

Gainesville-Hall County Economic Report 2008

Population... Gainesville-Hall County – the 4th fastest growing MSA in the US

Retail... Active recruitment for a lifestyle retail center bringing high-end retail to Gainesville-Hall County

Tourism... Lake Lanier Islands is in the midst of a \$300 million renovation

Housing... Three new gated, age-restricted residential developments with many amenities

Healthcare... Northeast Georgia Medical Center and Health System acquired CON approval on a 119-acre site for a new \$200 million South Hall hospital campus

Industry... Over 1,000 new jobs and \$159 million in new capital investment created in 2007

Infrastructure... more than \$130 million in road improvement projects are underway

Redevelopment... Gainesville's Midtown, Oakwood and Flowery Branch's downtowns will be redeveloped with the help of Tax Allocation District

Government/Public... a new South Hall Library, state-of-the-art aquatic center, parks, a new jail, green space, sewer and water projects, and new roads

Education... over 10,000 enrolled at Gainesville-Hall County colleges and universities

Vision 2030... over \$2.4 million of private funds invested to fund Vision 2030, economic development and education programs

Non-Profits... YMCA opened its new aquatic and wellness facility

100 Years... A century of business community representation



A CENTURY OF BUSINESS VISION

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Population Growth

- Gainesville-Hall County MSA is the 4th fastest growing metropolitan area in the Nation and the fastest in Georgia with 24% population growth from 2000-2007 according to U.S. Census Reports. Population of Hall County 200,000+.
- *Where to Retire* Magazine names Gainesville one of "America's Best Low-Tax Retirement Towns" in the January/February 2008 issue.
- May 2007, *Medical Economics*, a physician's monthly, named Gainesville as one of its best places for physicians to practice medicine.
- *Adventure Men's Journal* magazine named Gainesville one of its "50 Best Places to Live" in the April 2007 issue. The magazine reviewed the nation's 10 largest cities and found a town within an hour that has carved out its own identity. The magazine cites Gainesville's small town atmosphere and proximity to Atlanta which says makes it one of the country's best "commuter towns."
- *Barron's* magazine selected Gainesville as one of the best places to retire in the country.
- Hall County named among the most prosperous counties in Georgia by the Department of Community Affairs.

Retail

- Gainesville-Hall County Economic Development Council adopted retail development/recruitment as a part of its mission, looking to add a new lifestyle retail center bringing high-end retail to Gainesville-Hall County.
- Halverson Development's Stonebridge, a \$30 million 500,000 SF retail center on Spout Springs Road in Flowery Branch opened in 2007. Center includes a Home Depot, Office Max, and a Super Target.
- Big box retailers Best Buy, Rooms-To-Go, Home Depot, Kohls, Target, and Sam's Club open new Gainesville-Hall County locations.
- Colonial Lakeshore Mall completed a \$3 million renovation.
- REL Properties has planned 450,000 SF of retail development across from their considerable residential development on Mundy Mill Road in Oakwood.
- Dawsonville Highway (Hwy 53) continues to be a very successful retail corridor. New corridors are developing: Spout Springs Road, Friendship Road, Clermont/Quillian's Corner, 365 North, Limestone Parkway, and Thompson Mill Road.
- Highway 365 North is poised as a new retail and commercial corridor with access and infrastructure improvements.

Tourism

- Lake Lanier Islands, an 1100-acre resort in South Hall County, is undergoing a \$300 million investment to include new infrastructure, golf course improvements, hotels, harbor development, retail, and health spa on the shores of Lake Sidney Lanier.
- New accommodations: Hilton Garden Inn opens May 2008 in Gainesville; Hampton Inn opens September 2008 in Flowery Branch. Plans for a new Hotel and Conference Center in downtown Gainesville are underway.
- The Lake Lanier Olympic Center, home to the 1996 Atlanta Centennial Olympic Games, continues to host many national and rowing and canoe/kayak international events at this venue in North Hall County.
- The 2008 Tour-de-Georgia will hold its final stage in Gainesville in April of 2008.
- The Atlanta Falcons, headquartered in Flowery Branch, has a \$2.9 million local economic impact from their summer Training Camp. A \$10 million expansion including player dormitories with amenities was recently completed.
- The second Atlanta Falcons Physical Therapy Center will be located in South Hall County.
- Road Atlanta, the 2.54 mile International Grand Prix road course, adds \$53 million to the local economy annually. The track received \$2 million in improvements in 2007. In addition, Road Atlanta celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the world famous Petit Le Mans in the October of 2007.

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- The Smithgall Woodland Garden, a 185-acre preserve in downtown Gainesville is working to complete walking trails, importing plants from SE Asia, and construction of greenhouses. A part of the Atlanta Botanical Garden, the Smithgall Woodland Garden has kicked off a \$10 million program to develop the garden with a visitor's center, children's garden, pavilions, and amphitheatre.
- Elachee Nature Science Center has completed new trails and a 140 foot suspension bridge across Walnut Creek. Elachee is located on a 1200-acre site in the 2500-acre Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve.
- Hall County's "Field of Dreams," a baseball field for handicapped children in South Hall, will open in 2008.
- Hall County purchased 100-acres to develop a new South Hall park for residents and tourists.
- The City of Gainesville is developing a 50-acre park and aquatic center adjacent to the new Gainesville Middle School, to open in 2008.
- As part of Gainesville-Hall County's "Vision 2030," community leaders are working to create a new Hall County Welcome Center on I-985.

Housing

- Average Residential Home Purchase Price in Gainesville-Hall County is \$236,618.
- Over 1,100 single-family housing permits have been issued in Gainesville-Hall County in FY 2007.
- New gated, age-restricted residential developments with many amenities are in various stages of development in Hall County: Lanier Village Estates in North Hall County completed a new phase of 150 residences in its 100-acre complex bringing the total to 340 residential units and homes. Del Webb's development, The Village at Deaton Creek (550-acres with 1300 homes) in South Hall County sold more than 400 houses in 2007.
- High-end housing is on the rise with developments like Sterling on the Lake (894-acres in Flowery Branch) and Marina Bay on Lake Lanier (385-acres in North Hall).
- Multi-use developments with residential, retail and commercial office are becoming common, such as REL's Mundy Mill Development in Oakwood, Thompson Mill Village in South Hall and Hagen Creek on Hwy 365 North.
- Affordable housing developments are in various stages of development throughout Hall County.

Healthcare

- The Ronnie Green Heart Center at Northeast Georgia Medical Center & Health System (NGHS) ranked #1 in Georgia for Overall Cardiac Care, Cardiac surgery, and Cardiac Interventions for the third year in a row according to Health Grades.
- A new \$180 million six-story North Patient Tower on Northeast Georgia Medical Center's main campus in Gainesville will be completed in 2009. The project will provide new beds, surgery and imaging space.
- A new \$50 million Women & Children's Pavilion is being constructed on the west wing of the NGHS Main Campus in Gainesville will open in 2008.
- NGHS acquired a 119-acre site for a new \$200 million South Hall hospital campus. The master site plan for the campus includes a healthcare village concept and a multiple Medical Office Buildings, the first of which is under construction for completion in 2008.
- Some 100,000 SF of new medical space has been added in Gainesville and Hall County in the last year, with an additional 50,000 coming on line in the next 12 months. These projects are in addition to the Northeast Georgia Medical Center construction projects.
- NGHS will invest over \$100 million in the next five years on clinical technology to include cardiac CT, advanced stereotactic radiosurgery, and additional cardiac cath labs.
- The Braselton Clinic, a new physician clinic in South Hall operated by NGHS, opened in February 2006 and completed a 6,000 square foot expansion in 2007. The Clinic provides internal medicine and specialty care such as pediatrics, cardiology, urology, and digital mammography.

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- Northeast Georgia Medical Center & Health System serves some 700,000 northeast Georgia residents in a 14-county region. There are more than 4,000 people employed at the Northeast Georgia Medical Center and Health System. There are 420 physicians serving Gainesville-Hall County.
- Gainesville was named among "America's best places to practice" medicine by *Medical Economics* in June of 2007.

Industry

- 2007 netted 26 new and expanded industries creating 1,000 new jobs and \$159 million in new capital investment.
- Two new firms add to the base of 15 automotive suppliers already located in Gainesville-Hall County. TRW Automotive is a manufacturer of brake systems making a \$25 million investment and adding over 200 jobs. Sevex, a Swiss manufacturer of thermal heat shields, located their \$15 million investment and 60 jobs in a new North American headquarters in Hall County.
- ProCareRx announced their \$18 million investment and creation of 180 jobs in Gainesville-Hall County adding to the established base of five pharmaceutical companies in Gainesville-Hall County.
- The Manufacturing Development Center (MDC) was established by Lanier Technical College through a public/private partnership of community, state, federal and local government support in the Featherbone Community in downtown Gainesville. The MDC is assisting a number of small manufacturing companies in their formative stage with space, reduced state-up costs and access to professional guidance.
- New and developing business/industrial parks in Hall County: North Gate Retail and Business Park, 365 Industrial Park, ProLogis Park Buford, Glade Farm, Mountain View Business Park Lula, Oakwood South Industrial Park and Gainesville Business Park. Pattillo Construction Company, ProLogis and multiple other investors have built speculative buildings in various industrial parks to entice expanding and locating industry.
- In addition, the City of Gainesville announced Gainesville Business Park, a new 170 acre development site in the city, in partnership with Pattillo Construction Company.

Infrastructure

- More than \$130 million in road improvement projects are under construction:
 - Dawsonville Highway/SR53 becoming a 4-lane divided highway
 - I-985 at Exit 16 new interchange including Gainesville State College and Atlanta Highway
 - Winder Highway/SR53 becoming a 4-lane divided highway to Tanners Mill Rd/SR211
 - I-985 at Exit 22 operational improvements and adding signalization at US129 South
- More than \$350 million in road improvement are on schedule to begin by 2010:
 - Friendship Road/SR 347 East and West
 - Thurmond Tanner Parkway Phase III
 - US 129 South of Gainesville widening
 - I-985 New Interchange 14
 - Sardis Connector
 - SR 369/Browns Bridge Road West
 - SR 60 North through Murrayville ñ 4 lanes
 - Clarks Bridge replacement
- Sewer infrastructure for South Hall is going in the ground. This development comes just in time to be coupled with road widening projects in South Hall and has spurred new retail, commercial, restaurant and hotel opportunities for South Hall residents.
- \$54 million jail opened saving Hall County \$2 million per year in board fee and adding \$5 million per year in outside county boarding fees. The facility is 230,000 square feet with 1,026 beds.
- Gainesville's Lee Gilmer Airport's runway extension to 5,500 ft and the addition of new hanger spaces have made Gainesville-Hall County more competitive to attract corporate executives and their businesses. A new ILS (Instrumented Landing System), to be installed in 2008, will revolutionize air travel into Gainesville-Hall County by reducing the impact of local weather conditions that limit visibility (fog, rain, etc).

Redevelopment

- Plans for Village View Plaza, a new office building including, hotel and conference center to be located in downtown Gainesville are underway. Preservation Plaza, a retail and office development will fill out the fourth side of the downtown square in Gainesville. A new parking deck is set for construction in early 2009.
- Main Street Gainesville continues to develop out from the downtown square with new infrastructure and new retail shops and restaurants.
- The Georgia Mountains Center in downtown Gainesville has completed a \$1million renovation and is looking to expand with the addition of a hotel.
- Midtown in the City of Gainesville will be redeveloped with the help of a TAD (Tax Allocation District).
- The cities of Flowery Branch and Oakwood have leadership support to build on their historic centers. Both cities approved Tax Allocation District designation in the September 2007 referendum.
- St. John Baptist Church completed its new facility at the entrance to Gainesville-Hall County.
- Gainesville, Oakwood, Flowery Branch and Hall County are enforcing efforts to reduce unsightliness and blight by restricting litter and debris through new code enforcement.
- The Featherbone Communiiversity houses the Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK), the Manufacturing Development Center, and Brenau University's Nursing School, University of Georgia and Georgia Tech.

Government/Public

- The present five-year Infrastructure SPLOST (\$194 million) includes: a new Hall County Library in South Hall, new parks and green space, new roads, and a new jail.
- Georgia Department of Labor's new Career Center facility is located on the campus of Hall County School System's Career Academy and adjacent to Lanier Technical College and Gainesville State College.

Education

- Brenau University, a 125 year old private liberal arts university in downtown Gainesville, will be at full capacity with 850 enrolled from 15 countries on the traditional residential campus. Additionally, over 1,500 students will participate in the Evening, Weekend and Online College. The total Gainesville-Hall County economic impact of Brenau University is \$65 million.
- A new Brenau Department of Nursing opened for class in August 2008. Housed at the Featherbone Communiiversity Campus, it has 5 classrooms, 15 offices, and a 144 seat auditorium. The school currently has over 70 students.
- Brenau has completed a feasibility study to measure the prospect of a medical college in Gainesville-Hall County.
- Gainesville State College announced an \$8 million expansion/renovation of its Student Center on its 144-acre site in Oakwood. GSC now offers four year degrees in Applied Environmental Spatial Analysis, Technology Management, Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Care and Education. GSC's Gainesville campus has the fastest growing enrollment percentage in the University System of Georgia.
- Lanier Technical College's major dollar investment was a \$3 million investment for the new Center of Innovation for Manufacturing Excellence located on the campus in Oakwood. Lanier Technical College works with 6,000 students in annual enrollment
- Education SPLOST III (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) overwhelmingly passed to continue the present one cent sales tax to build and renovate schools in the Gainesville City and Hall County School Systems. This third Education SPLOST is anticipated to raise \$160 million. There are over 30,000 students in the Gainesville City and Hall County public schools, Fall 2008.

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- Riverside Military Academy completed \$90 million in new and upgraded facilities in 2004. Riverside, a 236-acre private college preparatory boarding and day school in Gainesville, has all-male Corps of Cadets of 516 boarding and day students in grades 6-12 from 10 countries.
- Lakeview Academy, a private K-12 college preparatory school located in Gainesville, has 618 enrolled from a six county region.
- INK, Interactive Neighborhood for Kids, is located in a 20,000 SF in the Featherbone Community for its Children's Museum in downtown Gainesville with many new exhibits.

Vision 2030 and the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

- The Greater Hall Chamber celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2008. The Chamber has initiated the Centennial Gateway Initiative, a five year public/private partnership, to improve all of the gateway exits into Hall County along I-985.
- 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 and individuals for 2006-2010, will expand the economic development, government affairs, and education programs of the Chamber, as well as to initiate and fund the Vision 2030 program.
- In Vision 2030, over 1,000 citizens came together to say what they want this 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.

Non-Profits

- United Way of Hall County exceeded \$2.1 million of community giving for its 15 agencies in 2007.
- The Hall County YMCA opened its new \$6 million, 54,000 square foot facility in July 2007. This location includes an aquatic and wellness center.
- Eagle Ranch for Boys & Girls has completed a \$5.4 million "Future Generations" Capital Campaign to add two new girls homes along with numerous campus improvements.