

Annual Report

2024-2025

**WE KEEP BUILDING:
POWERING JOB
CREATION &
ECONOMIC
GROWTH**



Meet The Team

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Brad Folsom
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Vice Chairman

Terri Lupo
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President & CEO

John Waters
Project Manager

April Brogdon
Research & Recruitment Analyst

Donna Holland
Administrative Services Manager

2024-2025

 **840+**
New Jobs

 **\$652**
Million Capital Investment



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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Fueling a Stronger Future for Lowndes County

We are proud to share this annual report, which reflects the progress we've achieved over the past two years. During that time, our community welcomed **840 new jobs and secured \$652 million in capital investment**—clear indicators of Valdosta-Lowndes County's continued economic strength and momentum. The competition for industry recruitment is tight, as cities across the country are chasing the same projects. However, Valdosta-Lowndes County is committed to long-term growth, and we're proud to say we're winning in today's challenging economic landscape.

We also recognize that recruiting new industries is not enough. Supporting our existing industries is essential to sustainable growth. Through business retention and expansion efforts, workforce partnerships, and proactive engagement, we're helping our industries tackle challenges, work more efficiently, and create more jobs.

None of this would be possible without the incredible partnerships we have. The City of Valdosta, Lowndes County, our utility partners, educators, and state leaders all work together to help us attract new companies and support the ones already here. It's this teamwork and shared vision that keep Valdosta-Lowndes County ready for future growth.

By focusing on high-quality, impactful jobs, we've made our local workforce stronger and boosted economic stability across South Georgia. Announcements from Walmart Dairy, Amazon, and GAF aren't just about new jobs—they're helping turn Valdosta-Lowndes County into a hub for advanced manufacturing, logistics, food processing, and ag-tech innovation.

Valdosta-Lowndes County's progress reflects thoughtful planning, strong partnerships, and a shared commitment to a thriving future. By working together and staying focused on opportunities, we will continue to build an economy positioned for sustainable growth and long-term prosperity.

Kathryn Y. Ogletree (Niki)

President & CEO - Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority



We Keep Building

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Since opening in 1975, Saft and Ace Electric—two cornerstone industries in Valdosta-Lowndes County-- have helped shape the region's industrial landscape while demonstrating how long-term investment and strong leadership can drive sustained success.

Saft has grown from its early operations in Valdosta into a global leader in industrial battery manufacturing, powering critical sectors such as aviation, rail, and telecommunications. Today, the Valdosta facility spans more than 200,000 square feet and employs 228 team members who help produce advanced battery technologies used around the world. Over the past five years alone, Saft's sales have increased by nearly 200 percent, driven by continued investments in automation, robotics, digital monitoring systems, and workforce training. As the company embraces cutting-edge technology, it remains committed to the safety, efficiency, and innovation that have defined its operations for five decades.

What began in 1975 as a small company founded by brothers Tom and Bobby Stalvey, Ace Electric, has grown into a workforce of more than 1,200 employees operating across multiple states. Built on strong family values, craftsmanship, and a dedication to developing a skilled workforce, Ace Electric continues to expand its influence while maintaining deep roots in South Georgia. As the company celebrates its golden anniversary, it is also entering a new chapter with the construction of its new corporate headquarters in Valdosta.

Together, Saft and Ace Electric represent the strength of Valdosta-Lowndes County's existing industries. Their 50-year legacies reflect not only business success but also long-standing partnerships with the community—creating jobs, investing in innovation, and helping power the region's economic growth for generations to come.



SAFT





CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

CJB Applied Tech Celebrate 10 Years

CJB Applied Technologies, LLC, a member of CJB Companies celebrated 10 years of delivering chemical and biological expertise to clients across a wide range of industries. Since its founding, the company has built a strong reputation for product formulation innovation, process development, and pilot plant services—supporting both start-up ventures and multinational companies as they bring new technologies and products to market.

As Mitchell Tatar, general manager; Sims Turner, VP of sales and business development; and Amanda Lupo, sales and operations planning manager, look to the next 10 years, they are focused on elevating the capabilities and services at CJB Applied Technologies.

Over the past decade, CJB Applied Technologies has positioned itself as a trusted partner for organizations seeking specialized scientific expertise and flexible development capabilities. By combining advanced laboratory resources with industry knowledge, the company has helped customers move from concept to commercialization through efficient process development and innovative formulation solutions.

As CJB Applied Technologies marks this milestone, the company is also preparing for its next phase of growth. Leadership is focused on expanding capabilities and exploring how emerging technologies—including advanced analytics and artificial intelligence—can further enhance services and unlock new opportunities in chemical and biological formulation.

ARGLASS EXPANDS

In 2025, Arglass completed a transformative \$230 million expansion—one of the most significant industrial investments in the region's history. The expanded facility enhances production flexibility, enabling the plant to manufacture up to eight types of glass containers simultaneously. This capability allows Arglass to respond more quickly to market demand, run smaller and more efficient production cycles, reduce inventory levels, and lower investment in molds—further strengthening Valdosta-Lowndes County's position as a leader in advanced manufacturing.



Expansion: The new Arglass facility will produce more than 350 million sustainable glass containers annually, helping pave the way for a greener, more eco-friendly tomorrow. The state-of-the-art manufacturing facility embodies the future of glass manufacturing with a fully integrated production network driven by AI-integrated real-time data monitoring, predictive modeling, and fully automated closed-loop production and quality assurance systems.





Building Momentum

CELEBRATING NEW BEGINNINGS



GAF and Walmart Dairy Celebrate Grand Openings

In 2025, Valdosta-Lowndes County celebrated the opening of two major manufacturing facilities—GAF and Walmart Dairy—further strengthening the region’s growing industrial and food production sectors.

On May 6, 2025, GAF officially opened its new TPO commercial roofing manufacturing facility in Valdosta, marking a significant milestone for the community’s expanding manufacturing base. The 425,000-square-foot plant employs more than 50 team members and produces GAF’s EverGuard® TPO roofing systems, a leading material used in low-slope commercial roofing.

GAF has also demonstrated a strong commitment to the community through its financial donation of a new roof for the Meta Shaw Coleman Children’s Imagination Station, a children’s museum expected to open in 2026.

In December 2025, the community celebrated the opening of Walmart’s new 300,000-square-foot milk-processing facility. The \$350 million investment will create more than 400 jobs and play an important role in strengthening the region’s food processing and agribusiness sector.

“This facility is a tremendous win for Valdosta, Lowndes County, and the region,” said Niki Ogletree, President and CEO of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority. “Walmart’s dairy operation brings high-quality jobs to our community while reinforcing our strong food processing base and our position as a premier location for large-scale manufacturing and agribusiness investment.”

During its grand opening celebration, Walmart donated \$5,000 to the Greater Valdosta United Way and \$8,000 to the Valdosta High School Marching Cats.

“Walmart’s dairy operation brings high-quality jobs to our community while reinforcing our strong food processing base and our position as a premier location for large-scale manufacturing and agribusiness investment.”

Niki Ogletree

President & CEO

Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority



AMAZON DELIVERY FACILITY



Attracting Industry Creating Opportunity

In November 2025, Valdosta-Lowndes County welcomed Amazon to its growing network of distribution and logistics companies with the opening of a last-mile delivery facility at Westside Business Park.

“Amazon’s investment brings new jobs, new capital, and meaningful opportunities for our workforce, further positioning Valdosta as a hub for business and industry growth,” said Niki Ogletree, President and CEO of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority. “The Amazon facility offers quality jobs with competitive pay and benefits while continuing to expand and energize our local workforce and economy.”

The 63,000-square-foot site brings more than 100 jobs and driver opportunities to the community, strengthens regional delivery capabilities, and represents another significant investment in Lowndes County’s expanding economy.

“We’re excited to join the Valdosta community with our new last-mile delivery station,” said Deborah Massie, Amazon’s Manager of Economic Development for Georgia. “Georgia continues to be a great place for Amazon to invest and grow, and this facility helps us better serve customers while creating quality jobs with competitive wages starting at \$19 per hour. Our partnership with the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County throughout this

project has been invaluable, and we’re very thankful for their support.”

Mayor Scott James Matheson welcomed Amazon to Valdosta, noting that the investment reflects the community’s continued momentum and commitment to growth. “Amazon represents continued growth and opportunity for our community,” he said. “We take pride in fostering a business climate where companies can thrive, employees can succeed, and families can prosper.”

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Scott James Matheson
Mayor of Valdosta

P&B COLD STORAGE

P&B Cold Storage is now operating a 200,000-square-foot cold storage facility at Westside Industrial Park in Valdosta. The project, which broke ground in May 2024, represents more than \$30 million in capital investment and supports approximately 100 jobs in Lowndes County. As the area's first large-scale cold storage facility, the operation plays an important role in supporting Valdosta-Lowndes County's expanding food production and distribution network.

"We are thrilled that P&B Cold Storage has chosen Valdosta for this facility," said Brad Folsom, Chairman of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority Board. "Their investment strengthens our economy and expands employment opportunities for our community."

P&B Cold Storage is a subsidiary of North American Cold Storage, founded by Scott Parker and Michael Betten in 2013. With more than 50 years of combined experience in the public refrigerated warehousing industry, the company provides cost-effective, reliable cold storage and distribution services for its customers.



P & B COLD STORAGE, INC.



Providing available sites, including ready-to-use building space, is a key part of the board's responsibility. We anticipated the demand and invested in two spec buildings, creating quality jobs for our community.



Brad Folsom

Chairman of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority Board

UTILITY PLASTICS

Utility Plastics to Invest \$20 Million in New Valdosta Facility, Creating Over 60 Jobs

Utility Plastics, LLC relocated its manufacturing operations and corporate headquarters to Valdosta-Lowndes County, marking another significant addition to the region's growing industrial base. Creating more than 60 jobs, Utility Plastics has invested approximately \$20 million to establish its facility in the development authority's second speculative building, located in the Westside Business Park.

The company produces heavy-duty underground enclosures for power, water, and communication markets worldwide. As part of its initial startup phase, the company will manufacture an estimated 23 million pounds of plastic annually.



UTILITY PLASTICS

In August 2025, Oldcastle Infrastructure—which operates nearly 80 manufacturing facilities and employs more than 4,000 team members across the U.S.—acquired Utility Plastics as a strategic investment to expand its manufacturing capacity and broaden its product portfolio in the southeastern United States. As part of this initiative, the Valdosta facility is currently undergoing a significant expansion, including the relocation of manufacturing equipment from other facilities across North America.

Connecting Education & Industry

THE WORKFORCE PIPELINE

The VLCDA continues to play an active role in supporting the development of the WIN (Workforce Innovation Network) Regional College & Career Academy, recognizing the initiative as a transformative step in strengthening the region's long-term workforce pipeline. As industries across South Georgia continue to grow and evolve, the academy represents a strategic investment in preparing students with the skills needed for today's high-demand careers.

WIN Academy is designed as a collaborative, industry-informed training model that will serve high school students from Valdosta City Schools as well as the Berrien, Clinch, Cook, Echols, and Lanier County school systems. By bringing together multiple school districts, the academy will create a regional talent pipeline that connects students directly to career opportunities in advanced manufacturing, logistics,



healthcare, construction, and other technical fields critical to the local economy.

By strengthening the connection between education and industry, the WIN Regional College & Career Academy will help expand career pathways for students while supporting the continued growth of Valdosta-Lowndes County's business community. This forward-looking partnership will play a vital role in developing a skilled workforce prepared to meet the demands of South Georgia's evolving economy for years to come.

BUILDING THE FUTURE

The Build the Future: Innovators event highlighted the creativity and technical talent of students across the region, offering a glimpse into the next generation of South Georgia's workforce. Students from Valdosta Middle School, Lowndes High School, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, and Valdosta State University showcased innovative projects and hands-on demonstrations that reflected the growing connection between education and industry.

Attendees also experienced emerging workforce training technologies, including virtual learning tools and game-based simulations designed to improve retention, safety, and productivity in high-demand careers. These interactive demonstrations illustrated how advanced training methods are preparing students and workers with real-world skills.



The event brought together students, educators, industry partners, and community leaders to celebrate innovation and collaboration while reinforcing Valdosta-Lowndes County's commitment to developing a skilled workforce and building a stronger future for the region.

CTAE INDUSTRY TOURS

Each year, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority hosts industry tours for Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) teachers from across the region. These tours provide educators with a firsthand look at the types of technical careers available in Valdosta-Lowndes County and the skills employers are seeking in today's workforce.

The experience includes visits to local industries as well as Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, where teachers learn about the latest certifications, training programs, and degree opportunities aligned with high-demand careers. By connecting educators directly with industry leaders and workforce partners, the tours help ensure that classroom instruction reflects the real-world skills needed in today's economy.

These tours highlight the region's strong commitment to workforce development by strengthening the connection between education, industry, and career opportunities for students across South Georgia.



CTAE teachers toured Valdosta's new GAF roofing manufacturing facility, gaining a firsthand look at modern manufacturing processes and the skills needed for careers in advanced industry.

BUSINESS RETENTION

Supporting our existing industries remains one of the Authority's highest priorities, and our Business Retention and Expansion (BRAT) program continues to serve as a cornerstone of that commitment. In 2026, we are strengthening this initiative by restructuring our BRAT Luncheons into focused peer-group sessions. The new format brings together professionals in similar roles across different industries, creating an environment for meaningful dialogue, shared insights, and practical problem-solving. By connecting leaders who face similar operational challenges, these sessions encourage collaboration, strengthen industry relationships, and help address workforce, infrastructure, and operational needs more effectively supporting continued, sustainable growth across our industrial base.



BRAT hosted a June 26 session on the power of apprenticeships to address workforce needs. Representatives from the Technical College System of Georgia highlighted how apprenticeship programs build skilled talent, boost retention, and lower recruitment costs. Missy Eason of Ace Electric shared how the company's apprenticeship model fills critical workforce gaps, while Richard "Tiger" Berard of Pete's Otto Shop offered a small-business perspective on how apprenticeships help family-owned companies grow and thrive.

Powering Growth & Opportunity

CELEBRATING MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing continues to play a vital role in the economic strength of Valdosta-Lowndes County. In recognition of its impact, Lowndes County Commission Chairman Bill Slaughter and Valdosta Mayor Scott James Matheson proclaimed Oct. 6-10, 2025, as Manufacturing Week in the community.



Terry Hunt, owner of Hunt Industries, joins Lowndes County Commission Chairman Bill Slaughter and Valdosta Mayor Scott James Matheson as they proclaim Oct. 6-10, 2025, Manufacturing Week in Valdosta and Lowndes County.

In Lowndes County, the manufacturing sector employs approximately 4,953 people locally—an increase of 992 jobs over the past five years—helping drive innovation, strengthen the local economy, and support continued regional growth.

Manufacturing in the region spans a diverse range of sectors, including automotive, agribusiness, food processing, and chemical production. These industries

contribute significantly to the local economy by leveraging advanced technology, skilled talent, and modern production methods.

“As we recruit and retain manufacturers, we strengthen the economic engine that drives opportunity and prosperity for our region,” said Niki Ogletree, President and CEO of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority.

Hunt Industries hosted this year’s National Manufacturing Day ceremony, highlighting the importance of the industry and the career opportunities it provides. Owner Terry Hunt emphasized the value of strong manufacturing employers that provide competitive wages and benefits while contributing to the long-term success of the community.

“It was an honor to host this year’s Manufacturing Day ceremony,” said Terry Hunt, owner of Hunt Industries, which employs more than 300 people. “We want to give back to our community and provide a place where people want to work.”

 **4,900+**

Manufacturing Jobs in
Lowndes County



EMERGING AG TECH HUB



Valdosta, Lowndes County continues to gain national recognition for its leadership in agricultural innovation. Business Facilities Magazine recently ranked Valdosta among the Top 10 Metro Communities for Agritech, highlighting the region's growing influence in food production, crop science, and agricultural technology.

The community is also gaining momentum as a hub for AgTech innovation, serving as home to leading chemical manufacturing companies specializing in crop protection and agricultural solutions. Industry leaders such as Corteva Agriscience and CJB Companies, including CJB Applied Technologies and Salvus, continue to advance research, formulation development, and manufacturing that support the agricultural sector.

Located in one of the nation's most productive agricultural regions, Valdosta-Lowndes County offers a pro-business climate and the infrastructure needed to support growth and expansion. The region is well-positioned for companies seeking to scale food processing operations or launch the next generation of AgTech solutions.

“Valdosta's growing footprint in AgTech and food production underscores our region's strategic position as a leader in agricultural innovation,” said Niki Ogletree, President and CEO of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority. “By supporting innovative companies like CJB Applied Technologies and Salvus, we are fueling economic growth while helping shape the future of food and crop production across the Southeast and beyond.”

CJB Applied Technologies, LLC, part of the CJB Companies, has delivered chemical and biological expertise to clients across a wide range of industries for the past 10 years.



Valdosta's growing footprint in AgTech and food production underscores our region's strategic position as a leader in agricultural innovation.

Niki Ogletree

President & CEO

Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority

VALDOSTA-LOWNDES COUNTY

The Capital of South Georgia.

In Valdosta-Lowndes County, we understand that a community's economic stability reflects a united effort to create a high-standard quality of life. Our community is known for its business-friendly environment, quality educational system, robust housing market, diverse recreational and entertainment opportunities, and thriving art community.

