

1. ATTEND at least one meeting or events held by the agency.

Accompanied by a friend who is familiar with the Thomasville-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, I attended the July 8, 2008 VOOM (Voice Of Our Members) meeting in the Chamber of Commerce reception room. The VOOM meetings are informal meetings held the second Tuesday of each month at 7:45 a.m. Attendees exchange ideas and business news while networking. They also serve a continental breakfast to those attending. I must say that I'm sure that I would have been greeted warmly by the Chamber members and guests that were present without my escort, but it was obvious that they were not used to having college students "on assignment" attend their meetings. I felt that the conversations in my presence were more formal than I've encountered in the past when I used to collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce for my career-mentoring program. Overall, the occasion was much more social than the Thomas County Public Library System (TCPLS) Board of Director's meeting that I attended as there was not a set agenda and a meal was involved. The Chamber of Commerce leaders that were present spoke very briefly to the crowd about recruiting new members, the pursuit of the Entrepreneur Friendly County status (the cooperation/partnership of the TCPLS was mentioned), and the several impending votes that would impact local business and industry. At this particular meeting, details were discussed while eating breakfast and in small groups rather than at the podium.

2. Summarize the agency's mission, purpose and goals. What public library roles fit this agency's purpose?

The Mission of the Thomasville-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce is to "enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Thomas County, Georgia. The Chamber strongly supports both existing business and industry, and the development of quality new business and industry; while maintaining the values of the community and preserving its historical resources."

The role of TCPLS is to work in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce in order to support through materials, classes, and building space the needs of Chamber community endeavors, the business and industry community at large, and the citizens of the area interested in entrepreneurial pursuits.

3. If the library already has a linkage with this agency, describe the nature of this connection.

During the June 9, 2008 TCPLS Board of Directors' meeting, the Entrepreneur Friendly County designation of Thomas County was discussed by one board member who is also a member of the Chamber of Commerce. In order for Thomas County to qualify, the Chamber needs to formalize a partnership with the library and the library needs to dedicate itself to providing entrepreneurial materials as deemed necessary by the program. The entire board was very supportive of the initiative and voiced support to add materials the Chamber of Commerce needed in order to form the appropriate partnership to be named an Entrepreneur Friendly County. This status will allow Thomasville-Thomas County to apply for certain funding/grants and to lobby for new businesses and industry. The board also discussed ways that it has partnered with the Chamber of Commerce in the past by providing grant writing courses and small business tax preparation courses free of charge to the public at large. The vote to approve the Chamber of Commerce proposition was postponed until a later date after more information was available. It was mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce would be willing to assist in the purchases.

4. If the library is not linked to the agency describe what kind of linkages could or might take place once contact is made.

The Chamber of Commerce is already linked with TCPLS. However, I have worked directly with the Chamber of Commerce in the past with my career-mentoring program and they were very supportive monetarily and through volunteerism. I believe that TCPLS could enhance their partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to include career-readiness programs for youth and teens. TCPLS does not currently have a Youth and Teen Services Director, but the need is there and our community is ripe for partnerships to serve the youth and teen population.