



Economic Development Report

2009-2010

Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia

A CENTURY OF BUSINESS VISION

Population

In 2009, the U.S. Census Bureau named Gainesville-Hall County the third-fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States.

Media

Gainesville-Hall County was ranked in the top 20 for job and salary growth in the nation by the Milken Institute Report.

Water

The 1071 Coalition is completing an economic impact study of Lake Sidney Lanier.

Tourism

Lake Lanier Islands Resort has completed the first phase of a new look, a renovated golf course and new infrastructure as part of a \$300 million investment.

Retail

Active recruitment is under way for a lifestyle retail center bringing high-end retail to Gainesville-Hall County. A new 460,000-square-foot development is planned at the intersection of Jesse Jewell and Limestone Parkways.

Housing

The Village at Deaton Creek in Hall County was metro Atlanta's #1 selling residential community for 2008 and 2009.

Healthcare

For the fifth consecutive year, Northeast Georgia Medical Center and Health System was named #1 in Cardiac Care in the State of Georgia. A 119-acre site has been acquired for a new \$200 million South Hall County hospital campus.

Industry

In 2009, 26 new and expanded industries committed to 300 new jobs, retained 850 existing jobs and generated \$107 million in new capital investment for Gainesville-Hall County.

Infrastructure

More than \$115 million in road improvement and transportation projects are under way throughout Hall County and its municipalities.

Redevelopment

Oakwood and Flowery Branch's downtowns, along with the City of Gainesville's Midtown, are being redeveloped with the help of Tax Allocation Districts.

Government/Public

A South Hall Library, state-of-the-art aquatic center, community center and detention center, along with parks, green space, new roads, and sewer and water projects were completed in 2008-2009.

Education

A record number of more than 16,000 students are enrolled at Gainesville-Hall County colleges and universities.

VISION 2030

Over \$2.4 million of private funds were invested to fund the VISION 2030 economic development, community, workforce development and education programs.

Philanthropy

The North Georgia Community Foundation distributed \$3.8 million in 2008-2009.

Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia is a vibrant and growing, solid and diversified community located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Surrounded by beautiful Lake Sidney Lanier, the area offers an unparalleled quality of life and a sound economic future for business and industry. Gainesville-Hall County is home to 47 Fortune 500 firms, more than 300 manufacturing and processing concerns, and 35 international companies representing 15 foreign countries.

Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

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G R E A T E R H A L L C H A M B E R . C O M

Population Growth

- In 2009, the Census Bureau identified the Gainesville-Hall County MSA as the third-fastest growing metropolitan area in the U.S. and the fastest growing in Georgia. Gainesville-Hall County experienced 40% population growth from 2000-2008. The population of Hall County is estimated at 200,000.
- Milken Institute ranked the Gainesville-Hall County MSA in the top 20 for best small metros based on job and salary growth in 2008.
- *Where to Retire Magazine* named Gainesville one of “America’s Best Low-Tax Retirement Towns” in the Jan/Feb 2008 issue.
- ***Forbes Magazine* rated Gainesville one of the “Best Small Places for Business and Careers” in 2008 and 2009.**
- *Relocate America* named Gainesville-Hall County among its “Top 100 Places To Live in 2009.”
- *Inside Business Reports*, hosted by Fred Thompson, featured Gainesville-Hall County as one of the top-growing communities in America in a brief televised business report (available online at: www.greaterhallchamber.com/news).

Retail

- Gainesville-Hall County Economic Development Council adopted retail development/recruitment as a part of its mission and is looking to add a new lifestyle retail center with high-end retail to Gainesville-Hall County.
- **Pacolet Milliken plans to build a 460,000-square-foot retail and commercial complex on a 55-acre tract near Exit 24 on I-985, at the intersection of Limestone and Jesse Jewell Parkways in Gainesville.**
- Flowery Branch has a newly developed retail corridor on Spout Springs Road with more than 500,000 square feet of new retail space. Highway 53 in Gainesville continues to be a very successful retail corridor with more than 1 million of square feet in retail.
- Big box retailers Best Buy, Rooms-To-Go, Home Depot, Kohl’s, Super Target, Office Max and Sam’s Club have opened locations in Gainesville, Oakwood and Flowery Branch.
- Highway 365 North is poised as a new retail and commercial corridor with access and infrastructure improvements.

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Housing

- The Average Residential Home Purchase Price in Gainesville-Hall County is \$184,000.
- **Del Webb’s development, The Village at Deaton Creek (550 acres with 1,300 homes) in South Hall County, was the #1 selling residential community in Metro Atlanta in 2008-2009, with more than 400 homes sold.**
- Retirement developments with many amenities are in various stages of development in Hall County: Dogwood Forest recently added 114,000 square feet in an expansion from 50 to 146 units. Lanier Village Estates recently completed a new phase of 150 residences in its 100-acre complex, bringing the total to 340 residential units and homes with extended care. Seasons on Lanier is a 214-acre development on the shores of Lake Lanier that offers a gated community and boat slips for the active adult.
- High-end housing is on the rise with developments like Sterling on the Lake (894 acres in Flowery Branch), Marina Bay on Lake Lanier (385 acres in North Hall) and Reunion (550 acres in Braselton).

Tourism

- Lake Lanier Islands Resort, a 1,100-acre resort, has completed the first phase of a \$300 million investment that includes new infrastructure, golf course improvements, the world-class Legacy Lodge Hotel and Conference Center, harbor development, and a health spa on the shores of Lake Sidney Lanier.
- **A VISION 2030 “Big Idea” that includes plans for the new City View Center, a hotel and conference center in Downtown Gainesville, is now under way.**
- New accommodations in Hall County include a Hilton Garden Inn in Gainesville and a Hampton Inn in Flowery Branch.
- The Lake Lanier Olympic Center, home to the 1996 Atlanta Centennial Olympic Games, continues to host many international rowing and canoe/kayak events, including the 2009 USA Canoe Kayak National Championships.
- The Atlanta Falcons, a National Football League team headquartered in Flowery Branch, have a \$2.9 million local economic impact from their summer Training Camp.
- Road Atlanta, a 2.54-mile International Grand Prix course, adds \$53 million to the local economy annually. Road Atlanta will host the 13th Petit Le Mans in September 2010.
- The Smithgall Woodland Garden, a 185-acre preserve in the City of Gainesville and a part of the Atlanta Botanical Garden, is in the midst of a \$10 million program to develop the garden with a visitor’s center, children’s garden, amphitheater and pavilions.
- Elachee Nature Science Center has completed new trails and a 140-foot suspension bridge across Walnut Creek. Elachee is located on a 1,200-acre site in the 2,500-acre Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve.

Healthcare

- The Ronnie Green Heart Center at Northeast Georgia Medical Center ranked #1 in Georgia for Overall Cardiac Care, Cardiac Surgery, and Cardiac Interventions for the fifth year in a row, according to Health Grades.
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center's Cancer Center was recognized among the top 6% in the nation by the Commission on Cancer.
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center received Premier's Clinical Advisor's Top Performer Award for 2008 for five disease categories for the third year in a row.
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center, serving a 14-county region, received the Georgia Alliance of Community Hospitals' annual Large Hospital Award for 2009.
- A new \$180 million six-story North Patient Tower on Northeast Georgia Medical Center's main campus in Gainesville opened in 2009. The project provides 128 new beds, surgery and imaging space. This was in addition to a new \$50 million Women & Children's Pavilion that opened in Fall 2008.
- In 2009, Northeast Georgia Health System opened Medical Park 1, a new, three-story 90,000-square-foot building in Gainesville, including a new, 26,000-square-foot Imaging Center.
- Northeast Georgia Health System acquired a 119-acre site for a new \$200 million South Hall hospital and healthcare village. Medical Plaza 1, a new 100,000-square-foot physician facility on the new South Hall hospital campus, opened in 2008.
- **Northeast Georgia Health System will invest over \$100 million in the next five years on clinical technology to include cardiac CT, advanced stereotactic radiosurgery, and additional cardiac cath laboratories.**
- More than 50 new physicians in targeted specialties were recruited to Gainesville-Hall County in 2009.
- 150,000 square feet of new medical space has been added in Gainesville and Hall County in the last year.
- Three physician groups in Hall County – The Longstreet Clinic, Northeast Georgia Physicians Group and Northeast Georgia Diagnostic Clinic – are listed in Atlanta's "Top 25 Physician Group Practices" by the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*.

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In 2008, Wrigley Manufacturing merged with Mars to become the largest confectionery in the world, with more than 1,000 employees in Gainesville-Hall County.

Industry

- Twenty-six new and expanded industries will generate 300 new jobs, retain 850 existing jobs and generate \$107 million in new capital investment. Collectively, these businesses absorbed 825,000 square feet of commercial real estate with a range from 5,000 square feet to 476,000 square feet.
- **Kubota Manufacturing acquired and developed a 480,000 square-foot cross-docking operation to create Kubota Manufacturing's largest manufacturing campus outside Japan.**
- In 2008, Wrigley Manufacturing merged with Mars to become the largest confectionery in the world, with more than 1,000 employees in Hall County.
- ProCare Rx is developing an \$18 million operations center at I-985 Exit 20 that will ultimately create 180 jobs and add to the established base of pharmaceutical companies in Gainesville-Hall County.
- The City of Gainesville and Hall County have a new Gainesville Business Park, a 175-acre site in the City of Gainesville that is a partnership with Pattillo Construction.
- The Manufacturing Development Center (MDC), established by Lanier Technical College through public/private partnerships in the Featherbone Community in Midtown Gainesville, has had six graduates and is currently assisting 13 start-up manufacturing companies with space, reduced start-up costs and access to professional guidance.
- New and developing business/industrial parks in Hall County: Gainesville Business Park, North Gate Retail and Business Park, 365 Industrial Park, Glade Farm, and Mountain View Business Park in Lula.
- Pattillo, Radial Property Group and Majestic Realty have built speculative buildings in various industrial parks for expanding and new industry.
- The 2009 Award of Innovation awarded \$10,000 to EZ-Way Systems for their automated manufacturing system, developed at the Lanier Technical College Manufacturing Development Center.
- Elan Drug Technologies, Theragenics and Merial are among the top Life Sciences firms in Metro Atlanta.

Redevelopment

- The City View Center development now under way in Midtown Gainesville includes two new office buildings, parking, and a hotel and conference center with a pedestrian bridge connected to the Downtown Gainesville Square.
- A new four-story parking deck in downtown Gainesville was completed in 2009 to support the growing downtown retail district.
- The City of Gainesville is in the midst of developing a new public safety complex in Midtown. Midtown Gainesville will be redeveloped with the help of a TAD (Tax Allocation District).
- The cities of Flowery Branch and Oakwood are redeveloping their downtown areas. Both cities approved Tax Allocation District designations. Both cities are planning for future growth around the developing Thurmon Tanner Parkway corridor.
- Featherbone Communiversity houses the Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK) Museum, the Manufacturing Development Center and Brenau University's Nursing School. Within the Manufacturing Development Center are 13 incubating start-ups, and the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech regional offices.

Infrastructure

- A \$240 million SPLOST VI (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) passed in March 2009 for infrastructure projects. These projects include a library in North Hall, parks and green space, a community center, roads and sewer projects.
- SPLOST VI allocated \$79 million for road infrastructure, sidewalks and trails throughout Hall County and municipalities. Over \$37 million in additional road improvement projects are under construction.
- **The City of Gainesville and Hall County are working together to bring online the Cedar Creek and Glade Farm water reservoirs.**
- In 2009, a new Exit 17 and upgraded Exit 16 were completed on I-985 at a cost of \$75 million.
- Thurmon Tanner Parkway Phase III will provide a parallel access road to connect exits 12, 16 and 17 to be completed by late 2010.
- South Hall water and sewer infrastructure will be coupled with road widening projects.
- A plan to provide sewer up highway 365 is under development with funding support from SPLOST.
- To complement the recent 5,500-foot runway extension, Gainesville's Lee Gilmer Airport added a new instrument landing system to make Gainesville-Hall County more attractive to corporate executive air travel.
- Georgia Department of Labor's Gainesville Career Center facility is located on the campus of Hall County School System's Lanier Charter Career Academy and near Lanier Technical College and Gainesville State College.

Education

- Three institutions – Brenau University, Gainesville State College and Lanier Technical College – are at record enrollment and at full capacity with a combined enrollment of more than 16,000 students.
- **Brenau University, a 125-year-old private liberal arts university in downtown Gainesville, opened a new Department of Nursing in August 2008 at the Featherbone Communiversity Campus with five classrooms, 15 offices and a 144-seat auditorium. The Nursing Program currently has more than 400 undergraduate and graduate students.**
- Gainesville State College will add a new five-story 130,000-square-foot academic building to its 144-acre site in Oakwood. The new building will house the college's Business, Healthcare, Humanities and Fine Arts departments. The Gainesville campus has the fastest growing enrollment in the University System of Georgia.
- Lanier Technical College is home to the Georgia Center of Innovation for Manufacturing technologies in automation, controls and robotics.
- The Education SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) is generating \$160 million through a one-penny sales tax to build and renovate schools in the Gainesville City and Hall County School Systems. There were 32,000 students in the Gainesville City and Hall County public schools for Fall 2009.
- Lanier Charter Career Academy is a \$3.1 million learning institution with subjects including healthcare, culinary arts and hospitality. In 2009, the Academy broke ground on a 24,000-square-foot student-run Bistro that will support the culinary arts program and provide students with practical experience.
- North Georgia Christian Academy acquired 100 acres in South Hall to build its new campus. There are 10 private schools in Hall County, including Lakeview Academy, Riverside Military Academy, Brenau Academy and North Georgia Christian School.
- The World Language Academy, the first charter school for the Hall County School System, opened its doors in the Fall 2008 with immersion language in Spanish, English and Mandarin Chinese.

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Culture

- Enthusiasts throughout Northeast Georgia support a flourishing arts scene in Hall County including a symphony, ballet company, and chorale, as well as numerous theatre companies, visual arts and an active Arts Council in Gainesville.
- Hall County's "Field of Dreams," a baseball field for handicapped children, opened in South Hall in Fall 2008.
- Hall County recently opened the Mulberry Creek Community Center in South Hall. Hall County also purchased 100 acres to develop a new South Hall park. There are plans for a new park in North Hall as well.
- INK, Interactive Neighborhood for Kids, is a hands-on Children's Museum with many new exhibits in 20,000-square-feet of the Featherbone Communiversiy, located in Midtown Gainesville.
- The Frances Meadows Aquatic Center opened adjacent to a new Gainesville Middle School in 2008 and is one of five indoor competition pools in Gainesville.

Philanthropy

- The Hall County YMCA is a \$6 million, 54,000-square-foot facility. This location includes an aquatic and wellness center.
- The North Georgia Community Foundation distributed over \$3.8 million in scholarships and grants from the Foundation Funds in fiscal year 2008-2009.
- Jackson EMC's Operation Round Up has presented \$2 million to area individuals and agencies to date.
- United Way of Hall County exceeded their 2009 Cornerstone Campaign goal.

VISION 2030 and the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

- Some 1,000 citizens came together to say what they envisioned the community to be in 2030. VISION 2030 is now executing action plans to accomplish these goals. Visit www.VISION2030.org to see the "15 Big Ideas" and the future of Gainesville-Hall County.
- GreatStorytoTell.com, a website that highlights how the progressive community of Gainesville-Hall County stands out in so many ways compared to the rest of the United States, was launched in 2009 and is a partnership of the Greater Hall Chamber and the Hall County Board of Realtors.
- The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's fundraising efforts produced over \$2.4 million for the HallMark Vision Campaign. These funds, invested by 125 businesses for 2006-2010, expand economic development, education and healthcare efforts, along with the VISION 2030 program.
- **VISION 2030 has made progress on a number of the 15 Big Ideas, including a downtown hotel and conference center.**

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