



GEORGIA'S RURAL CENTER

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RURAL CENTER ANNOUNCES OPENING OF NORTH GEORGIA OFFICE

The Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation celebrated the opening today of its north Georgia office. Located in Ellijay and housed in the Collaboration on Rivers Edge Building, or CORE, the satellite office will allow the Rural Center to better fulfill its statewide mission while also addressing issues unique to rural north Georgia.

Known and beloved for its geography and climate, north Georgia faces challenges common with other rural areas of the state, Rural Center Interim Director David Bridges points out.

"Finding ways to not only maintain but to multiply the economic and cultural vitality present in so many of north Georgia's small towns and rural communities relies heavily on relationships," Bridges said, "and we know that our presence and personnel there will only improve our ability to facilitate positive outcomes."

The Rural Center's north Georgia office will be led by Janet Cochran, who brings to the role more than a decade's experience as a regional project manager with the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

Bridges also pointed out the critical role House Speaker David Ralston played in bringing rural issues to the attention of his fellow lawmakers and establishing the Rural Center.

Expanding the center's presence into north Georgia, where agriculture and agritourism play major roles in local and regional economies, was a goal of Ralston and the House Rural Development Council when they established the center in 2018.

During remarks at the ribbon cutting, Ralston expressed his pride in welcoming the Rural Center's physical presence in the northern part of the state.

"I look forward to the good work that will be done to further economic opportunity throughout rural Georgia," Ralston said. "This Center is a direct result of the work of the House Rural Development Council and our continuing efforts to ensure prosperity is accessible to all Georgians – regardless of zip code."

Housed at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia's Rural Center serves as a central information and research hub for rural best practices, including community planning, industry-specific assistance and other cooperative efforts with community partners. The center was established by House Bill 951 in 2018.

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