

## **LGC puts economic development front and center**

By Marla Stroupe for *The Georgetown Times*

The importance of bringing new business to our area was the focus of Leadership Georgetown County's (LGC) March 17 class day. LGC members met with area business owners, entrepreneurs and government officials to learn about what it takes to entice and keep businesses in our region.

David Essex, executive director of the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments explained the importance of regional planning in securing funding to support revitalization, renovation and expansion across Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties. The more we all can do to make this a more desirable place to live, the better chance we have of bringing in viable employers.

Georgetown County Economic Development Director Wayne Gregory is all too familiar with what it takes to secure commitments from new businesses. During the numerous presentations that he makes each year to employers, visitors and community groups, he offers a wealth of data that profiles Georgetown County and its offerings. Gregory and Port Director David Schronce both believe that dredging the Georgetown port for 27-foot draft is a key to bringing five new businesses to our area in 2010. Those businesses already have made relocation commitments contingent upon port dredging.

A panel consisting of Sally Hogan from Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce, Tonia Speir from Case Solutions advertising and Brent Quillen from Coastal Wire talked to LGC members about issues as diverse as where to find loyal, skilled workers to how small businesses are promoting themselves with less money, to how our coastal area will begin marketing itself as the Hammock Coast.

As a first class example of innovative businesses that have chosen Georgetown County as a place to thrive, the LGC group visited Renewed World Energies (RWE), founded by two engineers who are pioneering ways to harvest microalgae and use it in the bio-fuel, nutraceutical, cosmetics, aquatics and farming industries. The company's short-term goal is to be the leader in manufacturing and selling its patent-pending algae photo-bioreactor and supplying the products and services related to the algae harvesting process.

In addition to its eight-month curriculum, the LGC Class XIX has chosen a class project designed to improve one of our county's historic sites, the Georgetown lighthouse. Class members currently are recruiting volunteers and assessing the type and amount of work and other resources needed to refurbish the site.

If you're a lighthouse lover or would like to assist with this project, please contact Tom Winslow at [twinslow@edbelllaw.com](mailto:twinslow@edbelllaw.com) or Beth Stedman at [bstedma@clemson.edu](mailto:bstedma@clemson.edu) . The project will be underway throughout the spring and into summer 2010.

Leadership Georgetown County is a partnership effort of the Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce and the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development.