



End-of-Year
2021



Katy O'Neal Castanien
Griffin Region College and
Career Academy, CEO



GA's Energy Cities At Work

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Education Synergy for Georgia's Economy

The Griffin Region College and Career Academy, one of 18 academies located in ECG communities, is a great example of how these institutions bridge student life and work life.

Daryl Ingram
Sr. VP & Chief External Officer

Griffin Region was honored among its statewide peers as Academy of the Year in 2019. At the helm at the time was the current academy CEO, Katy O'Neal Castanien. Castanien has demonstrated a passion to match industry with student potential for workforce success. She proved herself first at Athens Community Career Academy, named Georgia's College & Career Academy of the Year - 2015.

In 2021, Griffin Region continues to demonstrate a commitment for crafting a slate of academic pathways from local business workforce needs with the ever changing aptitudes, interests, and personalities of Generation Z.

"An additional critical factor for success is parental buy-in. We conduct Parents-Only-Tours at industries to make sure they see the opportunity and the potential," explains Castanien. She invites parents with a personal reminder, "Your student took the YouScience Assessment and it indi-

cated that your child not only has an interest, but the aptitude for a career in manufacturing or engineering."

The goal of all academies is to bring an added dimension to a high school student's education. The academy environment gives a student a fast-track to garner the skills and knowledge to compete in the workplace. With 80 percent of jobs requiring some type of post-secondary education, the academy can give a ready or reluctant student new motivation and a timely boost. A four-year degree may be the ideal answer for some but other options such as apprenticeships or technical certificates exist. Dual enrollment for high school students into post-secondary institutions is the gold standard in college and career academies.

Thanks to the synergy created by the engagement of local businesses, neighborhood school systems, a ready student population and forward-thinking state leadership, this initiative is a line item on our Governor's budget; proof of its success. The Technical College System of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Education and the Office of the Governor and Office of the Lieutenant Governor all champion this state network of academies.

See student profiles on Workforce panel

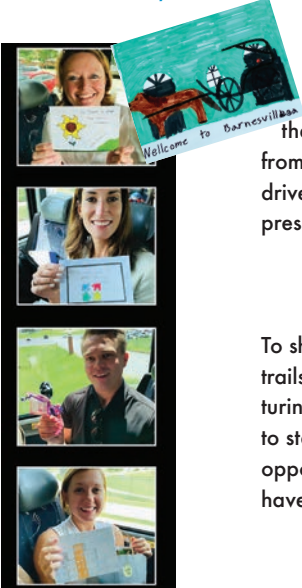
ECG LOCATION GEORGIA

helping bring growth to Georgia

2022 ED Summit April 27 - April 29 Westin Jekyll Island

see back panel for more event information

community tour



ECG tour guests

The true value of the ECG bus tour resides in the ability to connect with people and our friends from Atlanta. Economic Development is a relationship driven industry and we appreciate the opportunity to present our community in a creative, fun format.

B.J. Walker, Executive Director
Development Authority of Peach County, Fort Valley

To showcase our small city's quality of life including trails, parks, a technical college and more, while featuring our available economic development products to statewide project managers and DCA is the big opportunity of this tour. We are most appreciative to have been included!

Kay Pippin, Mayor
City of Jackson

our communities

Acworth	Douglas	Monroe
Adel	East Point	Monticello
Albany	Elberton	Moultrie
Barnesville	Ellaville	Newnan
Blakely	Fairburn	Norcross
Brinson	Fitzgerald	Oxford
Buford	Forsyth	Palmetto
Cairo	Fort Valley	Quitman
Calhoun	Grantville	Sandersville
Camilla	Griffin	Sylvania
Cartersville	Hampton	Sylvester
Chickamauga	Hogansville	Thomaston
College Park	Jackson	Thomasville
Commerce	LaFayette	Washington
Covington	LaGrange	West Point
Crisp County	Lawrenceville	Whigham
Dalton	Mansfield	
Doerun	Marietta	

Welcome to Barnesville was the theme for personalized messages from local elementary students to the 20+ economic development professionals who pulled into downtown. Face-to-face visits give the visitors armed with resources and potential industry prospects a chance to see the best of each community. The group went to seven ECG cities; Barnesville, Thomaston, Fort Valley, Forsyth, Hampton, Griffin and Jackson.



City of Camilla Gets Strategic with EDGE

ECG • MEAG Power • The Gas Authority - sponsor the EDGE initiative

While the pandemic might have slowed in-person collaboration, the City of Camilla took the lessons of the training initiative EDGE straight to the heart of the community. Following completion of the EDGE workshops, the staff and city council were ready to build a five-year strategic plan.

Daryl Ingram and Michelle Holbrook led the staff, city council and 10-15 community leaders in a strategic planning session. Plus, citizen input was solicited on the final document. Four guiding principles emerged for the initiatives of the plan. They are: build on a base of financial stability, enhance quality of life, create efficiency through environmental sustainability, and act based on fairness, equality and trust to grow.

The first initiatives speak directly to quality of life. J.W. Toombs Park, a 29-year-old city park received a \$80,000 facelift with new basketball courts, a picnic area, bleachers, water fountains and security cameras. Secondly, a downtown Splash Park is a new fun destination for families in the heat of summer. The space includes public restrooms and a picnic pavilion. Thirdly, a future amphitheater which again provides a community gathering place is envisioned for downtown.

Critical infrastructure improvements are slated for 2022, including renovations on wastewater and water systems.

"Perhaps the best aspect of this vision for the future is that collaboration drove the process. ECG staff knows the character and assets of the city. Plus, participation across the community in the planning activity ensures we are inclusive," states City Manager Steve Sykes.



Industry Factoid: ECG cities have an electric portfolio that is approximately 70 percent emissions-free.

Workforce



Griffin CCA Student Standouts from cover story

18 ECG cities have College & Career Academies

Ana Giddings, 19 years old, prior to high school considered a career as an architect. Her horizons were broadened when the academy helped her explore STEM options in manufacturing and engineering. The academy facilitated Ana in an apprenticeship with Norcom, a local manufacturer of school and office supplies in Griffin.



After three years of classwork in tandem with part-time employment with Norcom, she completed a coveted German apprenticeship designation. The final steps included rigorous exams in math, critical thinking and engineering concepts. As she begins college in 2022, Norcom has offered future summer employment while Giddings is in school.

William Samples, 19 years old, and a film major, entered Clayton State University approximately two years ahead of the plan. He entered in his junior year thanks to his academic work through the academy during his high school career. At the academy, his chosen pathway was in film production. Samples knew when he was seven years old he would be in theater or the performing arts. Opportunities followed his dream. In high school productions, he had directing experience; more recently a Georgia film production company provided on-location experience as cameras rolled. Samples hopes to lead community theater or work behind the camera in film production when he finishes college.



Workforce Factoid: All 22 state technical colleges serve as registered apprenticeship sponsors making the technical college system the largest registered apprenticeship network throughout our state.

Cities Succeed With State Partners

GDEcD*

The Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development (GRAD) Program offers industrial certified sites that are ready for fast-track construction projects.



Newest ECG community GRAD Select Sites:
Sylvester
Worth County Industrial Park
204 acres

Fort Valley/Byron
Robbins International Industrial Park
591 acres

Douglas
Satilla Park
175 acres

*GA Department of Economic Development

Governor & GDEcD

Governor Brian Kemp's electric vehicle (EV) alliance concept responds to growing trends in the industry.

"The Electric Mobility and Innovation Alliance will give Georgia a greater, more comprehensive strategy for the wave of electrification we are seeing across industry sectors," said GDEcD Commissioner Pat Wilson.

"The ECG cities have just begun serving this industry. To date, Commerce and Calhoun have located three key manufacturers and many cities are installing charging stations in downtowns," says ECG executive and alliance member Daryl Ingram.

Industry analysts predict EVs will have 10 percent of the vehicle market share by 2025.

GA Tech & ECG

"The \$10,000 GA Tech Smart City grant advanced our effort to digitize data into a usable, visual format. We first used the Geographic Information System (GIS) on housing data. Going forward we can track all data points that further economic development efforts," explains Albany City Manager Steven Carter.

"Successful 21st century economic development initiatives will be mostly data-driven. Readily available visual and user-friendly data get responses from prospects. ECG has the tools to assist cities with this effort," adds ECG executive Daryl Ingram.

DATA-DRIVEN

Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

Since its creation in 2017, Rural Zone designations provide tax credits to individuals creating jobs and making qualifying investments within historic downtown areas that have been designated as Rural Zones. Each designation lasts for five years.

The incentives are in the form of job tax, invest and rehabilitation credits. If a business takes advantage of all credits, the zone could allow a half million dollars in tax credits.

A few of the requirements are:

- Cities and counties with a population of less than 15,000
- Have a concentration of historic commercial structures at least 50 years old within the zone
- Must submit a feasibility study or market analysis identifying business activities that can be supported in the zone



Thomaston



LaFayette



Cordele

These three ECG cities are in the most recent group of 10 communities named as Rural Zones by DCA. They join ECG cities Moultrie, West Point, Adel, Commerce, Douglas, Fitzgerald, Hogansville, Monticello, Sylvester and Washington.

Biz Profiles — Industry Insights — Leaders at Work — City Initiatives — Expert Data

sector • manufacturing

A Goliath Chooses ECG Cities Again and Again

It was 1996, SKC Inc., a SK Group subsidiary, first located in the city of Covington. The plant opened to make polyester films used for labels on consumer products, window coverings, solar panels and other applications. The company remains successful today with sales of roughly \$68 million annually with 300 employees.

In 2021, 25 years later, SK Innovation manufacturing dominates the landscape on I-85 at Commerce. SK Innovation located first one, then a second, lithium-ion battery plant in this community to support the electric vehicle market. In terms of investment dollars and jobs, it is one of the largest economic development projects in Georgia history.

Fall of 2021 brings a promise of more foreign investment from the Korean giant. SKC Inc., announced an unprecedented venture on the original Covington footprint. With an investment of more than \$473 million, plans include manufacturing glass-based substrates for semiconductor chips. The process includes next-generation glass substrate technology for high-performance semiconductors, a raw material that US manufacturers use in a long list of consumer products.

SKC Inc. executive and former GA Tech researcher, Sung Jin Kim, said the glass-based technology will aid chip performance and hold down power use for some computing uses.

Beyond the potential of a cutting-edge product, this high-tech venture will put Georgia in the catbird seat for alleviating one of America's key supply chain roadblocks for computer chips. Currently chip manufacturing is dominated by overseas companies. SKC Inc. production should ramp up by late summer 2023; four hundred jobs are anticipated.

Corporate community commitment

"Since its first North American presence in 1996 in Covington, SKC Inc. has supported the community; in 2020 it pivoted production to PPE supplies to combat the pandemic," explains Serra Hall, Executive Dir., Newton County Industrial Development Authority.

In Commerce, even before SK Innovation was fully operational, the company donated \$400,000 to help create the technology platform by which Georgians can screen themselves for COVID-19.

SK Group is comprised of 30 companies.

sector • agriculture

Two Companies Celebrate Cotton - American Blossom Linens and Magnolia Loom T-shirts

The CBS Saturday Morning newscast featured American Blossom Linens of Thomaston Mills in its Made in the USA segment this November. American Blossom a brand that got its beginnings in the 1940s is noted for cotton linens that are made locally and raw materials that are regionally sourced. Today, with the renewed interest in American made products, the brand answers the demand for organically sourced sustainable products. The linens are 100 percent American organic cotton. Consumers may buy this luxury bedding directly from the manufacturer.

Zeke Chapman of Sandersville didn't start out as a clothing entrepreneur. The pandemic fueled a need to pivot a printing operation to an online platform selling customized products for fundraisers and corporate identity initiatives. From seed to shirt, Magnolia Loom pocket T-shirts come from cotton that is grown and processed in Georgia. The fabric is cut and sewn in Swainsboro. From there, Magnolia Loom shirts can be personalized with a customer's message and sold exclusively on his website. Magnolia Loom is certified Georgia Grown and is a member of the Georgia Grown economic development marketing initiative.

"Since I was very young, I have understood the importance of the agriculture industry in Georgia," Chapman said. "I knew I wanted this venture to support local cotton farmers, processors and sewers, and that's exactly what we are doing with Magnolia Loom."

A Georgia Tree For The Vice-President

Berry's Tree Farm, a Covington business, won a National Christmas Tree Contest. Owner Chuck Berry sent a Newton County-grown Murray Cypress tree to Washington, D.C., for display at the Vice-Presidential residence at the U.S. Naval Observatory.

Georgia Cotton by the Numbers, annually

- Georgia ranks 3rd nationally in cotton production
- Cotton-related professions provide 53,000 jobs
- Cotton's overall impact exceeds \$3 billion

Proof Is In The ECG Product

FY 2021	ECG communities attracted a quarter of the total	GDEcD of that ECG communities	379
industry announcements			97

Performance Accolades

Albany

Pretoria Fields - brewery

Small Business Rock Star
one of six honorees

Newnan

Poriferous, LLC

Presidential Export Award

one of 16 national export awards granted by the US President

The GA Economic Development Association and the GA Department of Economic Development bestow the Small Business Rock Star honors.

Remarkable Year of Growth

sector manufacturing

Newnan

Semperit Industrial Products is a headquarters and manufacturing facility; \$9 million and 70 jobs.

Cartersville

IC Biomedical produces medical-grade freezers; 75,000 sq.ft.

Buford

Rivacold makes refrigeration systems; \$5 million and 140 jobs
Megadyne Group makes engineered belts used in robotics.

LaGrange

Remington Firearms is a headquarters and manufacturing; \$100 million.

Griffin

Rinnai American Corporation makes tankless water heaters; 150 jobs.

Covington

SKC Inc. produces substrate for semiconductor chips; \$473 million.
Mytex Polymers makes engineered polyolefins; \$7 million - expansion.

sector manufacturing, continued

Cairo

Sailfish Boats makes recreational boats; \$1 million and 70 jobs - expansion.

Albany

Pratt Industries makes corrugated packaging; \$18 million and 30 jobs - expansion.

sector distribution

Lawrenceville

Target's supply chain facility is 367,000 sq. ft.

East Point

Home Depot order fulfillment operation is 650,000 sq. ft.

Cartersville

Amazon Delivery Station speeds up last-mile delivery; 100 jobs.

LaFayette

Roper Corporation makes appliances; \$118 million and 600 jobs - expansion.

sector • fintech

Know Your Customer



There is a new kind of customer for economic developers and their utility providers in Georgia.

The customer is a cryptocurrency operation; but ECG cities are smart with this new business model.

"To be successful, communities need to understand this customer. We understand what drives cryptocurrency operations' profitability, and the fintech business environment in which it operates," says Walter West, ECG's Chief Operating Officer.

"We maximize value and manage risk for the customer and the community," he confirms.

A cryptocurrency operation uses sophisticated hardware that solves an extremely complex computational math problem on the blockchain network. For every equation solved, the mining operator receives an electronic cryptocurrency reward. Large mining operations tend to have a massive footprint of computers and are intensive electricity users. They may often add new facilities and electric load quickly and, unlike other industry sectors, do not need redundancy in electric service as readily as they need redundancy in internet connection.

The ECG cities of Sandersville, Adel, Washington, LaFayette, East Point, College Park, Dalton, West Point and Albany have recently located cryptocurrency customers; other cities are in the process. Electric loads vary from two to 35 megawatts and growing.

sector service

Calhoun

Buc-ee's Travel Center facilities include 53,200 sq. ft. and 120 fueling stations.

sector high tech

East Point

Microsoft building a new data center - a new "cloud region;" \$75 million project and 1,500 jobs.

sector electric vehicle news flash!

Just days before this publication went to press, Governor Brian Kemp announced that electric truck maker Rivian will invest \$5 billion in Georgia, creating approximately 7,500 jobs on just under 2,000 acres.

Rivian will be located on an East Atlanta megasite represented by a multi-county joint development authority. The ECG communities included in the joint development authority counties are Jasper (Monticello), Newton (Covington), and Walton (Monroe) counties.

Supply Chain Relief - Inland Ports

Choked supply chains are in the national and state headlines. Griff Lynch, executive director of the Georgia Port Authority (GPA), leads the effort to unclog the Port of Savannah. Thousands of containers are parked untouched in the port yards while consumers face empty shelves. Inland ports are just one strategy to provide some relief. Located outside crowded port areas, inland ports break port bottle necks as well as boost inland regional economic development.



The Cordele Inland Port located in ECG community, Crisp County, in central Georgia opened in 2010, and is a rail-centric service for its customers for the 200 miles to the Savannah Port. Among its services, CIS offers overnight rail service three times a week to Savannah.

Kathy Johnson, President of the Gordon County Chamber of Commerce, sees first hand the economic value to Calhoun and Gordon County of the Appalachian Regional Port that opened in 2018.

“We will have added 11 million square feet in warehouse and distribution by the end of the year,” she reports. Johnson credits proximity to I-75 in her own county, along with the Inland Appalachian Regional Port terminal humming in nearby Murray County for spurring the growth. Changes in e-commerce consumer buying habits, fueled partly by the pandemic, drove the demand for enhanced distribution networks.

A third Georgia inland port is in Gainesville in Northeast Georgia relieving transportation concerns for nearby manufacturers.

Selling Abroad

What do high-tech surgical implants, nuts, and flip flops have in common? They are all products that are sold internationally and recognized as 2021 GA Department of Economic Development GLOBE winners for successfully entering new international market the previous year.

Exporter of the Year - small company Poriferous, LLC in Newnan

Exporter of the Year - mid-size company Sunnyland Farms in Albany

Poriferous is known for state-of-the-art quality surgical implants; its product allows for the patient’s own tissue to integrate with the implant as well as eliminating implant migration, reducing infection, and improving clinical performance.

Alex Wilson, Sunnyland Farms’ Chief Operating Officer, says “We’ve seen a lot of challenges in the past couple of years with Hurricane Michael. We’ve got a great team that gets the product out and we’ve been working with good customers.” The farm has been delivering nuts, cakes, candies, and chocolate since 1948.

Love Georgia-made flip flops! Flip flop sandals are products of exporter Okabashi shoes of Buford. The shoe company is in the small circle of US-MADE footwear makers; today less than one percent of shoes are made domestically.

Okabashi shoes are 100 percent recyclable. Scraps and non-saleable returns are turned into new product. Okabashi is one of the total 31 businesses GDEcD recognized for export business expertise.



Fostering Georgia Growth

ECG’s Office of Economic & Community Development is a liaison between growing companies and the ideal community that can meet their needs.



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We missed last year - Don't miss coming together in 2022



**ECONOMIC
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**20
22**

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ECG Downtowns Are OverAchievers

ECG cities are diverse; urban to rural, mid-size to small. The economic vitality of downtowns is a hallmark of ECG cities across the state. The communities get noticed far and wide.

- Thomaston was selected with five other cities across the nation for the first season of "Home Town Kick-start," an HGTV makeover show. "Home Town" hosts Ben and Erin Napier along with *People* magazine will highlight the town and the revitalization efforts.
- Fitzgerald made *Wall Street Journal* news with its latest tourism endeavor. It is the world's tallest topiary sculpture. The chicken sculpture uses at least 16 tons of steel and includes a B&B to rent to visitors on the ground level. It is a nod to the Burmese chicken that famously co-exist downtown. The next tallest topiary sculpture is a likeness of Mickey Mouse in Dubai.
- The Georgia Downtown Association honors great city initiatives annually. Two of the 12 were ECG cities.

Historic preservation honored in LaGrange

"At its best preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future."
William Murtagh

It was a close call for the Creighton Davis Building. Leon Moody was hired to demolish the historic structure, yet he asked permission for his structural engineers to explore if the building could be saved. The engineers devised a plan to restore the building. Today, it is a boutique with the potential for loft living space on the second floor. The City of LaGrange completed a pocket park next to the building featuring outdoor dining and cell phone charging stations. LaGrange won the Adaptive Reuse Award, defined as the aesthetic process that adapts buildings for new uses while retaining their historic features.

Premier special event honored in Thomasville

The 100th Rose Show & Festival celebration re-imagined its historic parade experience. A new interactive experience replaced the traditional parade with larger-than-life historic photo displays dating back to the 1920s lining Broad Street. Fifteen hundred rose varieties were in bloom for festival goers.

- All right. All right. All right. Matthew McConaughey followed up his 2020 autobiography *Greenlights* with his initiative Grit and Greenlights to honor risk and reward in small businesses. He chose four businesses across the US to feature. Fuzzy Goat, yarn shop owner, Cadence Kidwell, in Thomasville was one of the four businesses with whom he did a digital face-to-face interview. Google the results!



Fuzzy Goat shop

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► Governor Kemp directs \$5.8 million to aid Georgia’s tourism industry as of September 2021. The funds to aid tourism efforts are federal coronavirus relief funds.

