



**GREATER HALL**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A CENTURY OF BUSINESS VISION

# Gainesville-Hall County Economic Development Report 2009

## **Population...**

Gainesville-Hall County is the 3rd fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States in 2007-08.

## **Media...**

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

## **Retail...**

Active recruitment is underway 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 Parkway.

## **Tourism...**

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

## **Housing...**

The Village at Deaton Creek in Hall County is metro Atlanta's #1-selling residential community for 2007 & 2008.

## **Healthcare...**

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 hospital campus. Medical Plaza 1, in South Hall, has opened with an urgent care center, imaging center and several of physician specialties.

## **Industry...**

Over 1,500 new jobs and \$333 million in new capital investment were created in 2007-2008.

## **Infrastructure...**

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

## **Redevelopment...**

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

## **Government/Public...**

A new South Hall Library, state-of-the-art community aquatic center, parks, a new jail, green space, sewer and water projects, and new roads were launched in 2007-08.

## **Education...**

More than 10,000 students are enrolled at Gainesville-Hall County colleges and universities.

## **Vision 2030...**

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

## **Non-Profits...**

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

**Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce**

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## **Population Growth**

- Gainesville-Hall County MSA is the 3rd fastest growing metropolitan area in the Nation and the fastest in Georgia with 40% population growth from 2000-2008 according to U.S. Census Reports. Population of Hall County 200,000+.
- Milken Institute ranked Gainesville-Hall County MSA in the top 20 for best small metros based on job and salary growth, 2008.
- Where to Retire Magazine names Gainesville one of “America’s Best Low-Tax Retirement Towns” in the January/February 2008 issue.
- Forbes Magazine rated Gainesville one of the “Best Small Places for Business and Careers” in 2008 and 2009.
- Hall County named among the most prosperous counties in Georgia by the Department of Community Affairs.
- Relocate America named Gainesville-Hall County, GA among its “Top 100 Places To Live in 2009.”

## **Retail**

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

## **Tourism**

- Lake Lanier Islands, an 1,100-acre resort in South Hall County, is undergoing a \$300 million investment and includes new infrastructure, golf course improvements, the first class Legacy Lodge Hotel and Conference Center, harbor development, retail, and health spa on the shores of Lake Sidney Lanier.
- New accommodations: Hilton Garden Inn opened May 2008 in Gainesville; Hampton Inn opened September 2008 in Flowery Branch. Plans for the new City View Center, a hotel and conference center in downtown Gainesville, are underway. A new Holiday Inn is under construction on Spout Springs Road in South Hall. Construction has started for a new hotel next to the Hilton Garden Inn on Browns Bridge Road in Gainesville.
- The Lake Lanier Olympic Center, home to the 1996 Atlanta Centennial Olympic Games, continues to host many international and rowing and canoe/kayak events in North Hall County.
- The Atlanta Falcons, a National Football League team headquartered in Flowery Branch, has a \$2.9 million local economic impact from their summer Training Camp. An Atlanta Falcons Physical Therapy Center will be located in South Hall County.
- Road Atlanta, a 2.54-mile International Grand Prix course, adds \$53 million to the local economy annually. Road Atlanta will host the 12th Petit Le Mans in September 2009.
- 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, pavilions, and amphitheater.
- 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.

## **Housing**

- Average Residential Home Purchase Price in Gainesville-Hall County is \$230,000.
- Over 1,000 single-family housing permits were issued in Gainesville-Hall County in FY 2008.
- Gated, retirement developments with many amenities are in various stages of development in Hall County: Lanier Village Estates in Hall County completed a new phase of 150 residences in its 100-acre complex bringing the total to 340 residential units and homes with extended care. Del Webb’s development, The Village at Deaton Creek (550-acres with 1,300 homes) in South Hall County is the #1 selling residential community in Metro Atlanta, in 2007-2008, with over 400 homes sold.
- 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).

## 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 fourth year in a row according to Health Grades.
- Gainesville was named among “America’s Best Places to Practice medicine” by Medical Economics in June of 2007.
- Northeast Georgia Health System’s Cancer Center was recognized among the top 6% in the nation by the Commission on Cancer. The center also received the 2007 American Society of Breast Surgeons “Mammosite Registry Award.”
- 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.
- A new \$50 million Women & Children’s Pavilion opened in Fall 2008 at the Northeast Georgia Health System Main Campus in Gainesville.
- Northeast Georgia Health System 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 multiple Medical Office Buildings with a hospital. 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.
- Medical Plaza 1, a new 100,000 SF physician facility in South Hall (on the new hospital campus, operated by Northeast Georgia Health System), opened in 2008.
- More than 150,000 SF of new medical space has been added in Gainesville and Hall County in the last year.
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center & Health System serves some 700,000 citizens in Northeast Georgia, a 14-county region. There are more than 4,500 people employed at the Northeast Georgia Medical Center and Health System.
- Three physician groups in Hall County are listed in Atlanta’s “Top 25 Physician Group Practices” based on number of physicians. Atlanta Business Chronicle.
- Gainesville – Hall County is one of Georgia’s leading healthcare centers with over 425 physicians representing over \$310 million in annual revenues in 2007.

## Industry

- 2008 netted 16 new and expanded industries creating 500 new jobs and \$187million in new capital investment. More than 1,500 jobs and \$333 million in new investment have been added in the last 2 years.
- Three new firms have added to the base of 15 automotive suppliers located in Gainesville-Hall County. TRW Automotive, a manufacturer of brake systems, invested \$25 million and created 200 jobs. ElringKlinger, a German manufacturer of thermal heat shields, located their \$15 million investment and 60 jobs in a new North American headquarters in Hall County. ZF Industries will add a new automatic transmission line, their first in North America with 80 jobs and a \$30 million investment.
- Kubota Manufacturing introduced the gasoline RTV to its production line.
- In 2008, Wrigley merged with Mars to become the largest confectionery in the world with over 1,000 employees in Hall County.
- ProCare Rx announced their \$18 million investment and creation of 180 jobs in Gainesville-Hall County adding 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, a partnership with Pattillo Construction Company.
- The Manufacturing Development Center (MDC) established by Lanier Technical College through public/private partnerships in the Featherbone Communiiversity in downtown Gainesville, is assisting 14 small incubator manufacturing companies in their formative stage 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, ProLogis Park Buford, Glade Farm and Mountain View Business Park Lula.
- Pattillo, ProLogis, Scroggs & Grizzle, Radial Property Group and Majestic Realty have built speculative buildings in various industrial parks for expanding and new industry.
- The 2009, \$10,000 SoIn Award of Innovation was awarded to EZ-Way systems. An automated manufacturing systems company located in the Lanier Technical College Manufacturing Development Center.

## Redevelopment

- The City View Center development in midtown Gainesville includes two new office buildings, parking, a hotel and conference center with a bridge connected to the Downtown Gainesville Square.
- Preservation Plaza, a retail and office development will fill out the fourth side of the downtown square in Gainesville.
- A new parking deck in downtown Gainesville is under construction to support the growing downtown retail district in Gainesville.
- The City of Gainesville is in the midst of relocating a Police and Fire department to a new development in Midtown. Midtown Gainesville will be redeveloped with the help of a TAD (Tax Allocation District).
- Main Street Gainesville continues to develop out from the downtown square with new infrastructure, retail shops and restaurants.
- The Georgia Mountains Center in Gainesville completed a \$1 million renovation.
- The cities of Flowery Branch and Oakwood are redeveloping their downtown areas. Both cities approved Tax Allocation District designations.
- Flowery Branch has partnered with Hortman and Dobbs to create a \$15 million mixed-use development in downtown Flowery Branch.
- The Featherbone Communiiversity houses the Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK), the Manufacturing Development Center and Brenau University's Nursing School. Within the Manufacturing Development Center are 14 incubating startups, The University of Georgia and Georgia Tech regional offices.

## Government/Public

- A \$240 million SPLOST was passed in March 2009 for infrastructure projects. These projects include: a new Hall County library in North Hall, new parks and green space, new roads, and sewer projects.
- 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, is at full capacity with 850 enrolled from 15 countries on the traditional residential campus. Over 1,500 students will participate in the evening, weekend and online college. Brenau's Department of Nursing opened for class in August 2008 at the Featherbone Communiiversity Campus with 5 classrooms, 15 offices, and a 144-seat auditorium, and it currently has over 70 students.
- Gainesville State College completed 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 invested \$3 million for the Manufacturing Innovation Center located on the campus in Oakwood. Lanier Technical College has 6,000 students in annual enrollment.
- The Education SPLOST III (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) overwhelmingly passed to continue a one cent sales tax raising \$160 million to build and renovate schools in the Gainesville City and Hall County School Systems. There are over 31,000 students in the Gainesville City and Hall County public schools, Fall 2008.
- Lanier Career Academy is a \$3.1 million learning institution with alternative subjects including healthcare, culinary arts and hospitality.
- North Georgia Christian Academy acquired 100 acres in South Hall to build its new campus. NGC is one of more than ten private schools in Hall County.
- The World Language Academy, the first charter school for Hall County School System, opened its doors in the Fall 2008 with immersion language in Spanish, English and Mandarin Chinese.
- Riverside Military Academy is an all-boys preparatory school with 300 cadets from 30 states and 15 countries.
- Lakeview Academy, an 88-acre campus, enrolls 598 co-ed students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12.

## Infrastructure

- SPLOST VI, March 2009, allocated \$79 million for road infrastructure, sidewalk, trails throughout Hall County and municipalities. More than \$82 million in additional road improvement projects are under construction.
- I-985 at Exit 16 and 17 new interchange including Gainesville State College and Atlanta Highway.
- Thurmon Tanner Parkway Phase III extending the new four lane divided highway to SR53.
- Water and sewer infrastructure for South Hall is going in the ground. This development comes 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 County residents.
- \$54 million jail opened saving Hall County \$2 million per year in board fees and adding \$5 million per year from outside county boarding fees. The facility is 230,000SF with 1,026 beds.
- Gainesville's Lee Gilmer Airport runway extension to 5,500ft and the addition of new hanger spaces have made Gainesville-Hall County more competitive to attract corporate executives and their businesses. A new ILS (Instrumental Landing System) was installed in 2008 and has revolutionized air travel to Gainesville-Hall County by reducing the impact of local weather conditions that limit visibility (fog, rain, etc).

## Culture

- Hall County's "Field of Dreams," a baseball field for handicapped children in South Hall, opened in Fall 2008.
- Hall County purchased 100 acres to develop a new South Hall park for residents and tourists. There are plans for a new park in North Hall as well.
- 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.
- In 2008, the City of Gainesville opened a new 50-acre park and aquatic center, the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center, adjacent to the new Gainesville Middle School. The Aquatic Center is one of five indoor competition pools in Gainesville-Hall County.

## Vision 2030 and the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

- 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](http://www.VISION2030.org) to see the 15 big ideas and the future of Gainesville-Hall County.
- 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, expand economic development, government affairs, and education programs. It also funds the Vision 2030 program.

## Non-Profits

- 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 \$3,800,000 in scholarships and grants from the Foundation Funds in FY 2008-2009.
- Jackson EMC's Operation Round Up presented \$923,000 to area individuals and agencies in FY 2007-2008.
- United Way of Hall County exceeded their 2008 goal of \$2.2 million with the United Way Effort.



### A CENTURY OF BUSINESS VISION

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