



Members,

2017 was a year filled with challenges and great accomplishments. As a community we were able to enjoy another successful Bloomin' Festival, Bike Ride Across Georgia (BRAG), and the State of the Community Address. If you were able to participate in the opening ceremony or visit the Wall that Heals, I think you probably experienced something special there as well. It was a great event and a great way for our community to pull together and showcase who we are. Once again, the annual Candler Magazine turned out to be the perfect vehicle for telling the story of Metter and Candler County and I thank all who gave so much time to it.

As many of you know, the structure of the partnership between the City of Metter and the Chamber of Commerce changed in 2017. Though the changes have reduced the Chamber's annual income, they have also reduced our annual expenses by transferring the operation of the Welcome Center back to the City. In addition, these changes have enabled us to ensure that the Chamber of Commerce will continue to be involved in bringing the Bloomin' Festival, Connect Candler and Candler Youth Leadership and the State of the Community Address to our community. Our own Victoria Gaitten has jumped in with great enthusiasm as the Chamber Executive Director and Welcome Center Manager. I think you will find that these changes will allow your Chamber to serve you better and be focused on supporting and improving the business community in Metter and Candler County.

In addition to the changes seen in the Chamber, our community has grown with a new Executive Director at the Candler County Industrial Authority, Molly Olsen. The City has also brought on a new position, Director of Tourism and Economic Development, which has been filled by Heidi Jeffers. Together with Victoria, this team, along with your Board of Directors and others, will work diligently to maintain the quality of service you expect and to grow both our retail and industrial business to make Metter and Candler County the place to be in 2018.

This year, we have seen new businesses move into the downtown and surrounding area. We have seen new, local businesses achieve the success of a 1st Anniversary and long-standing businesses celebrate a 20th Anniversary. What is consistent in those success stories is residents and local businesses supporting the business community and each other. The programs and events we see in the community are for you and by you and I encourage you to continue to support each other and help our community grow.

Thank you for your ongoing support. If you are not a member, I encourage you to join the Chamber of Commerce team and our efforts to support and grow the business community in Metter and Candler County. We are looking forward to another great year in 2018 which starts with this, our 61st Annual Meeting and continues with your ongoing support.

Thanks,

Bryan Aasheim
Chairman
Metter-Candler Chamber of Commerce

Everything's Better in Metter!