



GEORGIA'S RURAL CENTER

A BRANCH OF THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ANNUAL REPORT

2025
-
2026

2025-2026

IMPACT

TO RURAL GEORGIA

+1.5

Over 1.5 million
invested in rural
Georgia in 2025-26
through projects

16

different
collaborative
partnerships with
2025-26 projects

90

projects completed
across the state
(since 2018)

ACROSS THE STATE



Community
and Economic
Development



Infrastructure



Agriculture



Healthcare

Georgia's Rural Center's mission is to work with rural leaders to build vibrant rural Georgia communities with managed support and collaborative partnerships.

AGRICULTURE



CRACKING INTO ^{GEORGIA} *Pecans*

Nearly 500,000 visitors explored the reimagined Georgia Grown Building at the Georgia National Fair last year, featuring the Powerful Peanut Experience, the Georgia Forests Experience, and the Georgia Cotton Experience. This year, Georgia's Rural Center is teaming up with the Georgia Pecan Growers Association to bring fairgoers an additional immersive exhibit: Crack into Georgia Pecans. For 10 days in October, Georgia Grown and the Georgia Department of Agriculture will showcase Georgia's pecan industry and the many benefits of "Georgia's Favorite Snack".

The Rural Center's work supports Georgia agriculture by investing in building awareness of some of rural Georgia's great commodities as well as investing in current and future generations of producers.

Georgia National Fair Georgia Grown Building

In addition to the new commodity feature, Pecans, the Cotton and Forestry exhibits also bring a new look and updated information to fairgoers. Peanuts return to showcase Georgia's state crop. In collaboration with commodity commissions and associations, these exhibits allow Georgians to experience rural Georgia while visiting one of the top events of the year.

Echols County Extension

The Echols County UGA Extension Office was granted \$25,000 to fund the purchase of a livestock trailer and updated livestock scales to better serve local youth livestock exhibitors and agricultural producers.

#1

Agribusiness is Georgia's #1 industry.

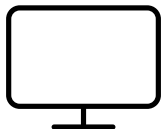
DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC



Stewart County Housing Study

Stewart County received a \$20,000 grant for a housing study that will complement its participation in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing program by assessing current housing needs and helping to better position the county to provide attainable housing options.



Ocilla-Irwin Co. Industrial Development Authority Website

The Rural Center awarded a grant to the Ocilla-Irwin County Industrial Development Authority to create a new website to showcase its community. The website serves as a platform to market available sites with the specific information industry decision-makers need, attract investment, and position Irwin County competitively. Additionally, it will feature videos, photos, site specifications, and resources for businesses and industries considering Irwin County. This platform is also a centralized hub for workforce development, offering job postings and career opportunities from local businesses and industries.

The Rural Center's work in community and economic development supports Georgia agriculture by building engaged, vibrant rural Georgia communities.

OTHER PROJECTS

City of Tifton

Georgia's Rural Center awarded funding to support the planning process for the redevelopment of the Short & Paulk site in downtown Tifton. This project includes a partnership with the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

City of Chickamauga

Support to fund a redevelopment study that will evaluate the potential reuse of the former Crystal Springs Mill site and other city-owned properties to support long-term economic growth.

SUPPORTING RURAL GEORGIA

The community and economic development projects in 2025-26 impacted over 123,000 people in their rural communities.



HEALTHCARE

Hospital Authority of Ben Hill

Georgia's Rural Center helped support the purchase of a new ultrasound machine for Dorminy Medical Center through a grant. This advances the hospital's modernization and digital transformation efforts. The upgraded equipment will enhance diagnostic capabilities, support the recruitment and retention of skilled clinicians drawn to modern technology, and improve overall patient care. The new ultrasound system will also allow Dorminy Medical Center to expand prenatal diagnostic services locally.

Emanuel County Hospital Authority

The Rural Center supported the replacement of a echocardiogram system and a new bronchoscope to enable bedside bronchoscopies. New services require new technology and equipment, and EMC is expanding Cardiovascular Services. Since the addition of a Cardio Thoracic Surgeon to the EMC medical staff, the volume of echocardiograms and bronchoscopies performed at the hospital has grown 53%.

Hospital Authority of Evans County

The Rural Center supported the upgrading of technology infrastructure, including medication scanning equipment for patients being seen in the Emergency Department. These technology upgrades will bring the Emergency Department into compliance with national patient safety standards for medication administration, significantly reduce the risk of medication errors in the hospital's highest-volume clinical area, expand telemedicine capabilities, and support ongoing quality initiatives, including efforts to improve door-to-EKG times.

The Rural Center's work in healthcare supports Georgia agriculture by building healthy, vibrant rural Georgia communities.

OTHER HEALTHCARE PROJECTS

IMPACTING OVER 305,000 RURAL GEORGIANS.

Bainbridge Memorial Hospital & Manor

Support for Memorial Hospital and Manor in Bainbridge, Georgia, to replace the hospital's aging ICU nurse call system.



Irwin County Hospital Authority

Support in the replacement of outdated and failing kitchen equipment that impacts their ability to provide quality meals to patients and staff at the hospital as well as to residents at the attached nursing home.



Dodge Co. Hospital/Hospital Authority

Support implementation of critical technology infrastructure upgrades to strengthen communication systems, enhance connectivity, and improve the delivery of patient care.



INFRASTRUCTURE



City of Sparta

Georgia's Rural Center provided a grant for the City of Sparta to fund engineering services and grant writing aimed at upgrading and repairing its aging natural gas infrastructure. The system serves residents and businesses in Sparta, as well as portions of Hancock County, including Hancock County State Prison.



Development Authority of Warren County

The Rural Center assisted with the Development Authority of Warren County project through key civil engineering studies that will advance two major industrial sites and position the county for long-term economic growth. The county's two primary development sites, one a 1,400-acre tract adjacent to Interstate 20 and another 510-acre site along U.S. 278, offer significant potential but require critical infrastructure planning.

The Rural Center's work in infrastructure supports rural Georgia with sustaining vibrant rural Georgia communities.

City of McCaysville

The City of McCaysville received \$67,000 to fund the replacement of two aging water filtration systems that are critical to maintaining a safe and reliable water supply for residents and businesses.

BUILDING RURAL GEORGIA

The infrastructure projects in 2025-26 impacted over 51,000 people in their rural communities.





*building healthy,
vibrant, rural
communities.*

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