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The contents of this publication are presented for informational purposes only and should not be considered in any way legal or professional assistance. We encourage you to seek the advice and council of a licensed professional when dealing with legal and financial matters.

While care has been taken to provide accurate, up-to-date information, the information presented has been collected from numerous sources, is subject to errors and changes, and should be further researched for updates and accuracy.

WHO IS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

- Someone who organizes and maintains a business venture
- Someone who takes on the risk and does what he/she wants
- in order to make a profit
- Someone who can coordinate the resources available to meet a need.

How can you become an entrepreneur?

How can you start your own business?

The Community Entrepreneur Development Committee along with the Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce has designed this booklet to simplify transition into the role of an entrepreneur.

Starting a Business in Cordele – Crisp County will make establishing your own business easier by giving you 'one-stop shopping' for the information you will need. We believe that begins with you. By giving you the proper tools, we can help build a strong economic foundation. We hope this booklet will be of assistance.

In order to receive the maximum benefits of the information contained in this booklet, we suggest you treat it as you would a workbook. Start at the beginning and work through to the end, making notes along the way

IS ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR YOU?

There is no way to eliminate all the risks associated with starting a small business. You can improve your chances of success with good planning and preparation. A good starting place is to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses as the owner and manager of a small business. Carefully consider each of the following questions.

Are you a self-starter? It will be up to you – not someone else telling you to develop projects, organize your time and follow through on details.

How well do you get along with different personalities? Business owners need to develop working relationships with a variety of people including customers, vendors, staff, bankers and professionals such as attorneys, accountants or consultants. Can you deal with a demanding client, an unreliable vendor or cranky staff person in the best interest of your business?

How good are you at making decisions? Small business owners are required to make decisions constantly, often quickly, under pressure and independently.

Do you have the physical and emotional stamina to run a business? Business ownership can be challenging, fun and exciting, but it is also a lot of work. Can you face 12-hour days, six or seven days a week?

How well do you plan and organize? Research indicates that many business failures could have been avoided through better planning. Good organization of financials, inventory, schedules and production can help avoid many pitfalls.

Is your drive strong enough to maintain your motivation? Running a business can wear you down. Some business owners feel burned out by having to carry all the responsibility on their shoulders. Strong motivation can make the business succeed and will help you survive slowdowns as well as periods of burnout.

How will the business affect your family? The first few years of business startup can be hard on family life. The strain of an unsupportive spouse may be hard to balance against the demands of a business. There also may be financial difficulties until the business becomes profitable, which could take months or years. You may have to adjust to a lower standard of living or put family assets at risk.

Self-Biz Quiz

**Are you the type of person who should open his or her own business?
Take this short quiz and see how your score adds up.**

MOTIVATION	Disagree	Strongly Agree
I constantly see business opportunities or ideas with potential commercial value.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I like growing or building businesses or taking ideas and making something of them.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I regularly come up with new ideas on doing things better or more efficiently.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am able to find solutions to challenges and problems.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am able to find the help, assistance and resources I need to be successful.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am a dynamic person providing vision, hope and energy to those with whom I work and partner.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am a hardworking person. I do what it takes to succeed.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am able to adapt to changes and surprises quickly and successfully.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am able to successfully manage risk associated with creating and growing a business.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I thrive on learning. I am constantly seeking new information that can help me with my business.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am motivated by success and driven to do well.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I believe in working with others who can help me make my dream a reality.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CAPACITY RELATED TO BUSINESS SKILLS

Consider yourself and other members of your management team

Ability to assess market opportunities	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Ability to develop products for services	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Ability to provide products or services	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Marketing and communications capacity	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Fiscal management	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Ability to acquire financial capital	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Personnel or team development management	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Ability to develop and sustain partnerships	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Quality control	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CAPACITY TO NETWORK AND PARTNER

I am comfortable seeking information from others	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I regularly network to gain information for my business.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I have an extensive resource network I am constantly building.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am comfortable with partnerships	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I have two or more partnerships associated with my business.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I have learned how to deal with the challenges of collaborating.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SUPPORT FROM FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

I am challenged and happy in my work building a business	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
There is good balance between my work and personal life	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Family and friends are supportive and encourage me.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My community is supportive of me and my undertaking	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
My community is actively helping me build my business.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SCORING

0-25 points	Low Potential
26-50 points	Some Potential
51-75 points	Moderate Potential
76-100 points	High Potential

Questions	Total Points		Value Factor		Points
1-2		X	1.0	=	
3-12		X	0.25	=	
13-21		X	0.25	=	
22-27		X	0.25	=	
28-32		X	0.25	=	
Total Points					

SOURCE: Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

For information on starting your own business, contact:

Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce
502 South 2nd Street
Cordele, GA 31015
229-273-1668; Fax: 229-273-5132
E-mail: info@visitcordele.com
Website: www.visitcordele.com

ONE YEAR CHECKLIST FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Starting your own business is not something to be rushed into. Careful, advanced planning can ensure the success of your venture. Below is a suggested one-year plan.

ONE YEAR BEFORE START-UP

- Refine your ideas in writing. Determine exactly where you want to go.
- Decide what business you want to start. Be specific in your business definition.
- Assess the impact on your family and personal life. How will this affect your relationships? Will your family support the use of finances and time?
- Begin research. You must determine if there is a need for your product. This research can be performed by students, professionals or on your own.
- Build your skills by taking management/business courses. Contact Georgia Southwestern State University, South Georgia Technical College and/or Albany State University – Cordele Campus about continuing education classes.
- Contact the Center for Business and Economic Development (CBED) at GSW for assistance in writing a business plan.
- Contact Georgia Department of Labor for information on educational seminars on labor/safety issues.
- The Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce is notified of statewide continuing education courses, contact the Chamber for more information.

SIX MONTHS BEFORE START-UP

- Determine the focus of your business. What do you want to specialize in? It is easier to excel in one area than in many.
- Start writing your business plan.
- Define your target markets. Who is your intended clientele? Who should you aim your advertising towards?
- Research business and trade organizations. Most areas of business have agencies and organizations set up to facilitate business. Take advantage of what these groups have to offer.
- Seek the best location for your business. Do you need little or lots of space? Would your business be better suited downtown or in rural part of the county? Is a storefront location even needed or can you work from your home? Location can make or break a business. Conduct the search on your own or contact a real estate agent.
- Check to see if there is an incubator available for your business by calling the Cordele-Crisp Chamber

FOUR MONTHS BEFORE START-UP

- Name your business. Be careful in deciding on a name and be aware that someone may already be using the name. Have a few back-up ideas. You can check to see if a name is being used by contacting the Georgia Secretary of State's office at www.sos.state.ga.us
- Select a business location. After seeking out several possible locations, now is the time to choose one. Make sure the location you choose is within your budget.
- Select outside advisors. This will be a very hectic time. It will be beneficial to have people upon whom you can call to listen to your ideas, problems, and plans. These people will provide you with guidance, constructive criticism, and feedback. They should be people experienced and knowledgeable in business.
- Form a Network of mentors. Select people who can help you by giving you insight and ideas.
- Choose your business' legal form. Will you be a partnership, sole proprietorship, limited-liability company, or corporation? Legal form should be chosen very carefully as it can affect your business in many ways.
- Set up bookkeeping, accounting and office systems. How are you going to operate your office? If you are going to keep your own books, then you need to learn or refresh your skills. Are you going to hire a bookkeeper/bookkeeping firm?
- Seek outside demographic information. Gather secondary information.
- Work on your business plan.

THREE MONTHS BEFORE START-UP

- ❑ Determine your cash needs. How much money do you need to start up? What will be your monthly variable and fixed costs? What is your break-even point? These are all questions that must be answered. You must estimate your cash flow.
- ❑ Review preliminary financial objectives. How much profit do you expect to make? Are you planning to make investments? What is your intended cash flow?
- ❑ Decide on your pricing strategy. After determining your variable and fixed costs, decide what your markup rate will be. You will also need to consider demand and competitive factors in setting your price.
- ❑ Forecast sales. Contact the CBED or others in your field to help you forecast accurately.
- ❑ Determine your company's employee needs. How many people do you need on your staff? This is important to decide as it affects your requirements for insurance, etc.
- ❑ Project your cash flow. Write out an estimated statement of revenues and expenditures. This statement should cover one calendar year. Also, project your net cash flow for the entire year.
- ❑ Work on your business plan.

TWO MONTHS BEFORE START-UP

- ❑ Prepare your marketing plan. How are you going to market your product? Are you going to use publicity? Are you going to use paid advertisement? You must decide how you will go about introducing your business to the public.
- ❑ Get your business license. (see Occupational Tax)
- ❑ Apply for necessary Tax Numbers: Federal and State
- ❑ Review non-financial objectives (image, legal questions). How do you want the public to see your business? Are you a family establishment or geared more toward adults? What form is your business taking? Do you have all legal documents needed?
- ❑ Prepare a preliminary balance sheet. Contact SBDC for assistance.
- ❑ Secure necessary financing. Whether through a private lender or through other resources, you must obtain the necessary amount of start-up capital.
- ❑ Secure insurance coverage if applicable. (See Labor/Safety).
- ❑ Determine advertising, promotion and public relations strategies.
- ❑ Order opening inventories. Talk to your suppliers for estimated opening needs.
- ❑ Complete improvements to your facility.
- ❑ Start the hiring process (see Labor/Safety).
- ❑ Refine your business plan.

ONE MONTH BEFORE START-UP

- ❑ Fine-tune your cash flow budget.
- ❑ Prepare for your grand opening. The Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce can be of assistance in planning your event. Be creative and practical.
- ❑ Set up your office, display areas, etc. Have everything exactly as you want it. The last few days before opening are not the time to do this. The look of your store or office sets the tone for your business. You should put thought and time into it.
- ❑ Review your final checklist.
- ❑ Hire your staff (see Labor/Safety)
- ❑ Make sure everything works. It is better to find out that your equipment does not work in advance. In that case, you can make any necessary repairs and be ready to open the doors on time.
- ❑ Implement marketing, promotion and opening plans. This will be a good time to start advertising in local newspapers, radio and television if your budget permits. Remember: word of mouth is your most powerful publicity! It is also the least expensive. Spread the Word.
- ❑ Create social media pages necessary for your business category

START-UP AND AFTER

- ❑ **BUDGET** your time. As a new business owner, your time will be precious. Schedule your time wisely. It is important to get the maximum out of time you have available. You must consider reading some time management materials or speaking with someone who you think manages time wisely.

- ❑ CONTINUOUSLY update your product/service. What is good about your product? Make it better. What doesn't work with your product? Eliminate the problem as much as possible. If people patronize your business for the original product, an improved product can only increase that.
- ❑ LISTEN to your customers, advisors and vendors. The customers are your cash flow. It is important to gather their opinions and put them to use. Their ideas can be helpful in updating your product. LISTEN to your advisors, you asked them to advise you for a reason. Let them guide you. LISTEN to your vendors. They have been in business much longer than you have. They can possibly provide you with money saving or moneymaking ideas.
- ❑ CHECK cash flow budget against actual performance.
- ❑ MAINTAIN good communications with your bankers and vendors. By keeping the lines of communication open, you are helping yourself. Should you need their help in the future, you are more likely to receive it.
- ❑ CONTINUE to improve the 5 Cs of credit – character, collateral, capacity, capital and condition.
- ❑ WORK with investors. Make sure you are in contact with them. Make sure that you understand the conditions of your repayment. When are payments due? Make sure you fulfill all obligations to investors. You may need to call them again someday.
- ❑ CHECK cost of living budget. If you are drawing money from the company for living expenses, be sure to take only what is necessary. Stick tightly to your budget.
- ❑ CONSIDER delaying your official grand opening/ribbon cutting until you have been in business for a couple of weeks. If you do, you can make sure you have worked all the 'bugs' out and everything is running smoothly.

BUSINESS PLAN

A business plan precisely defines your business, identifies your goals and serves as your firm's resume. The basic components include a current and pro forma balance sheet, an income statement and a cash flow analysis. It helps you allocate resources properly, handle unforeseen complications and make good business decisions. Because it provides specific and organized information about your company and how you will repay borrowed money, a good business plan is a crucial part of any loan application. Additionally, it informs sales personnel, suppliers, and others about your operations and goals.

The following outline of a typical business plan can serve as a guide. You can adapt it to your specific business. Breaking down the plan into several components, helps make drafting it a more manageable task.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ❑ Most important section of business plan
- ❑ Mission Statement
- ❑ Target market and market analysis

INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Give a detailed description of the business and its goals.
- ❑ Discuss the ownership of the business and the legal structure.
- ❑ List the skills and experience you bring to the business.
- ❑ Discuss the advantages you and your business have over your competitors.

MARKETING

- ❑ Discuss the products/services offered.
- ❑ Identify the customer demand for your product/service.
- ❑ Identify your market, its size and locations.
- ❑ Explain how your product/service will be advertised and marketed.
- ❑ Explain the pricing strategy.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- ❑ Explain your source and the amount of initial equity capital.
- ❑ Develop a monthly operating budget for the first year.
- ❑ Develop an expected return on investment and monthly cash flow for the first year.
- ❑ Provide projected income statements and balance sheets for a two-year period.
- ❑ Discuss your breakeven point.

- ❑ Explain your personal balance sheet and method of compensation.
- ❑ Discuss who will maintain your accounting records and how they will be kept.
- ❑ Provide 'what if' statements that address alternative approaches to any problem that may develop.

OPERATIONS

- ❑ Explain how the business will be managed on a day-to-day basis.
- ❑ Discuss hiring and personnel procedures.
- ❑ Discuss insurance, lease or rent agreements and issues pertinent to your business.
- ❑ Account for the equipment necessary to produce your products or services.
- ❑ Account for production and delivery of products and services.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

- ❑ Summarize your business goals and objectives and express your commitment to the success of your business.
- ❑ Once you have completed your business plan, review it with a friend or business partner.
- ❑ When you feel comfortable with the content and structure, make an appointment to review and discuss it with your lender. The business plan is a flexible document that should change as your business grows.

SOURCE: www.sba.gov

FEASIBILITY AND MARKETING STRATEGY

Is Your Business Idea Feasible?

Answer the following questions regarding your idea. Give complete, well thought out answers. If you are unsure about or answer no to any of the following questions, then you would rethink your idea.

- ❑ What type of business do you plan to start?
- ❑ What kind of product do you plan to offer?
- ❑ Will your product satisfy a need yet unfilled?
- ❑ Will your product have a competitive edge based on price, location, quality, or selection?

Researching Your Markets

It is recommended that you research your potential market demand for your product or service. First, determine what questions you need answered. The following are ideas on where to find the information you need.

Primary Data:

- ❑ Your experience.
- ❑ Experiences of people you know.
- ❑ Survey potential customers to determine their wants/needs. Observe similar businesses.
- ❑ Interview business owners.
- ❑ Interview suppliers, vendors, and bankers.

Secondary Data:

- ❑ Visit your public library.
- ❑ Contact trade associations (trade shows and trade journals).
- ❑ Contact Georgia Southwestern School of Business, South Georgia Technical College, Albany State University, the Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce, or Small Business Development Center. See the Resource Directory for contact information.
- ❑ Use various search engines on the Internet (Yahoo, Lycos, Alta Vista, Google, etc.).

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

In order to properly market your product, you need to answer the following questions. This information can be used to help you develop your marketing plan. Contact the Center for Business and Economic Development at GSW for more information on constructing this plan.

Questions to ask and define.

- Who are my customers? This determines your target market.
- Where are they?
- How many are there? This indicates your market size.
- What are their needs?
- Who are your competitors?
- How does my competition do it? One method of marketing/dealing with competition is the end-run strategy. In this strategy, you adopt your competitors' strategy with the intention of making it better.
- How can I reach them? The distribution of your product is very important. Where your product is located can affect how well it sells.
- How much will they pay? The pricing of your product is also very important. You must take into consideration what your competitors charge.
- What are the market trends? What are people buying? It is important to be aware of market trends. This relates back to knowing your customers' needs. Try to distinguish between trends and fads.
- What are the technological trends? One obvious answer to this question is the Internet. Will you be using technology? How can it be used to help your business? Do you need to advertise on the Internet? Do you need a network of computers for your business? If you are in a business related to technology, it is imperative that you stay abreast of any changes.

Determining Cash Needed to Start A Business

	Estimate of monthly expenses based on projected sales of \$ _____ per year.	Estimate of cash needs to start (col. 1 x non profit months)
Monthly Expenses		
Salary of owner/manager	_____	_____
All other salaries/wages	_____	_____
Rent (building/equipment)	_____	_____
Advertising	_____	_____
Office Expenses	_____	_____
Supplies	_____	_____
Telephone and fax	_____	_____
Other utilities	_____	_____
Insurance	_____	_____
Taxes, including Social Security	_____	_____
Maintenance/Repairs	_____	_____
Legal/Professional Fees	_____	_____
Loan Payments	_____	_____
Miscellaneous	_____	_____
SUBTOTAL:	_____	_____

One Time Start-Up Costs

Fixtures and equipment (get estimates from suppliers)	_____
Decorating and remodeling (get estimates from contractors)	_____
Installation of fixtures/equipment (get estimates from suppliers)	_____
Starting inventory (vendors can advise as to amounts and costs)	_____
Deposit of utilities (contact providers for estimates)	_____
Legal/professional fees (get estimates from attorney/CPA, etc.)	_____
Licenses & permits (contact government offices for amounts)	_____
Advertising and promotions for opening (get estimates from media)	_____
Other (make additional list if necessary)	_____

TOTAL ESTIMATE OF CASH NEEDED FOR START-UP _____

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A variety of free demographic information is available on the Internet or through the local Chamber of Commerce office. This information breaks down population by different categories, such as age, sex, race, income and education. It can be used to identify the number of people who may use your business or services.

Contact the Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce for assistance in gathering appropriate demographic information as follows:

Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce
502 South 2nd Street / P.O. Box 158 Cordele, GA 31010
229-273-1668

PROCUREMENT

DOING BUSINESS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Through the Governor’s Small Business Center, learn how to become a registered vendor with the State of Georgia and its many agencies. Visit the Governor’s Small Business Center website for more information.

Another good source for information is the Department of Administrative Services, www.doas.state.ga.us.

The local regional office of Georgia Tech’s Procurement Assistance Center can also be helpful in this area. They may be contacted at:

GTPAC
151 Osigian Blvd. Suite 157 Warner Robins, GA 31088
478-953-1460

LEGAL ASPECTS OF STARTING A BUSINESS

Deciding what form of legal entity your business will take is an important decision. This will have an impact on the future of your business including your protection under the law, and the rules and regulations (for example: federal and state taxes) that will apply to you.

It is recommended that before you enter into any of these four forms of business, that you contact an attorney, CPA or other qualified individuals. Speaking with someone informed about the legal entities of business will reduce the risk of mistakes in the business setup. You can probably do the necessary paperwork and procedures yourself, but it makes sense to leave it up to the professionals. Also, contact the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at 229-420-1144 for more information.

THERE ARE FOUR BASIC FORMS THAT A NEW BUSINESS CAN TAKE:

- ❑ Sole proprietorship
- ❑ Partnership (General or Limited)
- ❑ Corporation (C or S)
- ❑ Limited Liability Company

A **sole proprietorship** is usually owned and operated by one person. Under the law, it is not actually considered a legal entity. It is, instead, considered an extension of the person who owns the business. This individual has sole ownership of assets, but is also solely liable for the debts of the business.

A **partnership** can be formed in two ways. A general partnership is comprised of two or more individuals who join to start a business. Each person has proportional ownership of the business assets and proportional liability for business debts. Each person also has authority in running this business. A partnership agreement can be drawn up to alter each person's particular liability. However, despite this document, creditors may collect from each member of the partnership (this may include personal assets).

A **limited partnership** is made up of one or more general partners as well as one or more limited partners. Limited partners contribute capital and share in profits/losses. These limited partners, however, take no part in the running of the business and are not held liable for the organization's debts.

Whether taking part in a general or limited partnership, it is advisable that you draw up a partnership agreement. This document will detail each partner's rights and responsibilities. Partnerships are required to file both federal and state income tax. While the partnership is not typically taxed, each partner reflects charges for the partnership on his/her personal tax returns.

A **corporation** is an entity, which must be approved by the state of Georgia through the Office of the Secretary of State. A corporation must file federal, state and local taxes on its operations. One advantage to a corporation is the protection from liability afforded to shareholders. However, when an organization is small, creditors may require personal guarantees of predominate owners. Another advantage to the corporation is the ease of raising capital through the sale of common or preferred stock. A disadvantage of the corporation is that the organization's income will essentially be taxed twice (once for the business and again on the shareholders personal income tax after collecting dividends). There are two types of corporations: C and S.

The C corporations have their own tax identification numbers and pay their own taxes. The S corporation is the opposite. It is not taxed as if it is a corporation at all. Instead, it is taxed similarly to a partnership. Its gains and losses are reflected on the personal income tax of the shareholder. The S corporation does not provide protection from liability to its shareholders. (The distinctions between C and S corporations can be complicated. It is very important that you consult with someone who is knowledgeable on the subject before making a decision.)

In order to incorporate your business, contact the Office of the Secretary of State. You will then reserve your corporation name. The incorporation process must be completed within 90 days. The Office of the Secretary of State will instruct you in the completion of all documents needed. You will be required to pay an incorporation fee each year by April 1.

Office of the Secretary of State

www.sos.state.ga.us

2 Martin Luther King Drive
Suite 820, Floyd West Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334
470-312-2676

238 E. Second St.
Tifton, GA 31794
229-391-3732

This incorporation process includes publishing your intent to incorporate in the local newspaper's legal publication. Newspapers do charge for this service. The legal organ for Crisp County is the Cordele Dispatch. To publish your intent to incorporate contact:

The Cordele Dispatch
P. O. Box 1058 Cordele, GA 31010
229-273-2277

An attorney can usually perform the necessary procedures for you for several hundred dollars. How much it will cost depends on the attorney and your business.

The **limited liability company (LLC)** is one owned by two or more persons known as members. It is a mixture of other forms of organizations. This form combines some of the partnership corporation and S corporation's best features. Similarly, to a corporation, you must reserve a name and file the articles of incorporation. You and your fellow members should write an operation agreement to control the conduct of the business.

An LLC shields the personal assets of members as if they were shareholders in a corporation. It also eliminates double taxation. Because an LLC is a somewhat new organizational form, it is unclear how the partnership tax rules will apply. You may not be able to conduct interstate trade as an LLC. Many state and foreign governments have not yet approved this form. In addition, an LLC may not have a perpetual life. While this form of organization is gaining popularity, you must take great care in the establishment of an LLC to insure pass-through tax treatment.

LICENSING AND PERMIT INFORMATION

If you plan to operate a business in the state of Georgia, you must obtain a city or county business license. You should discuss the details of your situation with the licensing department. The fee for a license is contingent on the location, type and size of your business. The cost of a business license in the city of Cordele or Crisp County is completely dependent on what business you will be in and where your business will be located.

If your business will be located within the Cordele city limits

City of Cordele | City Hall | City Clerk
501 N. 7th Street Cordele, GA 31015
229-273-3102

If your business will be located outside any city limits

Crisp County Government | Crisp County Courthouse | Accounting Department
510 7th Street N Cordele, GA 31015
229-271-4726

If your business will be located within any other municipality in Crisp County

City of Arabi Arabi City Hall
4190 Bedgood Avenue Arabi, GA 31712
229-273-5096

ZONING

Once you have chosen a tentative location for your business, contact the Community Development Department of the City of Cordele or the Planning and Zoning Department for Crisp County to determine the permitted uses of that location. There might be special restrictions on that area. **DO NOT INVEST ANY MONEY IN A LOCATION UNTIL ZONING HAS BEEN THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED!**

The Cordele Community Development Department can help with determining if your location and type of business are in compliance with ordinances with in the City of Cordele. You will be required to submit your

business plans to the zoning office to determine if the business complies/can be adapted to comply with the following:

- ❑ Current zoning classification
- ❑ Building setbacks
- ❑ Off-street parking availability and service entrance requirements
- ❑ Buffer yards or required screening
- ❑ Lot area minimum
- ❑ Sign regulations

****Sign permits in the City of Cordele are required for erecting and placing any mounted or freestanding signs. Applications are filed through the zoning office. For specific information about signage, call the Community Development office at 229-273-3102

If your plans do not/cannot meet these specifications, you can discuss options with the Community Development office. If you find the current zoning, classification of your potential location does not allow for your business, you may file for rezoning. In order to file this appeal, contact the City of Cordele Community Development office.

Assistance can also be obtained for businesses in Crisp County from the following Planning and Codes office:

Crisp County Courthouse Zoning and Codes
210 S. 7th Street Room 303 Cordele, GA 31015
229-276-2640

Information on planning and zoning in the city of Arabi can be obtained by calling the City Hall in Arabi at 229-273-5096

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATIONS/OCCUPANCY

A building permit must be obtained for both new construction and renovations or additions to existing buildings. Before you may construct a new facility or renovate an existing one, you must have this permit. Once you have obtained a building permit, complied with the regulations pertaining to the area you are in, and construction is complete, your facility will be inspected. You will then apply for a Certificate of Occupancy. Without this certificate, it is illegal for your business to reside in the facility.

City of Cordele
Community Development
510 N. 7th Street
Cordele, GA 31015
229-273-3102 x 615

Crisp County
Building Inspection
210 S. 7th Street
Cordele, GA 31015
229-276-2640

For information on Building Construction in the city of Arabi, call Arabi City Hall at 229-273-5096

HEALTH PERMITS

If your business is to involve food processing, handling, storage, or distribution, you must obtain permits from the Crisp County Health Department, which handles the permits for the entire county and city. If you are unsure if your business needs a permit, contact the Health Department.

Crisp County Health Department
111 E. 24th Avenue
Cordele, GA 31015
229-276-2680

TRADE NAME REGISTRATION

In the State of Georgia, every person, firm or partnership that conducts business has two options regarding trade name registration: 1) The business name must include the last name of the individual owner of the business. 2) If using a fictitious name (one not including the last name of the individual owner), the fictitious name must be registered in the office of the clerk of the Superior Court of the county where the business is located. A corporation or limited liability company will not need to file this registration, as it will already be registered with the office of the Secretary of State. The fee for trade name registration is approximately \$10.

The Clerk's office will provide any paperwork that needs to be completed. Similar to publishing your intent to incorporate a business, you must publish a notice of your trade name registration in the legal organ of the county in which you will operate. You must also file the required affidavit. Notice of the filing of the trade name registration must be published once a week for two weeks in the legal section of the publication. The cost is approximately \$40. In order to run your legal advertisement, contact:

The Cordele Dispatch

P.O. Box 1058 Cordele, GA 31010
229-273-2277

Failure to register a trade name will not nullify contracts signed by the unregistered entity. The court, however, is authorized to assess court costs against the parties who have failed to register the trade name or partnership name at the time an action is filed. Thus, the trade name registration prevents a company from having to pay all court costs in an action by or against a company. If you have a question as to whether your business needs to register a trade name, contact the Clerk's office.

To file your trade name registration, contact:

Superior Court Clerk Crisp County Courthouse
510 7th Street N Cordele, GA 31015
229-271-4726

FEDERAL/STATE LICENSING

Most new small businesses most likely will not require any type of federal licensing to conduct business, unless you will be engaged in one of the following activities:

- Rendering investment advice
- Making alcohol products
- Making tobacco products
- Preparing meat products
- Making or dealing in firearms

For information on federal licensing for communications, transportation, or pharmaceutical businesses, contact:

U.S. Dept. of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms

2600 Century Parkway Suite 300 Atlanta, GA 30345
404-417-2600

U.S. Federal Drug Administration

75 Spring St SW Atlanta, GA 30309
404-893-7000

U.S. Federal Communications Commission

3575 Koger Blvd. Duluth, GA 30096
888-225-5322

Contact the Secretary of State's office for a listing of all occupations that require state licensing. For information, contact:

GA Secretary of State

Licensing Boards Division
237 Coliseum Drive Macon, Georgia 31217-3858
Local (478) 207-2440

The Office of Secretary of State offers a timesaving booklet entitled *Consolidated Registration Information for Businesses*. This booklet is more familiarly known as the BLUE BOOK. This packet includes request forms for governmental departments and agencies that will be instrumental in starting your business. In addition, this book contains important phone numbers, addresses and Internet addresses of offices and departments essential to your business.

State Tax Information

Sales & Use Taxes

Every business that sells tangible personal property, such as merchandise, to customers is required to obtain a seller's permit. This is issued from the state sales tax agency. (There are some businesses, however, that are exempt from this requirement.) Typically, a separate permit must be obtained for every business in which property subject to sales tax is sold. If selling to a retailer, wholesalers and manufacturers usually do not have to collect sales tax on the goods they sell. This, however, is contingent on whether the retailer has a valid seller's permit and can provide you with a "resale certificate".

Similarly, retailers are not required to pay sales tax on items you purchase for resale. You may purchase blank resale certificates at office supply stores. If state law requires that your business collect sales and use tax, you must keep detailed records of your gross receipts from sales/rentals. These records must include all sales/rentals whether or not you believe them to be taxable. Your records must also include evidence of all deductions you claim on sales/use tax returns. In addition, you must record the total purchase price of all tangible personal property acquired for sale, lease or consumption.

Sales tax forms must be filed monthly. The taxes must also be paid on a monthly basis. You can contact the Georgia Department of Revenue to petition for special permission for pay/file quarterly. Contact:

GA Department of Revenue

1105-D W. Broad Ave. Albany, GA 31707
229-430-4241

State Excise Taxes

In addition to federal excise tax, you may be responsible for collecting state excise tax as well. The categories are comparable to the federal categories. Alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, motor carriers and trucks with more than two axles are included in the taxed categories. You should contact the GA Department of Revenue for complete information.

GA Department of Revenue

1105-D W. Broad Ave. Albany, GA 31707
229-430-4241

Estimated State Income Taxes

The State of Georgia also requires that you pay estimated state income taxes. The payment dates for estimated state tax are the same as those for federal payments (see Section K. Federal Income Taxes above). The form 500ES should be completed for sole proprietorships or partnerships. A 9% per year penalty can be imposed for failure to file an estimated return or failure to pay the correct amount of tax.

FEDERAL TAX INFORMATION

Federal Excise Taxes

There are some forms of business on which the U.S. Government requires additional taxation. This will be a tax that you are responsible for collecting. This tax does not come out of your pocket. Typically, it is added to the sale price of your product or service. Form 720. Quarterly Federal Excise Tax Return is used to file most federal excise taxes. Federal excise taxes can be broken into nine general categories of products and services.

They are:

- Motor vehicle use tax (vehicles greater than 55,000 lbs. gross weight)
- Retailers tax (certain types of fuels)
- Retail excise tax on the sales of the following: heavy trucks/trailers, tires and tubes, recreation equipment (e.g. fishing/hunting supplies), firearms and ammunition
- Air transportation tax (if you are transporting people by air, you have to collect this tax)
- Communications taxes (e.g. on telephone or teletype services)
- Wagering taxes
- Taxes on U.S mined coal
- Environmental taxes (imposed on petroleum products, various chemicals and hazardous wastes)
- Alcohol, firearms, ammunition and tobacco taxes

Be sure to contact the IRS for complete information on federal excise taxes.

Internal Revenue Service

**235 Roosevelt Ave. Albany, GA 30701
229-430-8401**

Federal Income Taxes

The amount and way you will pay federal income taxes will be dependent on the legal form in which your business is organized.

For a sole proprietor or a member of a partnership:

In either of these arrangements, you will be required to make estimated federal income tax payments and federal self-employment tax payments in advance. These individual payments are due in four installments. These payment deadlines are April 15, June 15, September 15 and January 15 for one whose tax year is the calendar year. Any amount left unpaid will be due April 15 of the following year. The form 1040-ES is used to file these taxes. Ninety percent of your estimated tax must be paid during the course of the year.

For a corporation

The corporation is responsible for paying estimated corporate taxes if it has taxable income. These taxes can be due as soon as the fourth month of the corporation's first tax year. The proper form for filing these taxes is the Form 1120W. You must deposit these payments in a bank licensed to accept federal tax payments. The corporation will be issued a coupon book. These coupons will carry the corporation's tax ID number and are to be used with all federal tax payment deposits.

All forms necessary to file any of the estimated taxes mentioned above are available at your local IRS office. A coupon book will be mailed to you upon receipt of your Form SS-4 (the form filed requesting a tax ID number).

Internal Revenue Service

**6055 Lakeside Commons Dr. Suite 220 Macon, GA 31210
478-471-3500**

Employer Taxes

There are taxes that as an employer you are responsible for both withholding from employee wages as well as paying yourself. For more complete information on employer taxes, see Labor and Safety Regulation Information in Section IV.

Federal Tax Identification Numbers

Your federal tax identification number is the number used to file your taxes. It acts in a similar capacity to your social security on your personal income taxes. In fact, if you are a sole proprietorship you will probably use your social security number. In partnerships and corporations, you will need a Federal Tax ID number. To determine whether you need a Tax ID number, contact the Internal Revenue Service. There is a form in the BLUE BOOK that you may fill out and mail in for more information.

Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc.

Southwest GA United Empowerment Zone, Inc., (Southwest GA United) is a not-for-profit U.S. Treasury Certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) serving the State of Georgia. Southwest GA United began in 1994 through the federal Empowerment Zone program, with a mission of reducing poverty and improving the quality of life in rural Georgia. USDA recognized it for operating one of the most successful rural Empowerment Zones in the nation. While it is still a very small financial institution, its assets have grown from less than \$250,000 in 1999 to more than \$8.4 million. It now serves urban locations while continuing services to rural communities.

By stressing both opportunity for all residents and the common community heritage as the links that bind the past with the future, Southwest GA United helps individuals, organizations, and communities set the stage for sustainable growth and development while protecting the natural, cultural and historic character of the area.

Southwest GA United currently provides several financial products throughout the State of Georgia, including a Micro Loan Program, a Business Loan Program, and the State Small Business Credit Initiative. Demand for the loan products continues to grow.

Southwest GA United provides gap financing in combination with community and national banks to help them serve their customers. As a federally recognized CDFI, Southwest GA United can provide flexible loan interest rates, terms, and conditions and take subordinated collateral positions. This flexibility can help banks and their customers complete project financing. In addition to its gap financing, Southwest GA United's Micro Loan and Business Loan Programs can provide direct loans for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Utilities

Establishing Water, Sewer and Garbage Service

To establish water, sewer and garbage service in an existing location within the city limits of Cordele, you must contact Cordele City Hall. You will be required to sign a service contract and pay a deposit. This deposit is refundable at the closing of your final bill. The amount of your deposit is dependent on the size of your business and its estimated water use. To sign up, you must present a copy of your lease agreement or closing statement and driver's license or valid GA ID with Social Security number.

To establish service within the City of Cordele, contact:

City of Cordele	Advanced Disposal
501 N. 7th Street	809 E. 11th Avenue
Cordele, GA 31015	Cordele, GA 31015
Gas/Water/Sewage/: 229-273-3102	229-273-4536

To establish water/sewage in Crisp County, contact:

Crisp County Water Department
501 7th Street N Cordele, GA 31015
229-276-2620

Establishing Electrical Service

Cordele and Crisp County has one power service, the Crisp County Power Commission. To establish service, you will need to provide the service address, name of person responsible for bill payment and the name of your company. A deposit will be assessed for each business that begins service. The deposit amount for a business (unlike a residential deposit) varies from business to business and can run into hundreds of dollars.

Crisp County Power Commission
202 S. 7th Street Cordele, GA 31015
229-273-3811

Establishing Telephone Services

There are several telephone companies to services businesses in Cordele and Crisp County. These telephone services include AT&T, Access and Mediacom. To establish service with the proper company, physical address will be needed. An order for service will be taken and a credit evaluation will be made. A deposit may be assessed y any of the companies. Whether establishing service in a new or existing facility, a small business service representative should be consulted.

AT&T
844-723-0252

Mediacom
855-633-4226

Labor and Safety Regulation Information

Educate Yourself on Labor/Safety Issues

The Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) is available to provide consultation to new businesses in the state. The local and state departments offer educational seminars and presentations throughout the year. These classes cover a wide range of labor-related topics such as labor laws, labor issues, prevailing wages, unemployment insurance, benefits and employment services. It would be advisable to contact the local office regarding these classes. These seminars are intended to provide you with all the information you need to prepare you for the employment aspects of running a business. You should begin these classes up to one year before your intended start-up. At these seminars, you will be provided with a section of the instructional workbook. After attending a certain number of these seminars, you will have the entire workbook. The GDOL can help walk you through all of your employment and labor problems.

GA Dept. of Labor
120 W Church St Americus, GA 31709
229-931-2520

OSHA

The issuing and enforcing of occupational and safety health regulations is handled by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is the federal agency that administers these policies. The requirements put forth by OSHA include posting notices to employees and maintaining accurate records of employee injuries. OSHA policies and regulations must be posted in the workspace where all employees may see. The Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce also receives information on OSHA regularly, contact the Chamber for more information.

In addition to OSHA, the U.S. government also supports the Employment Standard Administration, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Veterans Employment and Training Service and the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration. Each of these departments is designed to protect both the employer and employee. Similar to OSHA, each issues and enforces a unique set of requirements and regulations.

OSHA
U.S. Dept. of Labor
450 Mall Boulevard Suite J Savannah, GA 31406
912-652-4393
www.osha.gov

EMPLOYER TAX RESPONSIBILITIES

Income Taxes

Businesses with employees must pay employer taxes and withhold employee taxes for both the state and federal governments. These should be deposited in any Federal Reserve Bank. You will be given a coupon book to accompany your deposits. These deposits are required monthly or quarterly. The Georgia and U.S. Departments of Revenue will determine your time of payment. You will be required to withhold Social

Security and Medicare taxes. In addition to this withholding, the employer must pay a matching amount. You should consult the current year tax calendar for present percentages.

GA Dept. of Revenue
1105-D W. Broad Ave. Albany, GA 31707
229-430-4241

Unemployment Insurance Taxes

Federal Unemployment Insurance Tax is the employer's responsibility. This is not withheld from employee wages. Consult the Employer's Tax Guide for more information on the various taxes that you will be required to pay. The Employer's Tax Guide is a booklet designed to help you with all aspects of taxation. Contact the Georgia and U.S. Departments of Labor and Revenue to receive the Employer's Tax Guide and other relevant information. See contact information below.

If you are a sole proprietor, you are not required to pay withholding. You are however required to pay self-employment tax. Contact the Internal Revenue Service for complete details.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Workers' Compensation Insurance is required of any business with more than three employees. The rates vary with the business type and the risk level. For more information, contact the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

State Board of Workers' Compensation
404- 533-0682
www.state.ga.us/sbwc/

Your business can become eligible for 7.5% discount on your Workers' Compensation Insurance Premiums. This is possible through the DRUGS DON'T WORK PROGRAM. Contact the Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce or visit the Georgia Chamber of Commerce website listed below for more information on this program.

Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce
502 South 2nd Street Cordele, GA 31015
229-273-1668

Drugs Don't Work Program
GA Chamber of Commerce
270 PEACHTREE ST NW Atlanta, GA 30303
404-223-2264
www.gachamber.com/affiliates/drugs

U.S. Dept. of Labor
Harris Tower
233 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Suite 650
Atlanta, GA 30303
1-866-487-9243
<http://www.dol.gov>

APPLICATION/HIRING/TERMINATION PROCESSES

There are basic ground rules for hiring and firing employees. There are legal requirements to acquiring or terminating employees. If handled incorrectly, personnel issues can result to legal problems. These legal problems can be large enough to close your business. It is important to make sure all your bases are covered. In addition to the do's & don'ts listed below, contact the GA Dept. of Labor for more on correct hiring and firing policies.

Application and Hiring

DON'T

- ❑ *Ask obvious questions.* Do not ask questions regarding sex, age, race, etc. or anything related to these areas. These are sensitive areas and cannot be used as discriminating factors. Some applicants may believe that all gathered information is used. It is for this reason that you should not ask these questions. It is best to avoid these topics so as to eliminate all possibility of legal problems.
- ❑ *Write on the job application form.* Any notes taken during interviews should be made on photocopies or other paper. This allows you to preserve the original application without marring it for your permanent records.

DO:

- ❑ *Limit your interview questions to job duties.* There is no reason to ask questions that do not apply to the responsibilities of the position. You may ask if an applicant has any barriers to completing the duties. Do not ask questions such as "Do you have children?" or "Are you married?" Small talk is acceptable if the interviewer is careful. Do not venture into conversation that might produce seemingly discriminatory information.
- ❑ *Make sure all company procedures follow employment statutes.* Have your advisors or attorney to review your system for application, hiring and termination before you begin hiring and periodically thereafter.
- ❑ *EDUCATE YOURSELF!!!!* The best way to prevent problems is to be familiar with the law. When you are in doubt about any issue concerning labor or safety, contact the GA Dept. of Labor. See the Resource Directory for contact information.

Termination Process

DO:

- ❑ *Review company policies.* If you have not yet developed company policies regarding application, hiring and termination, call the GDOL. Make a checklist of your procedures. Make sure that you have followed the rules in the firing process. If you have not completed your checklist, YOU SHOULD NOT TERMINATE THE EMPLOYEE YET. Take care to finish all steps in the process to alleviate any questions and possible legal repercussions.
- ❑ *Have a stated code of expected employee behavior.* Many employers face problems due to unclear expectations of conduct. It is easier to prove reasons for termination if such a code is in place. This documentation will be helpful if you are faced with paying restitution because it will show that you had sufficient cause to terminate the employee.
- ❑ *Conduct an exit interview.* This allows you to tie up any loose ends. Final paychecks can be issued, and company property (keys, paperwork, files, etc.) can be returned. Ask the employee what he/she liked or disliked about your company. Ask for feedback on aspects of your company of which this person has knowledge. This person might be a bit more forthcoming with problems or constructive criticisms than someone that still works there.
- ❑ *Keep termination of an employee between you (management) and the employee.* The fired employee should not be discussed with other employees. Privacy can help you avoid harsh feelings and legal repercussions.
- ❑ *Have employees sign a release.* If you are offering the fired employee severance pay or anything of value, have him/her sign a release of liability to the company. This may protect you in case of legal action.

Where to Find Your Labor Force

There are many resources through which you can find employees. The first things that typically come to mind are the classified advertisements in local newspapers. You can place ads in these publications for weeklong and even month long periods. Contact the publication you wish to use for information that is more specific. The GA Dept. of Labor is an agency that can assist you in finding employees. Other places you might contact are local colleges and universities. You can register your job opening with their Cooperative Education or Career Planning and Placement offices.

Georgia Southwestern State University

Career Services
 800 Wheatley Street
 Americus, GA 31709
 229-931-1273

South Georgia Technical College

Career Planning and Placement
 900 South Georgia Parkway
 Americus, GA 31709
 229-931-2243

Albany State

Crisp Co. Higher Ed
 2705 E. 14th Ave
 Cordele, GA 31015
 229-276-2589

A number of specialized employee-related services are typically available from GDOL's "One-stop" centers. Contact information follows:

Georgia Department of Labor

120 W Church St
 Americus, GA 31709
 229-931-2520

TRAINING RESOURCES

Training resources are available for employers and employees through South Georgia Technical College Cordele Campus and Albany State University - Cordele Campus offer training courses. For class schedules call:

South Georgia Technical College

402 N. Midway Road
 Cordele, GA 31015
 229-271-4045

Albany State University

134 E 11th Ave
 Cordele, GA 31015
 229-276-2589

FINANCING INFORMATION

The SBA works with lenders to provide loans to small businesses. The agency doesn't lend money directly to small business owners. Instead, it sets guidelines for loans made by its partnering lenders, community development organizations, and micro-lending institutions. The SBA reduces risk for lenders and makes it easier for them to access capital. That makes it easier for small businesses to get loans.

Benefits of SBA-guaranteed loans:

Competitive terms

SBA-guaranteed loans generally have rates and fees that are comparable to non-guaranteed loans.

Counseling and education

Some loans come with continued support to help you start and run your business.

Unique benefits

Lower down payments, flexible overhead requirements, and no collateral needed for some loans.

For more information go to: www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans

OTHER LOAN PROGRAMS**The Federal Empowerment Zone Designation**

Most of Crisp County has been designated as part of a federal Empowerment Zone. The Empowerment Zone programs are coordinated by Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc. The federal designation provides several benefits for entrepreneurs and businesses located in the Empowerment Zone area.

Federal Employment Tax Credit: The Empowerment Zone designation provides a credit of \$3,000 per year for each employee who lives in the Empowerment Zone area. The credit is available to any business

located in the Zone. Other federal tax benefits include an increased Section 179 deduction for equipment placed in service, and deferred recognition of gain on sale of assets or certain stocks. More information is available in IRS Publication 954: "Tax Incentives for Empowerment Zones and Other Distressed Communities" or from Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc.

Small Business Support: Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc. operates a Small Business Development Center program. The program provides assistance to entrepreneurs who wish to establish or expand a business in Crisp County. Services include help with planning, marketing, accounting, and other business areas; support services such as copying, typing and faxing; and rental of business space at below market rates. Contact the Business Development Center at Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc. for more details.

Community Development Financing: Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc. operates a business Revolving Loan Fund to provide relatively small amounts of capital to new and expanding small businesses. Loans can be used for several business purposes, including equipment purchase and operating capital. Loans typically have an interest rate that is below the market rate, and repayment terms can be flexible. Job creation or other area benefits may be required, and some loan funds are restricted to certain types of businesses. Contact the Community Development Finance Specialist at Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc. for more details.

The Empowerment Zone area in Crisp County currently includes the entire county north of U.S. Highway 280, east of Georgia Highway 90, and west of Georgia Highway 33. For more information, please contact Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc.

Tax Benefits

Federal Empowerment Zone Tax Benefits: Most of Crisp County is part of a federally-designated Empowerment Zone. The Empowerment Zone designation provides several federal tax credits for businesses located in those parts of the County. These credits include:

- Empowerment Zone Employment Tax Credit (\$3,000 per year per employee who lives in the Empowerment Zone area),
- Increased Section 179 Deduction (claim a part of equipment placed in service as an expense rather than a capitalized asset),
- Rollover of gain from sale of Empowerment Zone assets (postpone recognition of capital gain on the sale of equipment, other tangible property, or certain stock or partnership interests) and
- Increased exclusion of gain from qualified small business stock (exclude an additional 10% of gain from the sale or trade of qualified small business stock held more than five years).

More information is available in IRS Publication 954: "Tax Incentives for Empowerment Zones and Other Distressed Communities" or from Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc.

Downtown Cordele

Downtown Cordele and the designated surrounding area represents an opportunity to the potential entrepreneur. The City of Cordele's Downtown Development Authority (DDA), is available to assist businesses in the historic downtown area of Cordele. For information on available commercial property in the downtown and surrounding area, call the DDA/Main Street programs at 229-273-2902.

Agribusiness

AgAmerica Empowerment Agency is a community based nonprofit organization with the primary goal of stimulating the agricultural economy, and the mission of helping farmers make the most of their natural and financial resources. AgAmerica has begun implementing a state of the art Global Positioning System for automated tillage and is supporting the development of agricultural applications for geographic information systems. The organization also provides a library of conservation tillage equipment for use by area farmers. More than 150 local farmers have participated in the program to place more than 24,000 acres under conservation tillage methods. AgAmerica is available to support new and expanding agribusinesses and connect entrepreneurs to local farmers.

Agribusiness makes up a large part of the economy of Crisp County. This field of business also encounters special restrictions and opportunities. For more information on agribusiness ventures, contact the Crisp County Extension Service. The Extension Service is a part of the University of GA College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, and provides research-based information and technical guidance to farmers and landowners about farming. The Extension Service has information on crop and livestock enterprise budgets and license/permits requirements of the GA Dept. of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency. The FSA has farm loan programs, farm land acreage information (quotas, allotments, etc.) and land conservation assistance programs. Please see the Resource Directory for contact information.

Crisp County Extension Service
110 13th Avenue, E.
Cordele, GA 31015
229-276-2612

International Trade

International trade can be difficult, but also can provide tremendous opportunities. Most start-up businesses will not be participating in international trade. However, if you choose to export or import goods, the following contacts may provide you with valuable information. The U.S. Export Assistance Center can provide you access to all federal exporting resources. Valdosta Technical College may also be of assistance with its GA International Trade Data Network.

United States Export Assistance Center
230 Peachtree St
Suite 1725
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-897-6090

Tourism

The Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce can provide excellent resources when it comes to understanding the impact of tourism in Cordele and Crisp County. The Chamber can be contacted as follows:

Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce
502 South 2nd Street
Cordele, GA 31015
229-273-1668

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

When starting a new business, it is important to have a diverse base of information sources. One way to ensure success is through education. The more you know about your field, the better off your business will be. The following is a list of potential resources for information.

Cordele-Crisp County

- ❑ Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce: Promotes economic growth through a variety of programs and services, and can serve as your connection to the existing economic and political community. 502 2nd Street South, Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-1668, www.visitcordele.com
- ❑ Georgia Southwestern State University – Center for Business and Economic Development: 800 GSW Dr., Americus, GA 31709, 229-931-2726
- ❑ South Georgia Technical College: 402 N. Midway Rd., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-271-4040
- ❑ Albany State University: 134 E 11th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-276-2589

County Offices

- ❑ Crisp County Health Department: 229-276-2680
- ❑ Crisp County Tax Commissioner: 229-276-2630
- ❑ Crisp County Superior Court Clerk: 229-271-4726
- ❑ Crisp County Building Inspector: 229-276-2640
- ❑ Crisp County Zoning & Planning: 229-276-2640

- ❑ University of GA Cooperative Extension Service: 229-276-2612
- ❑ Crisp County Administrator: 229-276-2677

City Offices

- ❑ City Manager's Office: 229-276-2906
- ❑ Downtown Development Authority: 229-273-9570

OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- ❑ Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce: 229-273-1668
- ❑ Cordele-Crisp Carnegie Library: 229-276-1300
- ❑ Drugs Don't Work Program: Chamber of Commerce, 229-273-1668
- ❑ Georgia Department of Labor: 120 W Church St Americus, GA 31709 229-931-2520
- ❑ Cordele-Crisp IDC: 229-276-9570

STATE RESOURCES

Life Science Innovation Center Carl Clark 706-721-4055
 Georgia Center of Innovation for Aerospace AMY HUDNALL 478-230-4300
 Information Technology Innovation Center Abraham George 706-507-81991
 Center of Innovation for Manufacturing JOHN MOREHOUSE 404-385-0895
 Maritime Logistics Innovation Center MATT MARKHAM 404-962-4134

U.S. Dept. of Labor: <http://www.dol.gov>
 Governor's Small Business Center: www.georgia.org/small-business
 GA Tech's Entrepreneur Resource Center: www.atdc.org/erc
 GA Minority Business Development Center: www.edi.gatech.edu
 Dept. of Technical & Adult Education: www.georgiaquickstart.org
 Small Business Administration: www.sba.gov
 Georgia's web portal to business resources www.georgia.gov
 USDA Rural Economic Development www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga

Booklets & Forms

- ❑ The Office of Secretary of State's BLUE BOOK provides postage paid response cards so you may access the following forms or agencies:
 - Business Incorporation Forms
 - Professional and Occupational Licensing Forms
 - State Tax Application
 - Internal Revenue Service Forms
 - GA Dept of Economic Development/U.S. Small Business Administration
 - UGA Small Business Development Centers
 - GA Tech Services for Business & Technology
 - Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs
 - U.S. General Services Administration
 - GA Dept. of Labor
 - U.S. Dept. of Labor
 - GA Dept. of Consumer Affairs-Office of Business & Economic Assistance U.S. Export Assistance Center
 - GA Dept. of Insurance
 - GA Dept. of Agriculture

LOCAL RESOURCES

Attorneys

- **Cotton Law Firm, P.C.** P.O. Box 897 Cordele, GA 31010 229-273-9490

- **Melton Culpepper, Attorney at Law** 202 E. 12th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-2442
- **Clifford Harpe, Attorney at Law**, 219 South 7th St, Suite A P.O.Box 545 Cordele, GA 31010 229-271-6060
- **Hurt & Associates:** 111 W. 13th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-7832
- **Stephen Ingram, Attorney at Law:** 217 N. 7th St., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-271-5233
- **Lawson, Reid & Dean, LLC:** 601 East 14th Avenue P.O. Box 5005 Cordele, GA 31010 229-271-9323
- **Rainwater & Gibbs, LLP:** 109 E. 14th Ave. Ste. B, Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-5202

Accountants – CPA’s

- **Ambassador Personnel:** 716-A East 16th Avenue, Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-2999
- **Cook, Moore & Helms:** 115 E. 14th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-9620
- **Dan Spires, CPA:** P.O. Box 937, Cordele, GA 31010, 229-273-6915
- **Hutchins Clenney Rumsey Huckaby, PC:** 812 E. 16th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-7211

Financial Institutions

- **Ameris Bank:** 510 S. 2nd St., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-7700
- **Colony Bank:** 1031 E. 24th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-271-2100
- **Planters First:** 1620 E. 16th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-2416
- **Regions Bank:** 123 S. 7th St., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-276-2323
- **South Georgia Banking Company:** 702 S. Pecan St., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-271-3000

Real Estate Agencies

- **Brandywine Real Estate:** 2 Ponds Edge Dr., Chadds Ford, PA 19317
- **Carter Appraisal & Real Estate Services:** 106 W. 12th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-1141
- **Carrot Top Properties:** 1921 Central Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 886-584-2220
- **Century 21:** 2453 HWY 300 S., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-535-6735
- **Cordele Properties:** 1145 S. 7th St., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-2141
- **Daniels & Daniels:** 801 W. 16th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-1738
- **GBT Management:** 219 S. 7th St., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-1484
- **Lake Blackshear Plantation Realty:** 381 Lakeshore Way, Cordele, GA 31015, 229-535-4653
- **LaPorte, Inc.:** P.O. Box 916, Cordele, GA 31010, 229-273-2221
- **National Realty Company of Cordele:** 807 E. 16th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-4132
- **Perlis Realty:** 1220 E. 16th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-1851
- **SummerCo. Inc.:** 108 E. 13th Ave., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-1300
- **Turton Investments:** 215 S. 7th St., Cordele, GA 31015, 229-273-9430
- **Willcox Realty:** 2031 N. Slappey Rd., Albany, GA 31701, 229-273-0143

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- ❑ **Assets** – resources, owned or controlled by a company, that have future benefits. These benefits must be quantifiable in monetary terms.
- ❑ **Balance Sheet** – a list of company’s assets, liabilities and owner’s equity of a particular point in time.
- ❑ **Break Even** – the unit volume where total revenue equals total cost; there is neither profit nor loss.
- ❑ **Capacity** – the amount of goods or work that can be produced by a company given its level of equipment, labor and facilities
- ❑ **Capital** – the funds necessary to establish or operate a business.
- ❑ **Cash Flow** – the movement of money into and out of a company; actual income received and actual payments paid out.
- ❑ **Cash Flow Statement** – a presentation of the cash inflows and outflows for a particular period of time. These flows are grouped into major categories of cash from operations, cash investing activities and cash-financing activities
- ❑ **Collateral** – assets pledged in return for loans
- ❑ **Conventional Financing** – financing from established lenders, such as banks, rather than from investors/debt financing
- ❑ **Debt Financing** – raising money for a business by borrowing, often in the form of bank loans. (see Conventional Financing above)
- ❑ **Debt Service** – money being paid out on a loan; the amount necessary to keep a loan from going into default
- ❑ **Disbursements** – money paid out
- ❑ **Equity** – shares of stock in a company; ownership interest in a company
- ❑ **Expenses** – outflows of resources to generate revenues
- ❑ **Fixed Costs** – those costs that are not responsive to changes in volume over the relevant range of time
- ❑ **Income Statement** – a matching of a company’s accomplishments (i.e. sales) with effort (expenses from operations) during a particular period of time
(Revenues – Expenses = Net Income)
- ❑ **Leasehold Improvements** – the changes made to a rented store, office or plant, to suit the tenant and make the location more appropriate for the conduct of the tenant’s business
- ❑ **Letter of Intent** – a letter or other document by a customer indicating the customer’s intention to buy from a company
- ❑ **Liabilities** – commitments to pay out assets (typically cash) to or render services for creditors
- ❑ **Licensing** – the granting or permission by one company to another to use its products, trademark or name in a limited, particular manner
- ❑ **Liquidity** – the ability to turn assets into cash quickly and easily
- ❑ **Market Share** – the percentage of the total available customer base captured by a company
- ❑ **Net Worth** – the total ownership interest in a company, represented by the excess of the total amount of assets minus the total amount of liabilities
- ❑ **Partnership** – a legal relationship of two or more individuals to run a company
- ❑ **Profit Margin** – the amount of money earned after the cost of goods or all operating expenses are deducted; usually expressed in percentage terms
- ❑ **Pro Forma Statements** – a financial statement detailing management’s predictions
- ❑ **Receipts** – funds coming into the company; the actual money paid to the company for its products or services; not necessarily the same as a company’s actual receipts
- ❑ **Sole Proprietorship** – company owned and managed by one person
- ❑ **Variable Costs** – those costs that are directly responsive to changes in volume over the relevant range of time
- ❑ **Venture Capitalists** – individuals or firms who invest money in new enterprises
- ❑ **Working Capital** – the cash available to the company for the ongoing operations of the business

STATE ISSUED LICENSES

State Board of Accounting

Certified Public Accountant
Registered Public Accountant
Foreign Accountant
Accounting Firms

State Boards of Architects

Architects
Interior Designers

GA Athlete Agent

Commission
Athlete Agents

Board of Athletic Trainers

Athletic Trainers

GA Auctioneer Commission

Auctioneers
Auctioneer Corporations
Non-resident Auctioneers
Non-resident Corporations

State Board of Barbers

Master Barbers
Teachers
Apprentice
Schools
Shops

State board of Chiropractic

Examiners
Chiropractors

Construction Ind. Licensing

Boards Condition Air Contractors
Electrical Contractors
Low Voltage Contractors
Master Plumbers
Journeyman Plumbers
Utility Contractors
Utility Manager
Utility Foreman

State Board of Cosmetology

Master Cosmetology

Teachers
Instructor Trainee
Esthetician
Apprentice
Schools
Shops
Manicurists

Composite Board of Prof. Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage Therapists

Marriage Therapists
Professional Counselor
Associate Prof. Counselor
Master Social Worker
Clinical Social Worker
Marriage & Family Therapist
Assoc. Marriage & Fam. Therapist

GA Board of Dentistry

Dentists
Dental Hygienists

Board of Examiners of Licensed Dieticians

Dieticians

State Board of Professional Engineers & Land Surveyors

Professional Engineer
Engineer in Training
Land Surveyor
Land Surveyor in Training

State Board of Registration for Foresters

Foresters

State Board of Funeral Serv.

Funeral Director
Embalmer
Establishment
Apprenticeship

State Board of Registration for Professional Geologists

Professional Geologist

State Board of Hearing Aid Dealers & Dispensers

Hearing Aid Dealer
Hearing Aid Dispenser

State Board of Landscape Architects

Landscape Architects

State Board of Certification of Librarians

Librarians

Composite State Board of Medical Examiners

Acupuncture
Paramedic
Cardiac Technician Teacher
Institutional & Provisional Physician,
(MD & OO)
Osteopath Respiratory Therapist

State Board of Nursing Homes Administrators

Nursing Home Administrators
Nursing Home Administrator in Training

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapist
Occupational Therapist Assistant

State Board of Dispensing Opticians

Opticians

State Board of Examiners in Optometry

Optometrists

State Board of Pharmacy

Pharmacy Intern
Retail Pharmacy
Hospital Pharmacy
Wholesaler Manufacturer
Research Approvals
Pharmacy Schools
Nuclear Pharmacists

Pharmacy Clinics
Nuclear Pharmacies
Prison Clinic Pharmacies

State Board of Physical Therapy

Physical Therapists
Physical Therapists/Assistants

State Board of Podiatry Examiners

Podiatrists
Board of Examiners of Licensed Practical Nurses

Licensed Practical Nurses

Board of Private Detectives and Security Agents

Private Detectives
Employees
Private Detective Businesses
Private Security Businesses
Weapon Permits
Training Instructors
Classroom Firearms
Classroom & Firearms

State Board of Examiners of Psychologists

Psychologists

GA Board of Nurses

Registered Nurses
Licensed Undergraduate Nurses
Advanced Practice

State Board of Examiners for Speech Language Pathology and Audiology

Speech Language Pathologists
Audiologists
Speech Language Pathology Aide
Paid Clinical Experience Fellow

State Board of Registration of Used Motor Vehicle

Dealers & Used Vehicle Parts Dealers

Used Motor Vehicle Dealers
Used Motor Vehicle Parts Dealers
Used Motor Vehicle Dismantlers
Salvage Yard Dealers Rebuilders
Salvage Pool Operators

State Board of Veterinary Medicine

Veterinarians
Faculty Licenses
Animal Technicians

State Board of Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant & Operator & Laboratory Analysis

Public Water Supply System
Operator Class I, II, III, IV)
Biological Wastewater Treatment
System Operator
(Class I, II, III, IV)
Industrial Wastewater
Treatment
System Operator
Wastewater Collection System
Operator