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Kay Durand tapped to lead Center for Strategic Planning

(Sept. 24, 2009) The Troup County Center for Strategic Planning met as an organized agency today with its Board of Directors naming Kay Durand executive director of the nonprofit formed to bring to fruition initiatives outlined in a two-year study facilitated by Georgia Tech.

The 501c3 nonprofit corporation will be headed by a Board consisting of leaders of local governments and major institutions throughout Troup County. The Center for Strategic Planning will be located on the second floor of the Troup County Government Center where workers are currently renovating a vacant office to accommodate the new Center, set to open in early October.

As executive director, Durand initially will focus on workforce development, a major concern for area officials hoping to reduce the county's current 14.6 percent unemployment rate. The Center for Strategic Planning will be responsible for maintaining the "Troup Works" Web site, currently being constructed to match businesses and industries that are hiring with potential employees. The site ultimately will allow employers to register their available jobs while Troup residents in need of jobs will be able to post their applications on the site.



“I’ll be responsible for making sure the content is there as far as employers, to connect unemployed residents of Troup County with jobs and educational opportunities for those jobs,” said Durand. “If jobseekers don’t get matched up with employers, we’ll find out why and direct them to ways they can develop skills necessary for meaningful employment in Troup County.”

Organization of the nonprofit Center follows finalization of a two-year study by Georgia Tech which outlined 10 goals with 50 strategies aimed at improving the quality of life in Troup County by addressing various concerns, from education and employment to services for senior citizens and preschoolers.

“If that work is going to be continued, it’s going to take a concerted effort, and that’s what the Center for Strategic Planning is all about,” said Durand. “What’s most exciting is that leadership at all levels is coming together on this board to make sure we accomplish goals for the betterment of our entire community. We want to plan well to make this a viable community that makes a positive difference in people’s lives.”

Durand is no stranger to serving her community. The first woman elected to a seat on LaGrange City Council, she served as council member from November 1989 through December 1999. During that time, she was active in coordinating a study of local courts which resulted in establishing the local mediation center; initiating a committee to study creation of a comprehensive recreation department, which ultimately led to formation of Troup County Parks and Recreation Commission; improving downtown LaGrange; and working to ensure affordable

housing as a founding member of Neighborhood Housing Services. In December 2008, she retired from Durand-Wayland where she had worked with her husband, Fred, since 1995.

“After four months of a leisurely lifestyle, I was ready to get deeply involved in something meaningful and felt like my experiences in the community would serve this organization well,” she said. “I was fortunate to be selected. This is a wonderful, exciting time to be in Troup County. I can’t help but have hope because of the outstanding people in our community, their dedication and foresight.”

Center for Strategic Planning directors include Jeff Lukken, LaGrange mayor; Ricky Wolfe, Troup County Commission chairman; Drew Ferguson, West Point mayor; Jack Leidner, Hogansville City Council member; Speer Burdette, Callaway Foundation executive director; Ed Smith, Troup County School System superintendent; Dan McAlexander, LaGrange College president; Skip Sullivan, West Georgia Technical College president; Page Estes, Troup County Chamber of Commerce president; Diehardt Lindner, LaGrange Development Authority president; and Jerry Fulks, West Georgia Health Systems president.

Five non-voting directors include managers and assistant managers of local governments, currently, Tom Hall, LaGrange city manager; Ed Moon, West Point city manager; Bill Stankiewicz, Hogansville city manager; Mike Dobbs, Troup County manager; and Tod Tentler, Troup County assistant manager.