities Conference. U.S. Representative Phil Gingrey (front row, center) and U.S. Senators Johnny Isakson and Saxby Chambliss were among the legislators that were presented the Chamber's legislative agenda.

The trip also allowed the Chamber group to meet with representatives of the EPA and discuss the burden placed on the county by PM 2.5, which could potentially impact the construction of the Armuchee Connector, which county voters supported with the passing of last November's Special Purpose, Local Option Sales Tax. The Chamber group contends that PM 2.5 is based on potentially flawed data that poses an unfair burden on the community, and that waiting on the construction of the Armuchee Connector would cause more traffic and pollution than its construction.

In a conference call between local officials, the EPA and the Federal Highway Administration the following week, the county was given the go-ahead to carry on with the project without being forced to conduct drawn out environmental reviews that could take as long as 18 months because the connector will be paid for with funds collected from the SPLOST.

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