



GEORGIA'S RURAL CENTER

A BRANCH OF THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

24-25 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Charlie Fiveash,
Georgia's Rural
Center Director*

Since the Rural Center was created by the state legislature in 2018, our focus has remained constant: promote rural Georgia! While we have experienced a few changes in the last year, our mission to support Georgia's rural communities remains the same. With an efficient staff of four and a focused budget, our target has been to provide human and financial capital to Georgia's rural counties that need the most help. With roughly a third of Georgia's 159 counties having a population of less than 15,000 residents, our reach and impact is wide.

Despite the large geographic area, the Rural Center has been able to impact a substantial number of rural communities through grants to help start or complete larger economic development projects.

Effective July 1, 2025, the Center for Rural Prosperity & Innovation, now known more commonly as Georgia's Rural Center, became a branch of the Georgia Department of Agriculture. We moved our offices into the Department of Agriculture Tifton facility from the ABAC campus in January 2026. Under the leadership of Commissioner Tyler Harper, the Rural Center is now positioned to further support agriculture, which is Georgia's #1 industry. This allows us to connect with a larger number of agribusiness projects that drive economic development in Georgia's rural areas, since agriculture is based in the heart of rural Georgia.

Since taking on the leadership role as director in August 2025, we've been working to connect and discover the opportunities in rural Georgia in every corner of the state. Some of the recent projects we've funded include housing studies, engineering reports, website design, civil design and industrial park layouts, emergency-911 infrastructure, land use planning & site optimization, as well as investments in medical equipment at some of Georgia's rural hospitals.

We are eager to continue valuable work with new projects in 2026. At Georgia's Rural Center, we look to collaboratively partner with stakeholders who understand the collective impact of rural Georgia and its economic impact on our great state.



IMPACT

TO RURAL GEORGIA

\$406.7 million

invested in rural Georgia because of Georgia's Rural Center projects.



LOCAL
PUBLIC



OTHER
STATE



FEDERAL
FUNDS



PRIVATE
INVESTMENT

*units in
millions

IMPACT

TO RURAL GEORGIA

ACROSS THE STATE

20

different collaborative partnerships with 2024-25 projects

74

projects completed across the state from north to south, east to west

83

counties served by individual projects

159

counties served by regional and/or state projects

RECENT PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



HOSPITALS IN RURAL GEORGIA

IMPACT: Statewide

ABOUT THE PROJECTS: Funds are needed to support critical healthcare infrastructure improvements and planning across multiple Georgia communities, including replacement of a bulk oxygen tank and manifold at Crisp Regional and the patient call center at Pinewood Manor to enhance patient care efficiency. Support was also provided for the expansion of comprehensive radiology services to sustain 24-hour medical operations, employment, and economic impact at Optim Medical Center in Screven County. Additionally, feasibility assessments and strategic planning were conducted to guide reinvestment in facility resources, increase operational capacity, and better meet current and future patient demand in Elbert and Colquitt counties. Site visits were performed at water treatment plants serving 16 critical access hospitals lacking backup generators, including evaluations of electrical upgrades needed to ensure uninterrupted operations during power outages.



RECENT PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



CITY OF DAWSONVILLE HOTEL FEASIBILITY STUDY

IMPACT: Dawson County and Surrounding Counties

ABOUT THE PROJECT: The City of Dawsonville desired to conduct a hotel feasibility study to evaluate the potential success and economic impact of a proposed hotel project within the newly acquired town center. The study would assess how a hotel could accommodate existing tourist attractions, expand the city's tourism footprint, and generate much-needed hotel/motel tax revenue for tourism product development, public spaces, and potential private investment.



RECENT PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



POWERFUL PEANUTS AT THE FAIR

IMPACT: Statewide

ABOUT THE PROJECT: At the 2025 Georgia National Fair, a brand new exhibit released in the Georgia Grown Building featuring Georgia's peanut industry. This educational and captivating exhibit will showcased the entire process from peanut to product to thousands of people who visited the fair. Partners included Georgia Peanut Commission, Georgia's Rural Center, Georgia Department of Agriculture, and Georgia Grown.





*building healthy,
vibrant, rural
communities.*

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