House Rural Development Council

RURAL GEORGIA INITIATIVES

Amy A. Carter, Deputy Commissioner
Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives Division

Meet our Team

Amy Carter, Deputy Commissioner, start date March 16, 2018

Taylor Walden, Project Manager, start date May 16, 2018

Chris Chammoun, Division Director, start date July 1, 2018

All Centers of Innovation fall within the division (Aerospace, Energy Technology, Information Technology, Logistics, Manufacturing)
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives Division
Our Mission

• Help rural Georgia communities become more competitive for economic development projects and identify new strategies for attracting jobs and investment
• Promote collaboration and regionalism in rural areas
• Create relationships between our rural communities and the state and federal agencies that can assist in its development
• Work diligently with other rural-driven organizations to advance these strategies
How are we working toward our mission?
GDEcD Regional Map
Rural Georgia Initiatives – Where we’ve been
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives Division – How are we working toward our mission?

First Roundtable Events – Region 1 (Northwest Georgia)
  • Two Meetings – May 17, 2018, Ringgold and Rome
  • Hosted at Georgia Northwestern Technical College
  • Brought together thought leaders from local communities to learn about state and federal agency opportunities/grants/loans
  • Macro approach – Regional Meetings
  • 14 State Agencies/Programs + 2 Federal Agencies represented
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives Division – How are we working toward our mission?

- Community Meetings
  - Economic developers
  - Chamber executives
  - Locally elected officials
  - Small and large business owners
  - Farmers
  - Bankers
  - Healthcare professionals/administrators
  - Superintendents/teachers/educators
  - Devoted Citizens

Economic Developer/Chamber of Commerce President
Jan Hackett, Blue Ridge-Fannin County

Economic Developer Rick McCaskill,
Bainbridge-Decatur County
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives Division – How are we working toward our mission?

• Community Meetings—What are we hearing?
  • Strengths and Challenges
  • Offer resources—connect the dots
  • Bring our backgrounds to the table to offer suggestions/advice
    • Brain drain is real—ways to keep local students
    • K12/higher education systems
    • Quality of life opportunities/discussions
    • Local leadership MUST WORK TOGETHER
• Some communities are content with their current situation
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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<tr>
<td>GRAD-Ready Sites (Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development); good infrastructure for development</td>
<td>Need funding/grants for sites/infrastructure/website/</td>
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<td>Thriving downtowns</td>
<td>Limited tax base</td>
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<td>Agribusiness</td>
<td>Internet access/cell phone coverage</td>
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<td>School system and graduation rates</td>
<td>School system and graduation rates; apathy for education</td>
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<td>Strong Family Connections partnership</td>
<td>Lack of affordable housing</td>
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<td>Quality of life</td>
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<td>Hospital/healthcare options</td>
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<td>Airport/transportation options/highway/railroad access</td>
<td>Interstate access/transportation</td>
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<td>Dirt roads</td>
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<td>Local government leadership</td>
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<td>Loyal citizens who love and support their community</td>
<td>Recruitment of executive/high-level management</td>
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<td>WORKFORCE—ability and numbers—skill level is minimal; shortages of certain workers; salary range; need more college-educated workers</td>
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GDEcD Rural Georgia Division – How are we working toward our mission?

• Industry Visits/Tours

Briggs & Stratton Tour and largest satsuma farm in Georgia visit, Statesboro

Pretoria Fields (Albany)—GA’s only farmhouse brewery and one of three in the Southeastern US

Hon Manufacturing plant, Cedartown
GDEcD Rural Georgia Division – How are we working toward our mission?

• Industry Visits/Tours

- Sawmill Tour, Forsyth
- Hydro Dynamics Inc Industry Tour, Rome
- Honda Lock Industry Tour, Bremen
- Mount Vernon Mills Industry Tour, Summerville
- National Beef, Moultrie
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives - Working together for the same goal

Attended the Georgia Craft Food Makers Symposium with Georgia Department of Agriculture

USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue and USDA Rural Development State Director Joyce White

Meeting key stakeholders at the Locate South Georgia dinner in Moultrie (21 counties in a regional economic development collaborative)

A visit with rural Congressman Austin Scott
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives - Rural Economic Development Events

Premium Peanut Expansion, Douglas

GRAND OPENING
PREMIUM PEANUT OIL
APRIL 30, 2018

Valmeira Glass Expansion
Ribbon Cutting, Dublin

Sumter County Fiber Connectivity Announcement

Celebrating Rural Georgia’s Small Business Rock Stars, SouthLife Supply Co, Thomasville

Taurus International Announcement, Bainbridge
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives – Seeing Rural Georgia

A visit to the Inland Port in progress

Tour of the Savannah Port and Portfresh Logistics in Bloomingdale—discussing the partnership between the two

Connecting with Rural Georgia economic developers and elected officials (Thomaston mayor, Forsyth Co, Peach Co IA Directors)

A visit to Southern Grace Farms, Enigma
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives – Connecting Rural Georgia on an international level

Comparing rural issues with female mayors from Moldova, Europe
GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives – Connecting with Rural Friends
Rural Georgia Initiatives Goals

- Define rural (“underdeveloped area”)
- Build upon our Rural Georgia Initiatives website landing page and promote it as a “go-to site”
- Set up and maintain social media marketing
- Continue to build upon the micro and macro approach to learning and building up rural communities
- Introduce our K-12 and higher education students to career opportunities within Rural Georgia and their rural communities
- Promote mentorship programs within Rural Georgia to encourage high expectations and build pride for success within communities
- Promote Quality of Life initiatives and growth of a younger workforce in Rural Georgia
The GDEcD Rural Georgia Initiatives Team

Amy, Chris and Taylor—your Rural Development Team