



A Regional Approach to Economic Development

**Rural Development Council
August 14, 2018**

Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, McIntosh, Wayne Counties

What I Plan to Discuss

How to Develop a Successful Regionalism Program in Georgia

Tiers

Incentives

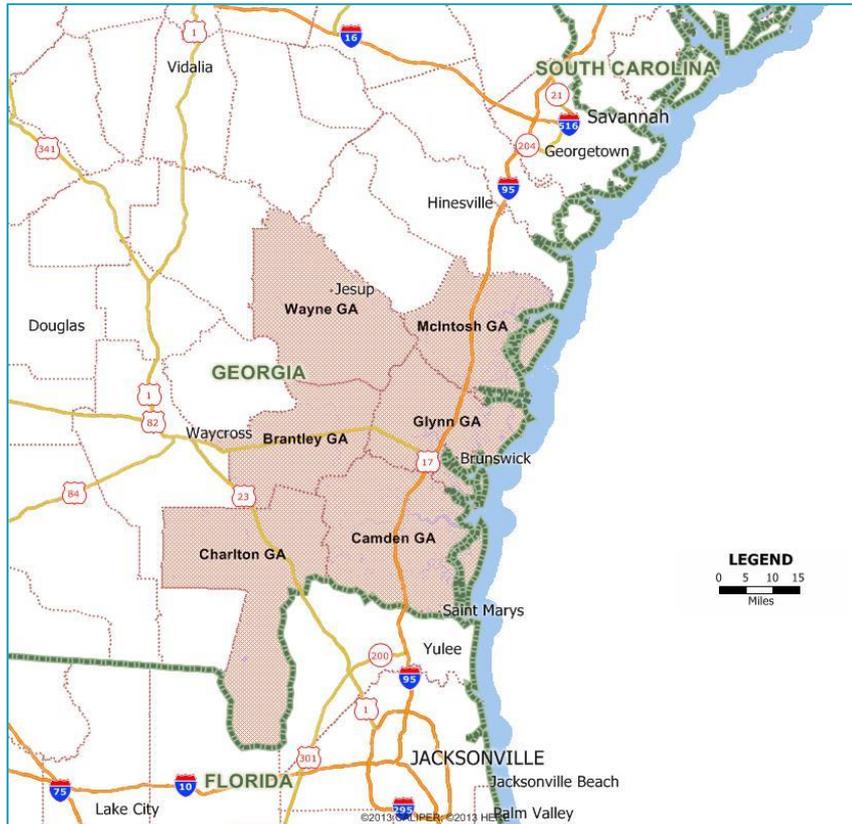
Potential Role of Region Commissions

Role of Agriculture



1st – Prove Economic Dependency

This Determines the Make Up of a Region



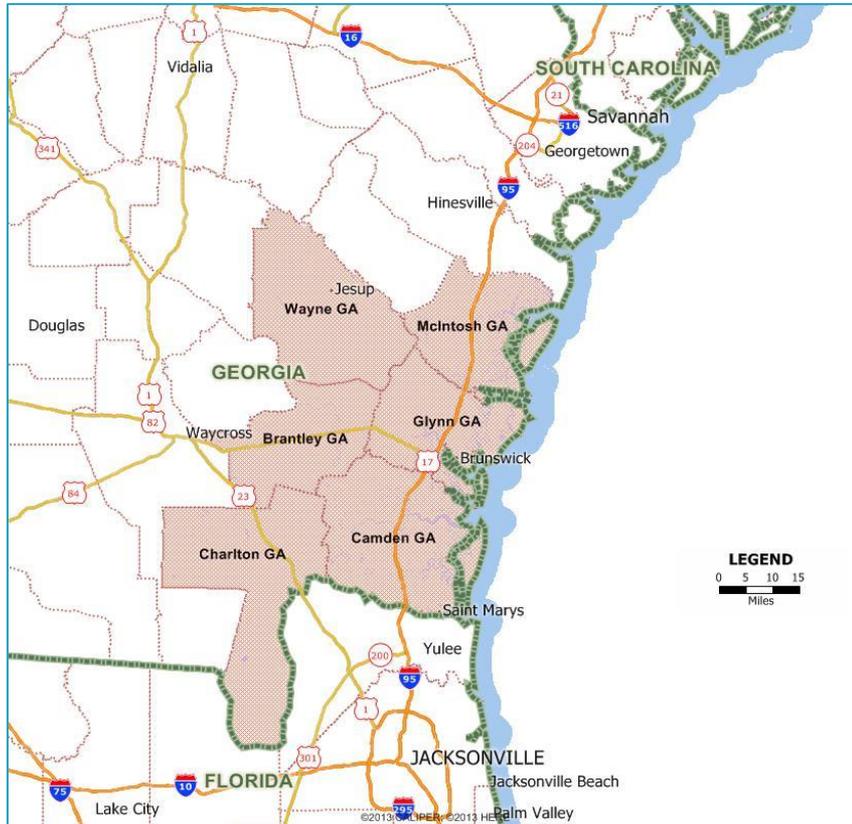
The Southeast Georgia Joint Development Authority has been a marketing alliance of 6 counties that share access to I-95 in SE Georgia, bridging Savannah and Jacksonville

Being large enough to meet project population criteria but small enough to be nimble and inclusive to all, we can conduct credible marketing efforts.



Proven Economic Drivers

Determines the Make Up of a Region



- ▶ Nearby MSAs
- ▶ Workforce Study proved same workers employed
- ▶ Same Educational Institutions
- ▶ Ports, Airports, Interstates, Highways

Incentives

Promoting Regionalism in Rural Georgia

Georgia Statewide

Focus is on individual projects, not product development

- Statutory Credits
- MEGA Project Tax Credits
- High Paying JTCs
- R&D Tax Credits
- Premium Tax Credits
- Zone designations

What Regions Need

Need Product, Staffing, Marketing

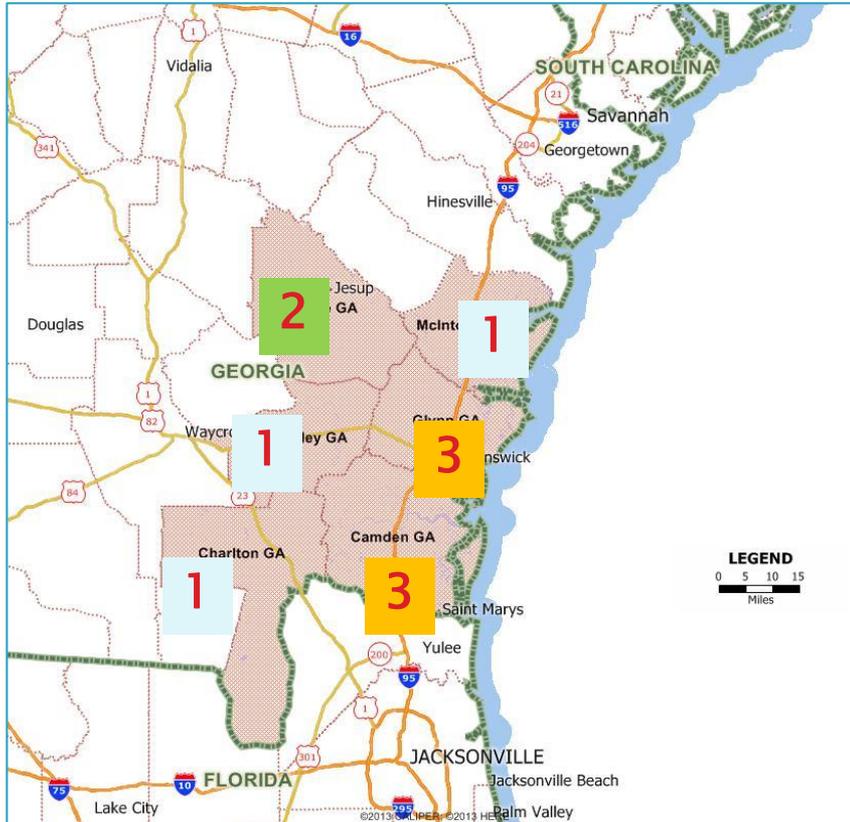
- Infrastructure
- Operation Expenses
- Educated Project Managers, Educational and DOL Staff
- Expert grant writing assistance
- Research assistance
- Should be \$ for \$ with local match

*applies mainly to more developed areas



TIERS

Multiple Designations in One Region



- ▶ Discourages cooperation in most cases
- ▶ Confuses story and project decision makers
- ▶ Punishes those who do everything right!
- ▶ Consider a Region Zone incentive for all qualified active regions

Regions Need Infrastructure

- **Industrial Parks** – not necessarily jointly owned but incentivized more if it is by at least 2 counties in the region, i.e. McIntosh and Glynn. This can be accomplished with a special zone designation like an Opportunity Zone for Regional Parks which gives more incentives to those locating in the park.
- **Spec Buildings** – up to 80% of all projects start out looking for an existing building. This is a huge difference in rural and more developed areas that get private developers funding of buildings
- **Transportation improvements** – can include transport of workforce. Also rail improvements are a plus that rural GA needs
- **Utilities**–gas is particularly needed
- **Telecommunications**–absolutely necessary

SC Rural Economic Development Initiative – \$7 million

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND Eligible activities generally include infrastructure and economic development activities. Examples are listed below:

Engineering – Right-of-way acquisition – Drainage– Roads – Rail spurs

Economic development program enhancement – Speculative building Training costs and facilities – Improvements to regionally planned public and private water and sewer systems – Fixed transportation facilities including highway, rail, water and air

Improvements to both public and private electricity, natural gas and telecommunications systems – Environmental studies – Feasibility studies – Community revitalization – Marketing for counties (studies, materials) – Small business incubators – Industrial park development and improvement – Relocation expenses for employees paid at least two (2) times the lower of the State or county per capita income – Site preparation – Acquiring or improving real property

AWARDED IN 2016 – Rural Infrastructure Fund 13 Grants – \$6,975,000



South Carolina – Holistic Approach

Third Round of Downtown Revitalization Initiative Launched

\$100 million will be invested into 10 additional downtown neighborhoods across the state, boosting local economies by transforming communities into vibrant neighborhoods.



Example: SC Water & Sewer Grant Program

Grant Program Summary: Funds available: \$25 Mil
Grant Amount: \$500,000

Match Requirements:

All Applicants: 100% of Non-Construction Costs

Projects in Tier 1 or 2: 25% of total construction costs

Eligible Activities: New construction, upgrades, improvements or extensions of water or sewer infrastructure or storm water drainage



Regions Need Operation Dollars

- South Carolina's successful program allows use of regional grant money to be used for management. We've found this allows full or part time management for the joint program while allowing individual counties to maintain their operations. This puts all counties on an equal footing within the organization
- Regions need money for marketing. This allows authorities with less funds to promote their community with regional assets

New York – Community Driven Approach

Through the Regional Economic Development Councils, we have replaced the ‘one-size fits all’ approach to economic growth with a ‘ground-up’ strategy that focuses on cooperation and regional assets to generate opportunity.

- Governor Andrew M.



New York

New Government Operating Model

- Agency silos replaced with a single point of contact
- Community-driven rather than a top-down approach to economic development
- Comprehensive, sustainable development that addresses regional needs in a holistic fashion



New York

Regional Economic Development Achieves

- Strong partnership among the state, private sector, higher education and communities
- Realistic strategies for regional growth
- Competitive state funding aligned with regional priorities



Regional Commission Assistance

- **GRANT WRITING** :Funding for a professional grant writer is needed for economic projects. Too often communities have to spend grant money that could be used for the project to pay a grant writer. This should be at no cost as the RC is getting the services of a grant writer for other users as well.
- **DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH** of quality that can produce reports needed for economic development projects like EMSI and Mapping capability
- As previously stated, regional transportation is a plus
- **DCA OVERSIGHT** is needed to assure the quality of the work so that regions are getting the best possible help with low costs for services

Agriculture for Economic Development

- **CAPTURE RESEARCH**—resulting in product development: i.e., Research Station in Tifton has privately funded product research usually with native ag products potentially having production needs
- **UTILIZE SUNBELT EXPO** to host high level ag company execs
- Develop next generation marine projects like aquaculture and oyster farming production at a commercial level
- **PROMOTE GA GROWN PRODUCTS** like pecans similar to CA's campaign for almonds, milk and grapes

Vidalia Onion proves this works!

