



Executive Brief

Volume I, Issue 2



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of Life

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Second Quarter

What's Hot

If you look across the state for innovative and sustainable economic growth you will find success in central Georgia. Two issues particularly high on the radar screen in this area are growth management and workforce readiness.

In May, 30 practitioners in a regional workshop examined growth management models from showcase communities and downtown development authorities. Communities are committed to developing existing commerce centers before creating new ones. To facilitate smart growth, the Department of Community Affairs issued this spring its first round of funding for quality growth community projects, a total of \$150,000.

In education, initiatives like the Flint River Consortium and

other workforce development centers bring businesses, educational institutions and agencies together to create a seamless transition from classroom to workplace. Georgia Tech's Tech Smart Centers have assisted communities, like Thomaston and Upson County, with bridging leadership and technology skills while eleven technical colleges in the region support custom technical training programs.

From Fort Valley to Sylvania to Commerce, economic development professionals and local volunteers are channeling resources to build quality communities.

Daryl Ingram
Business Development Manager

Monticello Mayor Susan Holmes explains, "We also believe preservation is economic development."

A defining characteristic of the titans

is their ability to tell the difference between the seemingly impossible and the genuinely impossible.

Harvard Business Review

The **Monticello** community motto "preserving our past is our future" captures the vision that guides economic development leaders of Jasper County. This community desires to keep its quality of life and rural character by managing growth as it develops a strategic 10-year plan including a new industrial park.

Gayle Boykin, Executive Director of the **Screven County Industrial Development Authority** and her community took an opportunity to support young people to create jobs. Georgia's first 90-day school for at-risk youth, The Savannah River Challenge, employs 130 people. In its first year, 75 percent of its "graduates" are trouble-free. Early in the siting process, a town meeting of educators, commissioners, law enforcement officers and business leaders facilitated the community support for the venture.

Thomaston, a community who lost 1,500 jobs in January 2001 with the closing of a 2.6 million square foot facility, Thomaston Mills, secured three textile concerns and one development company to use the existing space within a 12-month period. Community leadership rallied with the help of many state agencies and developed an eco-

nomics development advisory council of manufacturers, bankers and leaders to create a broad community development plan including attention to quality of life, recreation and education.

The leaders in **Covington/Newton County** conceived a Center for Community Preservation and Design to be a clearinghouse for positive, sustainable and quality economic growth. The specific initiatives - Smart Growth Newton County, Newton County Trail Path, Inc. and Newton County Land Trust Alliance will share resources through the center that is currently under construction.

The **Griffin-Spalding** Development Authority headed by David Luckie, former GEDA president is launching a new mixed-use industrial park aided by a special purpose local option sales tax.

The Four County Authority of **Walton, Newton, Morgan and Jasper County**, with 1500 acres traversing three counties on the I-20 corridor, envision Stanton Springs Industrial Park as a mixed use development of residential/commercial/ industrial components. To support the project, each county adopted mutual ordinances and codes. The total concept is a 30-year buildout with the first 100 acres marked for an industrial park in 2003. Technology Park Atlanta is marketing the property.

Commerce city council including MEAG Power board member Bob Sosebee, the local chamber of commerce and the downtown development authority transformed the old city hall into a Business Development Center. The center, as an incubator for start-ups, reviews business and financing plans.

Elbert County Chamber of Commerce honors a visionary leader, Frank Coggins, CEO of

Coggins Industries with a first ever Ambassador Award for his economic development efforts spanning 40 years. He negotiated financing options, donated land, envisioned industrial parks and built infrastructure through his influence and commitment to Elbert County.

"The higher the education the farther you go away to get a job."

Frank Coggins on the conundrum of retaining a workforce in rural Georgia

Leadership



"Sound leadership is always inclusive. Look at your team of community leaders. If they all look like you in terms of age, race, background, education and social group, you aren't inclusive."

Laura Meadows
Commissioner
Georgia Department
of Community Affairs

From July 2000 to June 2001, visitors to Georgia spent over \$16 billion.

Oracle Packaging in Thomaston manufactures 11 million Krispy Kreme doughnut boxes weekly.

Leggett & Platt[®] INCORPORATED

Existing Industry

Leggett & Platt Inc., a **Walton County** manufacturer completed an expansion in January 2002 bringing three remote operations into one 580,000 square foot site in Monroe. Parent Leggett & Platt a Fortune 500 company produces a variety of engineered components with revenues of \$4.1 billion. The mattress and boxspring components from the Monroe facility go to final manufacturers in the Southeast.

This April, Southeast Toyota of **Commerce** added 55,000 square feet to its 120,000 square feet, sprawling 300-acre complex where North American-made Toyotas are processed for distribution in portions of the Southeast. In 2001, Inland Processing provided pre-dealer delivery services for 104,000 vehicles, and employs 150 people.

The family-owned Woodbury Box Company in **Thomaston** re-trains and retains employees. Susan Hall, a mathematics Ph.D. and president since 1988, values education especially in a workforce



In 2001, Southeast Toyota installed over 500,000 accessories in cars for distributors.

that can change with new product lines and equipment modernization. When 1994 capital improvements included new manufacturing equipment to make metal mop frames, employees were matched with the new processes and retrained. No one left. Hall seeks employees that “keep learning” and rewards training with pay. The latest new product, Blooming Wire, a high end line of garden trellises and planters, will debut nationally next month at the Atlanta International Gift and Home Market. The \$4.25 million company which began in 1946 doesn’t make boxes anymore but the company’s original moniker is one Hall plans on keeping.

Downtown



• A fledgling facade grant program in the city of **Forsyth** for downtown storefront improvements created \$110,000 worth of improvements. One such merchant is A Touch of Glass, a stained glass studio with 22,000 square feet of design and fabrication space. Owner Celia Henigman designs for residential, ecclesiastical and commercial markets and her work is sold throughout the United States. The downtown improvements have sparked 15 new applicants for the facade program.

• The 1898 Fitzpatrick Hotel at the heart of the downtown square in **Washington** is getting a \$1million facelift. The hotel will include 14 bed and breakfast rooms and three storefronts.

A Touch of Glass creates custom art glass design including custom bevels, door, window and wall systems. Henigman studied with national and international master craftsmen, including a three-month internship in Italy.

Preservation

Following a community design workshop with the Georgia Conservancy, Covington has embarked on a neighborhood live/work concept of residences, retail, civic and commercial named Clark Grove. The first phase of housing is under construction with full build-out in 5-10 years. A four-mile multi-use bicycle/walking trail with a pedestrian bridge is also underway. The trail will link downtown, Turner Lake Park in Clark Grove, the high school and the library. Transportation Enhancement Act funds from the Department of Transportation are supporting the trail project.

Infrastructure

- **Monticello** has received a \$98,000 USDA grant for a two-acre parking lot to support its downtown commerce.

- **Fort Valley** received grant dollars from OneGeorgia funds, the Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Transportation to upgrade rail, road and utility infrastructure in Phase III of the South Peach Industrial Park.



- **Washington, Monticello and Fort Valley** are offering wireless Internet service through private sector partnerships to provide high-speed cyber options for its citizens without the expense of fiber optic facilities.

- The counties of Meriwether, Pike, and Talbot are working with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish a 55-mile loop in west Georgia as the Meriwether County Scenic Byway. The DOT has approved the first phase and now the municipalities and counties are

developing the recreation, and tourist destinations associated with the byway. One highlight of the route is Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Warm Springs home, one of the busiest tourist sites in Georgia. The route should be open in 2003.

Since 1967, Georgia's workforce training program Quick Start has partnered with more than 3,400 companies to create customized training for 250,000 Georgians.



Special Focus

Workforce

"An educated workforce is my number one priority," explains Charles Sims Executive Director of the Development Authority of Peach County as he describes the Workforce Development Center in Fort Valley, a center designed to incorporate under one roof literacy programs, and other innovative and alternative education initiatives. This is a theme that resonates among many middle Georgia communities wanting to ensure business and industry have the manpower to locate and prosper there.

Across the region partnerships have emerged with area technical schools, colleges, high schools, businesses and other entities interested in training and skill development. A hospitality curriculum to support and develop a 400-person workforce for the new Ritz-Carlton Lodge at Reynolds Plantation evolved in Green County and the city of Thomaston looked to Flint Technical College, the Workforce Investment Board and others to help a workforce evolve as a textile industry changed.

Concludes Sims, "Labor is a scarce commodity. Our literacy education project is important to making sure we can serve industry."

B uildings and Parks



The READI Program, a community assessment tool that assists communities in examining 13 criteria for economic development success, issued its fiscal year-end report. Region 5 which includes the cities of Commerce, Elberton, Monroe, Covington, and Monticello scored the highest marks. MEAG Power is a member of the READI design team.



Forsyth

Located on Industrial Park Drive. The 10,000 sq. ft. building is expandable to 15,000 sq. ft. and has maximum ceiling heights of 24 ft. Contact the Monroe County Development Authority, 478-994-9239.



Griffin

Located on Boyd's Crossing Road. The building is 106,606 sq. ft. with 30 ft. ceiling height. Contact Griffin-Spalding Development Authority, 770-412-9200.



Columbus

Located on One Battery Blvd in Corporate Ridge Industrial Park. The MBIA building is 127,000 sq. ft. Contact Jim Branock at 706-649-3006.

Parks

Griffin-Spalding County is identifying property for an economic development park to house industries, a hotel-conference center and a research and development incubator.

The design process is completed on a new 102,000 square foot speculative building in Fort Valley South Peach Industrial park.

City of Sandersville and Washington County, in a 50/50 joint land purchase are in the design phase of a new 220-acre rail-served industrial park. A OneGeorgia \$500,000 grant was approved in May. A 100,000 square foot speculative building will be ready spring of 2003.

Location	Available Building	Size/sq. ft.
Monroe	Piedmont Regional	160,000
Warner Robins	Speculative Building	50,000
Athens	Wal-Mart Building	110,580
Athens	Thompson Warehouse	37,080
Commerce	Mt. Olive Rd. Building	60,000

Make A Note

• The third annual Celebrate Rural Georgia takes place August 26-28 at the Dubose Porter Business and Industry Training Center in Dublin, Georgia. The Rural Georgia Development Council sponsors the event. Topics include: rural entrepreneurship, public/private partnerships, regional collaboration, preserving rural character, leadership, and southern hospitality. For more information call Matt Bishop at 706.583.2736 or visit celebratingruralgeorgia.org.

• Visit the Georgia Tech Economic Development Institute website at www.edi.gatech.edu under current events for professional development classes for economic developers.



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Location Georgia, a service of MEAG Power, offers site selection services for the state of Georgia. We also provide communities economic development support in aerial photography services, advertising support, strategic planning facilitation and an economic development lease finance program for buildings, parks, infrastructure and downtown.

MEAG Power is a charter member of Georgia Allies, a statewide economic development marketing alliance of utilities, financial institutions and private business.

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