



## Acknowledgement

**The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission would like to thank the Community and Economic Development Committee members and local and regional partners for their guidance in this planning process.**

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a composite of several documents including the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's Regional Comprehensive Plan, Technical Staff Report Update, Regional Agenda Update, Part One and Two, the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Local Workforce Investment Act Plan, Kennesaw State University's Problems Facing Northwest Georgia, and NWGRC staff research and analysis.

The 2012 CEDS was made available for public review and comment for 30 days, followed by adoption by the CEDS Committee on September 18, 2012, and adoption by the NWGRC Council on September 20, 2012.

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Contents At A Glance

In EDA’s CEDS Summary of Requirements sheet, page 2, section B, “Technical Requirements”, is found in several places the phrases “the CEDS must include...”, and “The CEDS must contain...” The following references are provided as a “Quick Find” to assist EDA in their CEDS review.

The CEDS must contain a background of the economic development situation of the region...  
Pages 11-81

The CEDS must include an in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities... Pages 82-90

The CEDS must contain a section setting forth goals and objectives... Pages 94-100

The CEDS must contain a section discussing the relationship between the community in general and the private sector... Pages 7-11

The CEDS must contain a section which identifies regional projects, programs and activities...  
Pages 102-113

The CEDS must also contain a section that discusses methodology for cooperating and integrating the CEDS with the State’s economic development priorities. Page 114

The CEDS must contain a section that lists the performance measures... Page 115

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## **Community and Private Sector Participation**

### **Economic Development Strategy Committee**

The comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) brings the public and private sectors together to create an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the economy of the fifteen counties in Northwest Georgia. The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, as the local Economic Development District, develops, implements, and revises the CEDS with assistance from the CEDS Committee. The Regional Commission receives Planning Investment

Funds from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) to complete this document. The Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee consists of the Regional Commissions Economic Development Committee with additional private sector stakeholders added.

Three meetings of the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee were held; on July 26, 2012 and August 21, 2012; the final meeting to review and adopt the CEDS was held September 18, 2012. A total of 33 individuals participated in these meetings; however, not everyone attended both meetings. Sectors represented include the agriculture, economic development, education, labor, local government, tourism, and the private sector.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee members, regional and state partners include the following:

**Table 1 List of Participants**

<b>Northwest Georgia Regional Commission</b>		
<b>Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee</b>		
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Sector</b>
W. Michael Babb	Chairperson, NWGRC	Public
Jim Henry	Chairman, CEDS Committee; President, Custom Precision Components, Member of WIB Board	Private
Don Murray	Gilmer County	Private
Bishop Nicky Starling	Whitfield County	Private
Brian D. Anderson, Sr.	President and CEO, Dalton Whitfield Chamber of Commerce, Dalton State College Board Member	Private
Ken McMichen	President, Paulding Timber Products	Private
Louis Hamm	City Councilman, Fort Oglethorpe	Public
Martin (Mark) C. Eubanks	Self-employed as a consultant	Private
David Hammond	Calhoun City Councilman	Public
Frank E. Jones (Butch)	Gilmer County Bank	Private
Steve Noland	Ready Mix USA	Private
Gary E. Reece	Jasper Banking Company	Private
Jane Wilson	Bremen City Councilwoman	Public
Bill Simonds	Chairman, Fannin County Board of Commissioners	Public
Virgil R. Sperry	Hallmark Resources, Inc.	Private
John W. Weaver	Mayor of Jasper	Public
Steve Holland	Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 72, AFL-CIO	Private
Sam Payne	Payne Farms	Private

<b>Regional and State Partners</b>		
Carl Campbell	Georgia Department of Economic Development	
Patrick Vickers	Department of Community Affairs	
Leamon R. Scott	Department of Community Affairs	
Lisa Adkisson	Georgia Department of Labor	
Pete McDonald	Georgia Northwestern Technical College	
Don Henderson	Mount Vernon Mills	
Laura Musselwhite	Georgia Highlands College	
Dr. John Schwenn	Dalton State University	
Keith Barclift	Northwest Georgia Joint Development Authority	
James Thompson	Appalachian Regional Commission	
David Apple	Georgia Institute of Technology	
Erin E. Rosintoski	Georgia Institute of Technology	
Larry Brooks	Walker County Development Authority	
Alex Stall	Dalton-Whitfield County Development Authority	
Janet Cochran	Georgia Department of Economic Development	
Cynthia Norton	Georgia Department of Agriculture Agritourism Manager	
Carmen Hughes	Kennesaw State University	
Bruce Bowman	Chairman, Workforce Investment Board	
Marty McDonald	Ace Computers, Inc.	
<b>NWGRC Staff</b>		
Lloyd Frasier	Acting Director, Director of Community & Economic Development	
Gwen Dellinger	Director of Workforce Development	
David Howerin	Director of Planning	
Julie Meadows	Community & Economic Development Rep.	
Carolyn Coburn	Community & Economic Development Rep. (former)	
Delmos Stone	Community & Economic Development Rep.	
Jennifer Whorton	Loan Programs Officer	

## Community Participation

Community participation was encourage throughout the process with meeting notices sent to local and regional media, posted at both Regional Commission offices, and placed at the Calhoun Convention Center. Community participation also included a public hearing and comment period.

## Background

Generally, Northwest Georgia is in an excellent strategic location for economic growth. Positioned between Chattanooga, Atlanta and Birmingham, all counties have experienced population and economic growth. Availability of strong economic resources at the local, regional, and state levels, combined with excellent transportation and solid investments in infrastructure, indicate future economic development activity in the region.

## Northwest Georgia Geography

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's region consists of 15 counties: Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Walker, and Whitfield. The region is predominantly rural but continues to see substantial growth due to its proximity to Atlanta and Chattanooga. The Interstate 75 corridor runs North-South through the eastern part of the Region connecting the two metropolitan areas. A description of each county follows:



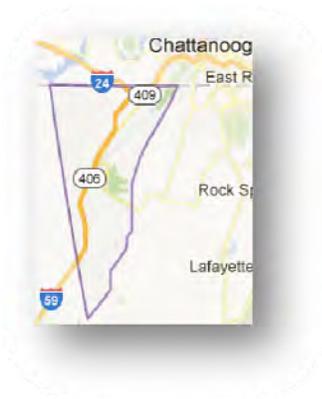
*Bartow-* This county is the second largest in the region in terms of land mass. It is home to several of the region's major employers, Plant Bowen, Anheuser-Busch, Toyo Tire and Shaw Industries. Its Civil War history includes the Great Locomotive Chase of 1862: The locomotive General was stolen by Northerners led by James J. Andrews at Big Shanty (now Kennesaw, Georgia), and used in an unsuccessful attempt to destroy vital railroad and communication lines through North Georgia.



*Catoosa-* Because of its proximity to Tennessee, Catoosa County and its cities, Fort Oglethorpe and Ringgold, are considered bedroom communities to Chattanooga and are included in its Metropolitan Statistical Area. Catoosa County is also home to the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park, the site of a major battle of the Civil War.

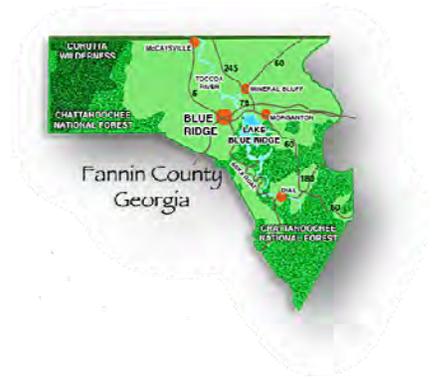


*Chattooga-* The Chattooga River and Sloppy Floyd State Park are among the natural resources of this rural county. Industries include the region's oldest operational textile mill, Mount Vernon Mills, Showa (Best), Mohawk Carpet, and J. P. Smith Lumber. Summerville, the county seat, features one of the few operational railroad turntables in the U.S., as well as the historic neoclassical revival courthouse.



*Dade*- Geographically the smallest county in the region and has one incorporated city, Trenton. It is best known for the beautiful views from Cloudland Canyon State Park.

*Fannin*- Located in the Georgia Mountains, Fannin County and its county seat, Blue Ridge, are popular tourist destinations. Because of its mountainous terrain, there is little manufacturing and the county relies heavily on the service sector for employment.



*Floyd*- Floyd County is the largest county in the region in terms of land mass and is home to the largest city, Rome. Rome serves the epicenter of Northwest Georgia and is known for its beautiful downtown. It is home to Berry College, Shorter College and two major hospitals.



*Gilmer*- Nestled in the southern foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Gilmer County is a predominately rural and heavily forested. It is designated as Georgia’s Apple Capital as well as the Mountain Biking Capital of the state. Ellijay and East Ellijay are Gilmer County’s two incorporated cities.



*Gordon*- This county has taken advantage of its connection to Interstate 75. Its largest city, Calhoun, relies heavily on manufacturing including major carpet and floor covering manufacturers, food processors, heavy machinery assembly companies, and distribution firms. Gordon County was home to New Echota, capital of the Cherokee Nation from 1825 to 1835, and the birthplace of the written Cherokee language and newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix.



*Haralson*- Located in the Southwest corner of the region bordering Alabama, Haralson County has Interstate 20 on its southern border and US Highway 27 running North-South through the county. Home to Honda Precision Parts of Georgia, Haralson County is part of the Auto Alley program and attributes most of its employment to the manufacturing industry.



*Murray*- This county is largely forested land being home to Fort Mountain State Park and the Chattahoochee National Forest. Murray County's connection with neighboring Whitfield County has kept their economy largely dependent on the carpet industry.

*Paulding*- Paulding County has the largest population in the region, topping 140,000 residents. As a bedroom community of Atlanta, it is the fastest growing area in the Northwest Georgia region but most of the county's residents travel outside of the county for employment.



*Pickens*- Part of the mountain region of Georgia, Pickens County is known for its high quality marble. The site of one of the largest marble veins in the world, mining is an important industry for this county. Over 60 percent of the monuments in Washington, D.C. are made from Pickens County marble.





*Polk-* Located on the western edge of the region, this county is largely rural with the city of Cedartown as the county seat. Polk County is home to 15 miles of the Silver Comet Trail, a multi-use Rails-to-Trails trail that connects to the Chief Ladiga Trail in Alabama. The combined Silver Comet and Chief Ladiga trail length is estimated to be over 100 paved miles from Smyrna, Georgia to Anniston, Alabama and brings in visitors from all over.



Industries, and Phillips Brothers.

*Walker-* Located in the northwest portion of the region, this county shares borders with both Alabama and Tennessee. Walker County is one of the few Georgia counties with a Sole County Commissioner. Lookout Mountain runs through Walker, Dade and Chattooga Counties; See Rock City is a well-known theme park on the mountain from which one can see 6 states. Industries include Nissin Brake Co., Shaw Industries, Roper Corp and Yates Bleachery (a third generation family industry), Syntech, Synthetic



*Whitfield-* Whitfield County is home to Dalton, the Carpet Capital of the World. They are very dependent on carpet manufacturing and were hit very hard by the recession in 2008. Interstate 75 bisects Whitfield County and the local government has been using this resource to their advantage to attract new and diversified industry into their community.

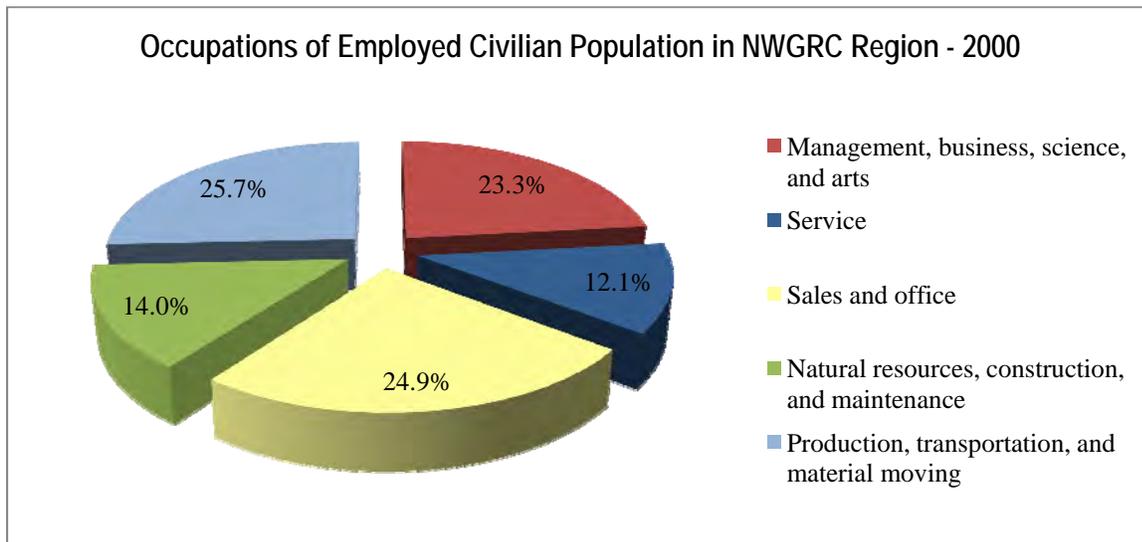
## Regional Economy

The region's economic base has long depended upon the manufacturing sector (25% of the region's employment in 2011), dominated by carpet/textiles. The economic downturn and resulting collapse of the housing industry dramatically reduced demand for carpet products, causing economic distress in the region as layoffs and plant closures led to thousands of jobs lost. Whitfield County continues to lose carpet manufacturing jobs; losing 4,600 jobs, or 6.9 percent of its employment, from June 2011 to June 2012 (US BLS). This affects workers in neighboring Murray, Gordon and Catoosa Counties, as well as related manufacturers, distributors and suppliers throughout the region. From Dade County to Whitfield County, Northwest Georgia has experienced greater economic distress than the U. S. as a whole, with a 24-month regional unemployment rate of 10.22% compared to 8.94% for the U.S.

However, there are bright spots as well around the region in 2012. These include the expansion of Mohawk Carpet in Chattooga County, adding 500 jobs to this rural community; and voestalpine, a global auto supplier adding 220 jobs as the anchor industry in Bartow County’s Highland 75 industrial park, with the promise of additional jobs. Three industries in Walker County- Syntec, Synthetic Industries, and Phillips Brothers- are expanding, adding 100 jobs and retaining 220, investing \$6.3 in private investment and bonds. Paulding County attracted Interroll, a global manufacturer of conveyer systems, creating 70 jobs with a private investment of \$10 million. Other counties, including Polk, Pickens and Gilmer, are investing in their industrial parks and in downtown development.

Manufacturing, including the carpet and flooring industry, is changing its production model. Going from a highly labor intensive hands-on production system to an automated system, where skilled technicians guide machines using computer programming or perform manual tasks with robotic assistance. In this changing job market, prospective employees must have or be able to learn the required skill set including engineering, computer technology, and programming skill as well as ability to do demanding physical work and long hours. Automotive suppliers and other small manufacturers have similar requirements. Other industries still depend on traditional textile workers but find it difficult to work with the educational system to train and supply the needed workforce. Nationally, and here in Northwest Georgia, the service sector, including health care, food service and retail, is a growing sector while the goods producing sector is declining.

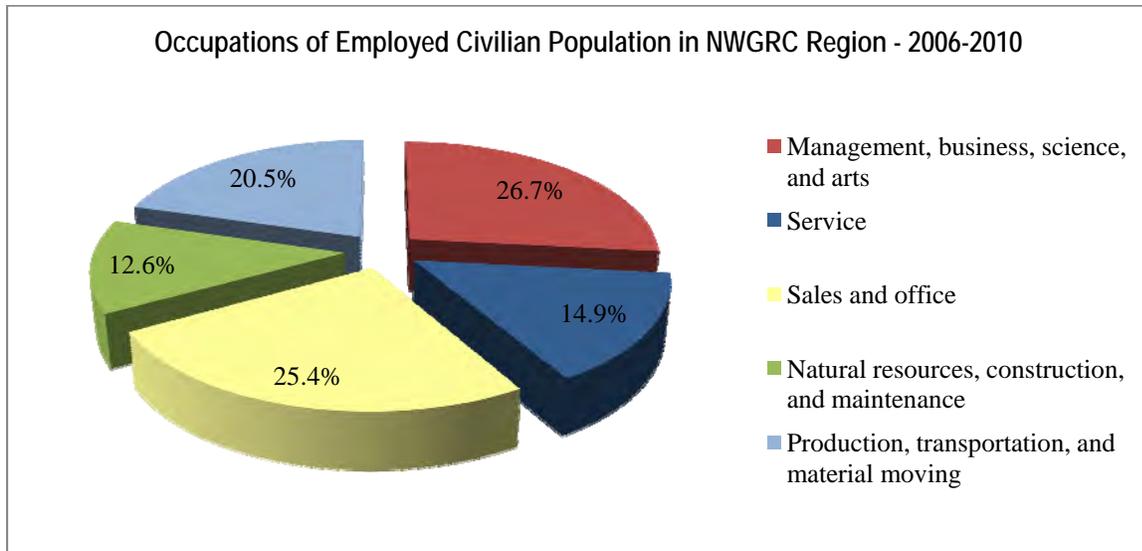
### Occupations



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3

In 2000, an almost equal portion of the region’s workers (approximately 25%) were employed in the production, transportation, and material moving; management, business, science and arts; and

sales and office occupations. Service occupations formed only 12.1% of total employed workers. From 2006-2010, service occupations increased by 2.9% to 14.9%, while the production/transportation sector decreased by 5.2% to 20.5%. Management and sales occupations increased slightly and natural resources decreased slightly.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2010

Other key aspects of the regional economy that will contribute greatly to the future of Northwest Georgia, but do not necessarily show up in terms of numbers employed, include information- and technology- based jobs; and agriculture. While on the surface these jobs seem dissimilar, they both add value to the local economy, attract both young individuals as well as retirees or those starting a second career, depend on resources in the community whether it is land or broadband, and both are creative and collaborative, finding new, more effective ways of producing.

## Long Range Employment Trends

### REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC SECTORS-REGION ONE, 1970-2010.

	Agric	Mining	Constr	Manuf	TransPU	W.T.	R.T.	F.I.R.E.	Serv	NonC	Total
1970	373	874	4,956	70,089	3,446	3,894	13,566	2,920	7,773	336	108,227
1980	251	1,029	4,885	83,810	5,447	5,826	20,157	4,025	13,942	808	140,180
1990	502	512	6,793	88,359	7,639	10,562	31,267	5,522	26,797	631	178,584
1995	580	586	6,805	93,605	7,979	11,743	39,533	5,924	39,004	138	205,897
1997	842	644	7,811	92,979	9,109	12,285	41,818	6,182	42,525	72	214,267
1998	332	613	8,128	86,720	5,480	9,227	30,238	6,562	67,203	153	214,656
2000	358	697	9,585	84,045	7,245	10,596	32,927	6,726	73,937	201	226,317
<b>2010</b>	<b>1,017</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>7,119</b>	<b>59,592</b>	<b>10,236</b>	<b>8,855</b>	<b>30,606</b>	<b>6,535</b>	<b>72,568</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>197,401</b>
<b>SECTOR AS PERCENT OF TOTAL</b>											
	Agric	Mining	Constr	Manuf	TransPU	W.T.	R.T.	F.I.R.E.	Serv	NonC	Total
1970	0.30%	0.80%	4.60%	64.80%	3.20%	3.60%	12.50%	2.70%	7.20%	0.30%	100.00%
1980	0.20%	0.70%	3.50%	59.80%	3.90%	4.20%	14.40%	2.90%	9.90%	0.60%	100.00%
1990	0.30%	0.30%	3.80%	49.50%	4.30%	5.90%	17.50%	3.10%	15.00%	0.40%	100.00%
1995	0.30%	0.30%	3.30%	45.50%	3.90%	5.70%	19.20%	2.90%	18.90%	0.10%	100.00%
1997	0.40%	0.30%	3.60%	43.40%	4.30%	5.70%	19.50%	2.90%	19.80%	0.00%	100.00%
1998	0.20%	0.30%	3.80%	40.40%	2.60%	4.30%	14.10%	3.10%	31.30%	0.10%	100.00%
2000	0.20%	0.30%	4.20%	37.10%	3.20%	4.70%	14.50%	3.00%	32.70%	0.10%	100.00%
<b>2010</b>	<b>0.52%</b>	<b>0.24%</b>	<b>3.61%</b>	<b>30.19%</b>	<b>5.19%</b>	<b>4.49%</b>	<b>15.50%</b>	<b>3.31%</b>	<b>36.76%</b>	<b>0.20%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>PERCENT GROWTH</b>											
	Agric	Mining	Constr	Manuf	TransPU	W.T.	R.T.	F.I.R.E.	Serv	NonC	Total
1970-80	-32.70%	17.70%	-1.40%	19.60%	58.10%	49.60%	48.60%	37.80%	79.40%	140.50%	29.50%
1980-90	100.00%	-50.2%	39.10%	5.40%	40.20%	81.30%	55.10%	37.20%	92.20%	-21.90%	27.40%

1990-00	-28.70%	36.10%	41.10%	-4.90%	-5.20%	0.30%	5.30%	21.80%	175.90%	-68.10%	26.70%
2000-10	184.08%	-31.4%	-25.7%	-29.1%	41.28%	-16.43%	-7.05%	-2.84%	-1.85%	96.52%	-12.78%
1990-95	15.50%	14.50%	0.20%	5.90%	4.50%	11.20%	26.40%	7.30%	45.60%	-78.10%	15.30%
1995-00	-38.30%	18.90%	40.90%	-10.2%	-9.20%	-9.80%	-16.70%	13.50%	89.60%	45.70%	9.90%
1970-00	-4.00%	-20.3%	93.40%	19.90%	110.20%	172.10%	142.70%	130.30%	851.20%	-40.20%	109.10%
<b>1970-10</b>	<b>172.65%</b>	<b>-45.3%</b>	<b>43.64%</b>	<b>-15.0%</b>	<b>197.04%</b>	<b>127.40%</b>	<b>125.61%</b>	<b>123.80%</b>	<b>833.59%</b>	<b>17.56%</b>	<b>82.40%</b>

Source: County Business Patterns, Census Bureau (estimated to overcome disclosure problems)

Since 1970, regional employment in Northwest Georgia has increased 82% overall. In each decade from 1970-2000, employment increased uniformly by 27% to 30%. However in the last decade from 2000-2010, overall employment decreased by 13%. The recession’s impact on the region’s employment in this last decade cannot be overstated. Goods Producing

Overall the goods producing sector of the regional economy (including agriculture, mining, construction and manufacturing, declined as a percentage of total employment from 1970-2010. All other sectors increased, most notably the service sector which increased by 733.6%. The service sector grew from 7.2% of the economy in 1970 to 36.8% of the economy in 2010.

**NWGRC Wage and salary employment (number of jobs) 1970-2010.**

<b>County</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change 1970-2010</b>
Bartow, GA	11,689	16,693	21,831	32,855	32,840	180.95%
Catoosa, GA	4,769	7,345	12,441	15,946	14,245	198.70%
Chattooga, GA	7,189	7,661	7,548	8,749	6,162	-14.29%
Dade, GA	1,396	2,112	2,878	3,644	3,226	131.09%
Fannin, GA	2,289	2,759	3,759	5,460	5,732	150.42%
Floyd, GA	31,194	34,538	39,235	42,730	39,999	28.23%
Gilmer, GA	2,624	3,694	5,617	7,822	8,319	217.04%
Gordon, GA	8,100	11,060	18,187	22,602	20,417	152.06%
Haralson, GA	6,266	7,013	7,313	6,876	7,470	19.21%
Murray, GA	2,718	6,488	9,412	13,921	10,877	300.18%
Paulding, GA	2,085	3,374	6,301	13,419	21,008	907.58%
Pickens, GA	3,045	3,921	4,354	5,906	7,358	141.64%
Polk, GA	8,715	10,567	10,150	11,159	11,716	34.43%
Walker, GA	13,678	12,355	16,213	16,595	13,889	1.54%
Whitfield, GA	28,725	36,774	52,285	65,186	55,411	92.90%
<b>Legend / Footnotes:</b>						
<i>All state and local area dollar estimates are in current dollars (not adjusted for inflation).</i>						
<i>Last updated: December 14, 2011 - new estimates for 2010; revised estimates for 2008-2009.</i>						
Source: U. S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, CA 34, 2012.						

Except for Chattooga County, each County experienced an overall employment increase from 1970-2010. The gains were not uniform however. The previous CEDS (2007-2012) stated that Haralson County from 1970-2000 experienced a significant jobs loss in their main industry, textile manufacturing. Chattooga County experienced only a very small gain in this industry; overall employment decreased in Chattooga County by 14%. Polk and Walker Counties had slight gains but heavy textile manufacturing losses from 1970-2000. Whitfield County was impacted by the recession as the carpet industry experienced a loss of demand and a retooling of the industry, causing nation-leading jobs loss. The largest percentage gain in employment was Paulding County as it transitioned from a rural county to part of the Atlanta metropolitan area.

## Current Economic Base

### Average Monthly Employment by Sector in 2010 – Region, State, and Nation

NAICS Sector	NWGRC		Georgia	United States
	Number	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total
<b>Goods Producing</b>	<b>68,206</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>14.7</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,017	0.4	0.7	0.9
Mining	478	0.2	0.1	0.5
Construction	7,119	3.0	4.0	4.3
Manufacturing	59,592	24.8	9.1	9.0
<b>Service Providing</b>	<b>128,800</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>68.3</b>
Wholesale Trade	8,855	3.7	5.2	4.3
Retail Trade	30,606	12.7	11.5	11.3
Transportation and warehousing	8,917	3.7	4.0	3.1
Utilities	1,319	0.5	0.5	0.4
Information	3,217	1.3	2.7	2.1
Finance and insurance	4,826	2.0	3.9	4.3
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,709	0.7	1.5	1.5
Professional, scientific/tech services	6,758	2.8	5.8	5.8
Management of companies/enterprises	1,142	0.5	1.4	1.5
Administrative & Waste Services	9,257	3.9	6.8	5.8
Educational services	1,949	0.8	1.7	1.9
Health care and social assistance	24,343	10.1	10.5	12.7
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,679	0.7	1.0	1.5
Accommodation and food services	19,597	8.2	8.9	8.7
Other services (except government)	4,626	1.9	2.5	3.4
<b>Unclassified</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Total - Private Sector</b>	<b>197,401</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>83.1</b>
<b>Total – Government</b>	<b>42,700</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>16.9</b>
Federal	1,779	0.7	2.9	2.3
State	6,835	2.8	3.9	3.6
Local	34,086	14.2	11.1	11.0
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>240,101</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Georgia Department of Labor (region and state); U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (nation)

When comparing Region One to the State, the obvious difference again is that our region has a much higher concentration in manufacturing employment (approximately 25% in Region One versus approximately 9 % for the State). The State, on the other hand, has slightly higher percentages in the other sectors. In 2010, of all the people in Northwest Georgia who were employed, 28.4% of them were employed in the goods producing sector, including construction, agriculture, manufacturing and mining. Many more people are employed in the goods-producing sector in Northwest Georgia, than statewide (13.9% of total employment in Georgia) or nationwide (14.7% for the US). Contrastingly, the region’s service sector, including retail and wholesale trade, insurance, and finance, provided 53.6% of total employment as compared to 68.0% for Georgia and 68.3% for the US. The remaining 17.8% of workers were employed with local, state, and national government, comparable to Georgia and the US.

### **Industry Employment Distribution for NWGRC Region for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, 2011**

Rank	Industry Sector	Establishments	Employees	
			Number	Percent
1	Manufacturing (31-33)	1,148	60,034	25.0%
2	Retail Trade (44 & 45)	2,564	30,849	12.8%
3	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,292	26,391	11.0%
4	Education Services	433	24,526	10.2%
5	Accommodation and Food Services	1,176	20,309	8.5%
6	Public Administration	329	12,886	5.4%
7	Transportation and Warehousing (48 & 49)	565	11,145	4.6%
8	Admin., Support, Waste Mgmt, Remediation	740	9,889	4.1%
9	Wholesale Trade	983	9,482	3.9%
10	Professional, Scientific & Technical Svc	1,215	7,230	3.0%
11	Construction	1,537	7,034	2.9%
12	Other Services (except Public Admin.)	1,055	5,016	2.1%
13	Finance and Insurance	748	4,687	2.0%
14	Information	185	3,334	1.4%
15	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	149	1,955	0.8%
16	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	525	1,781	0.7%
17	Utilities	30	1,305	0.5%
18	Management of Companies and Enterprises	58	1,000	0.4%

19	Agriculture	118	935	0.4%
20	Forestry, Fishing & Hunting Mining	24	489	0.2%
-	All Industries	14,874	240,277	100.0%

*Source: Labor Market Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program*

Most recent employment numbers, for Fall 2011, showed that manufacturing led the five top sub-sectors of the regional economy, employing 60,034 worker (25% of all workers), followed by retail sales (12.8%), health care and social assistance (11.0%), education services (10.2%), and accommodation and food services (8.5%). All other service and goods producing sub-sectors provided less than one-third of total employment (32.5%).

### *Agriculture*

Agriculture increased in the region from 1970-2010 due in large part to an apparent increase in employment from 2000-2010. Employment in this sector tended to fluctuate across the 40 year period. Agricultural employment may depend on many conditions that vary from year to year including labor availability, current federal or state regulations, condition and yield of crops, type and size of farming operation, even seasonal variations. Reporting farm employment also depends on the definition of a farm, as well as the fact that the farm may be a secondary source of employment and income. The sector provides less than 1% of total employment for the region.

The number of farms in the region dropped from 7,042 in 1969 to 4,904 in 1987, to 4,600 in 1992 but increased to 5,939 in 2007. Acreage in farms dropped by almost 40% or 435,104 acres from 1969 to 1997 but increased slightly to 660,357 acres in 2007. The average size farm remained virtually unchanged from 1997-2007 after declining by 11 acres from 1969 to 1987. Poultry and poultry products accounted for an average 72% of total farm sales in 2007, same as 72.9% in 1987. Other livestock and their products accounted for 12% of agricultural sales. Poultry processing is growing but requires very little land and most owners of chicken houses use chickens only to supplement their income. Gilmer County produces the highest broiler sales followed by Gordon County.

### *Construction*

The construction industry in Georgia declined by 26% from 2000-2010 due to the impact of the housing crisis and economic recession. Overall from 1970-2010, the industry saw a 44% growth in employment. As a percent of total employment the sector dropped from 4.6% in 1970 to 3.6% in 2010. Overall, employment is projected to decline by 2% by 2018.

### *Mining*

The mining sector currently forms less than one half percent of total employment, and this sector has decreased in employment from 1970 to 2010. Bartow County account for four-fifths of this total. Mining in Bartow County is conducted for several clay minerals but has declined in the last five years with the closing of a major operation near downtown Cartersville. Outside this county, mining is mostly limited to sand and gravel. Projected employment shows a 4% decrease by 2018.

### *Manufacturing*

Manufacturing in the region declined by 15% as a percentage of employment from 1970-2010; in 1970 manufacturing accounted for 65% of total employment and in 2010 this had decreased to 30%; however it is still a significant employment sector in the region. Textile and textile producing mills accounted for the majority of jobs lost in the region. Manufacturing is projected to decline by 5% by 2018.

### *Service Providing*

The service sector of the economy increased as a source of employment from 1970-2010. All service sectors increased by at least 120% total employment. By 2018, the service sector is projected to increase by 16%.

### *Retail Trade*

Retail trade increased from 13% of the region's employment in 1970 to 15% of employment in 2010, and employment in the sector increased by 126%. As population increased in the region the demand for additional services grew and retail employment increased. This sector is very vulnerable to changes in the economy and with the recession's impact on disposable income layoffs and closures are common. By 2018, the overall trade and transportation sector including retail is expected to increase by 6%.

### *Wholesale Trade*

From 1970 to 2010, wholesale trade increased from 3.6% to 4.5% of total employment, and actual employment increased 127% over the period. By 2018, the overall trade and transportation sector including wholesale is expected to increase by 6%.

### *Transportation*

This sector increased steadily in jobs and grew from 3.2% of total employment in 1970 to 5.2% in 2010; an increase of 197%. In 2000, over half of sector employment was due to trucking and warehousing, primarily to serve the carpet industry concentrated in Whitfield County. This

sector was impacted heavily by the recession, the decline of the carpet industry and the rising price of gasoline. Changes to the logistics and transportation industry are expected as cargo handling and distribution changes globally. Sector employment is expected to grow by 83% to 15859 by 2025. By 2018, the overall trade and transportation sector is expected to increase by 6%.

### *Other Services*

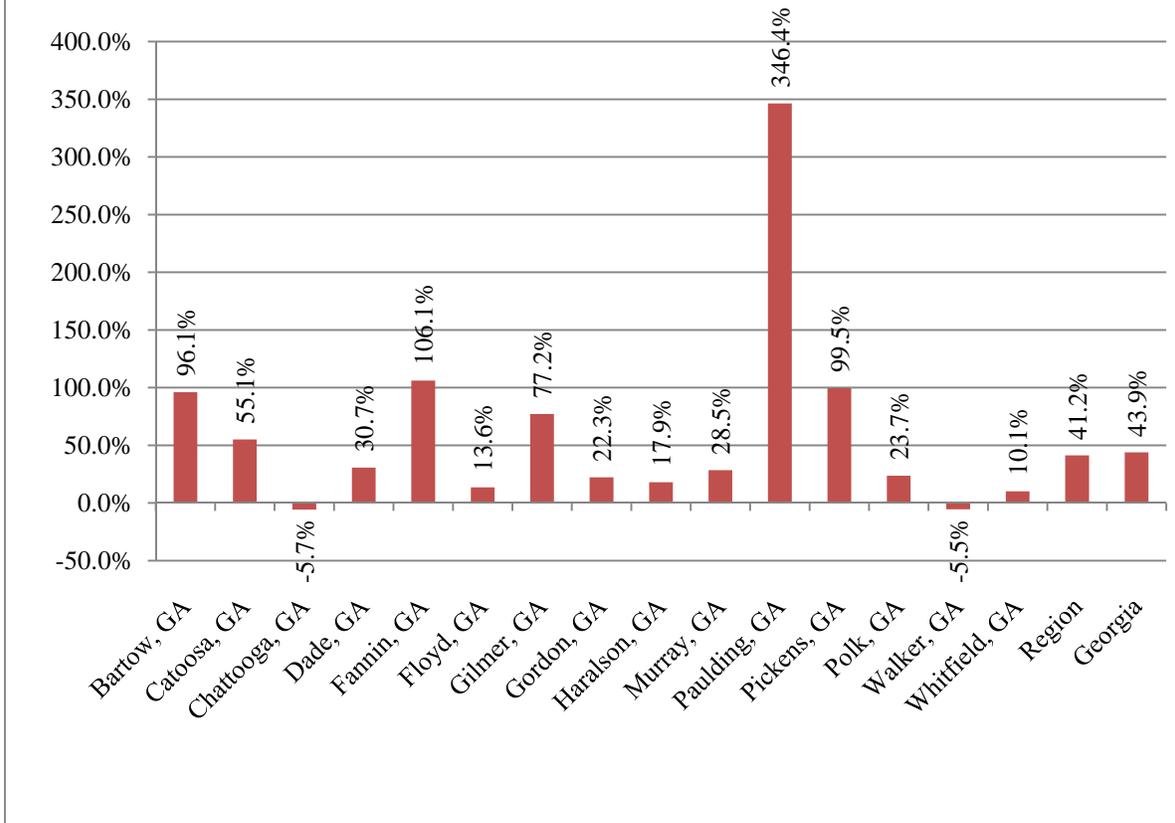
Employment in this sector as a percent of the total employment increased from 7% in 1970 to 37% in 2010, and employment increased overall in the sector by 833%. By 2018 the sector is projected to grow by a further 13%.

### *Government*

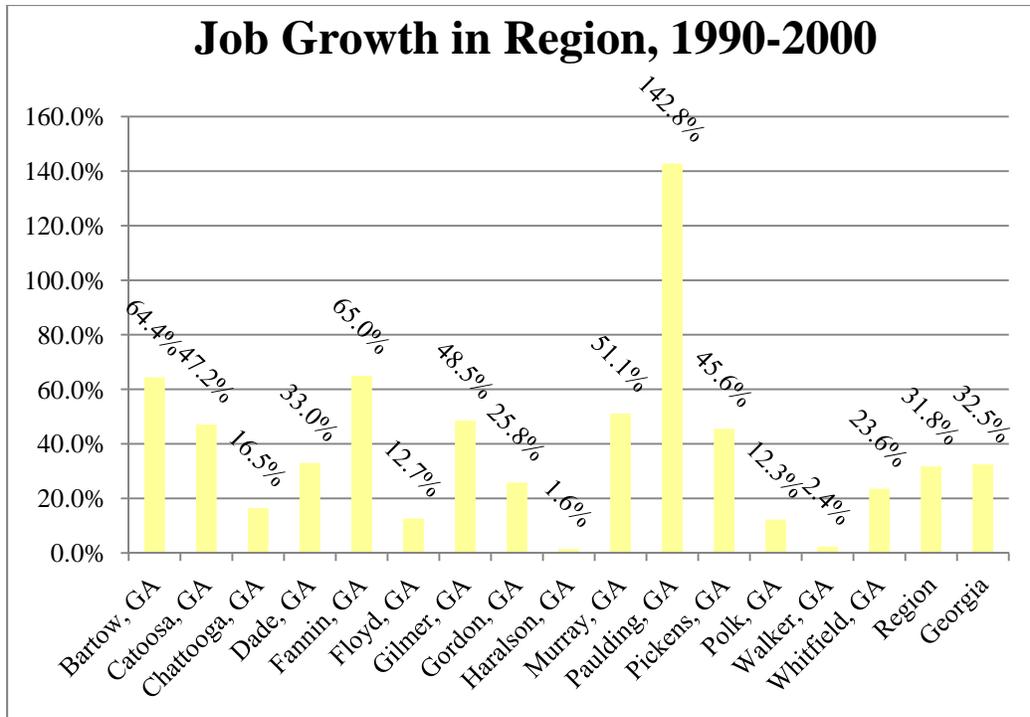
This sector which currently employs 17,945 in the region, including local, state, and national levels, is projected to grow by 6.3%.

## **Labor Force- Historical Jobs Growth**

## Employment Growth, 1990-2010.

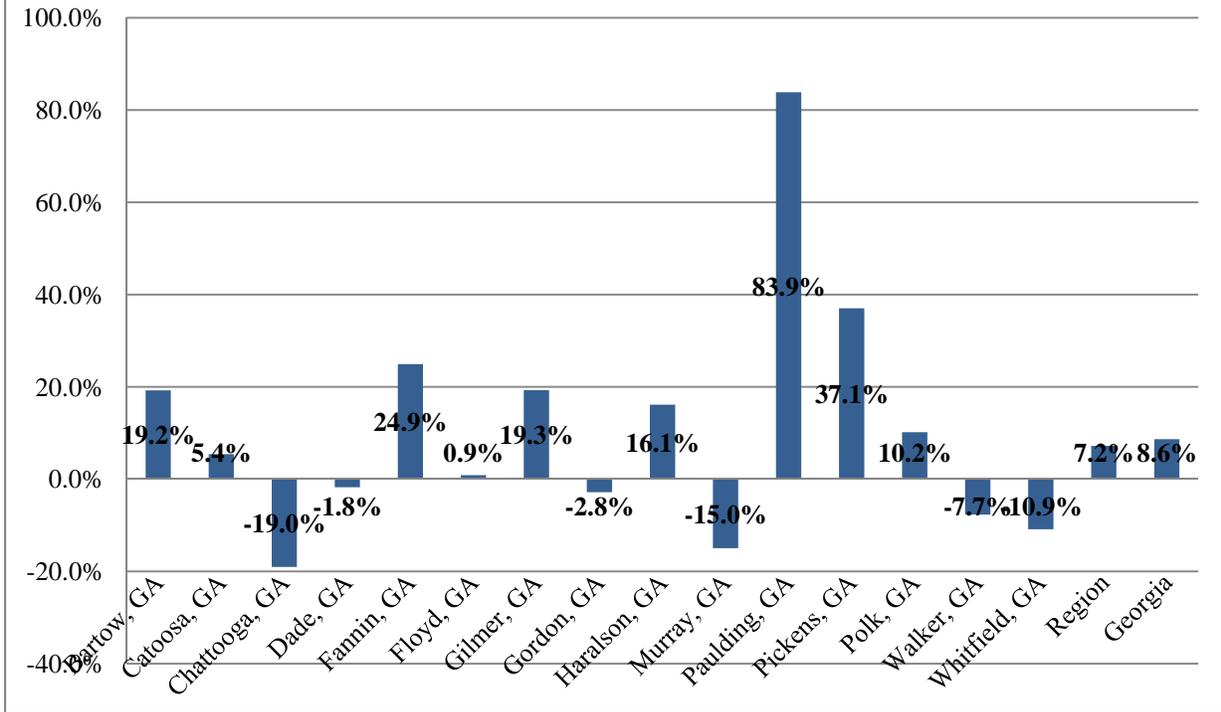


From 1990 to 2010, job growth in Paulding County skyrocketed with an increasing population and proximity to the metro Atlanta area. Other communities who saw job growth related to metro Atlanta and I-75 or I-575 include Bartow, Fannin, Pickens, and Gilmer Counties. While most counties saw job growth over the period,



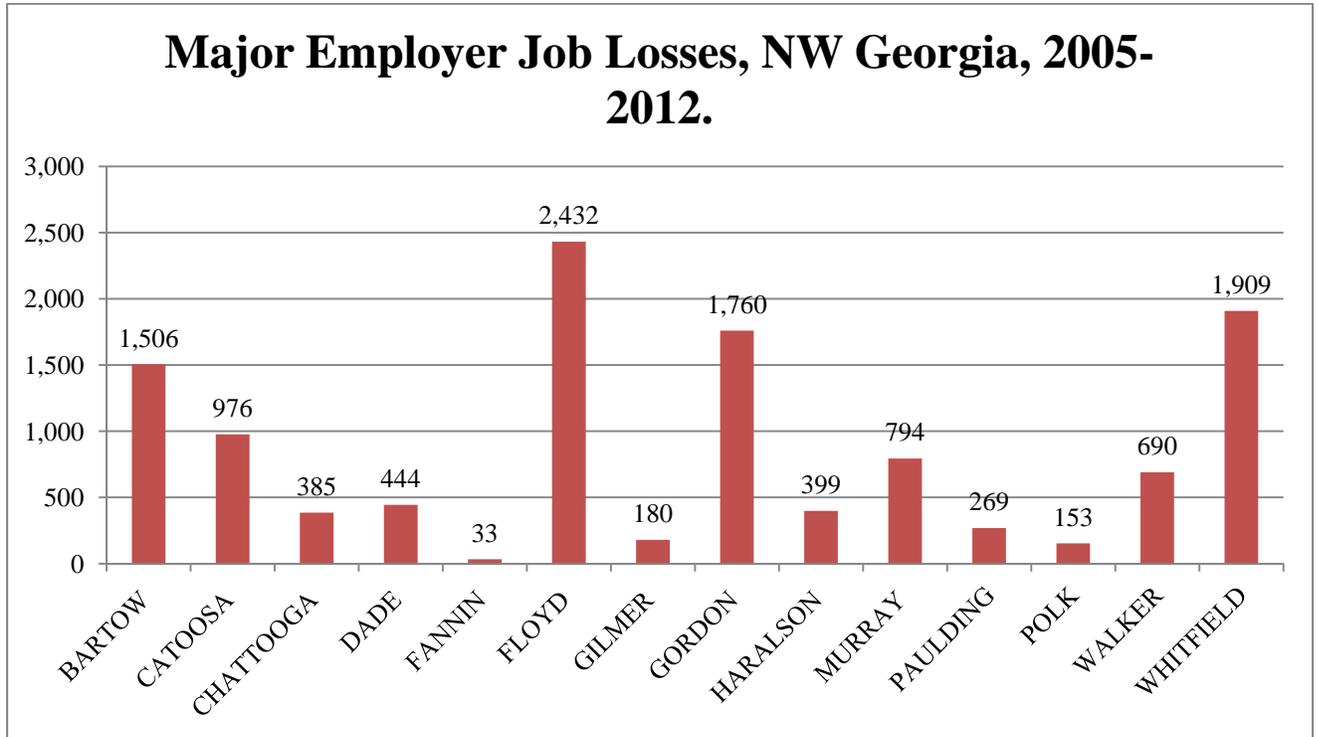
From 1990 to 2000 the region saw across-the-board job growth, with Paulding, and Bartow, and to a lesser degree the counties along the I-575/Highway 5 corridor, Pickens, Gilmer, and Fannin Counties. Overall, the region and state showed comparable job growth from 1990-2000. However, this changed in the next decade.

## Job Growth in Region, 2000-2010.



The job situation from 2000-2010 changed dramatically. Due to the recession, housing crisis and subsequent changes in the carpet industry, including layoffs and closures, job growth was negative for many counties, including Chattooga, Murray, Whitfield and Walker Counties. In Paulding County, continuing growth occurred in the service sector, specifically in retail trade, health care and food service, while goods producing jobs actually declined. Employment growth in these service sectors paralleled population growth as Paulding County became an increasingly residential community for Metro Atlanta area workers. Compared to the state, the region showed less job growth over the decade.

## Major Job Losses



The region has experienced 11,390 major employer jobs lost from 2005-2012, according to the WARN system from the Georgia Department of Labor. The vast majority have been manufacturing jobs, in the textile mill or textile product mill sectors.

The following is a sample of major employer losses or layoffs by county.

### Major Employer Losses or Layoffs in the Region

	Company Name	County	Affected	Date
1	NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL HOSPITAL	FLOYD	750	12/5/2011
2	TRINITY NORTH AMERICAN FREIGHT CAR, INC.	BARTOW	659	4/22/2009
3	SHAW INDUSTRIES	DADE	444	10/9/2008
4	SHAW INDUSTRIES	CATOOSA	431	9/8/2009
5	SHAW INDUSTRIES, PLANT 07	GORDON	390	3/24/2009
6	TI ACQUISITIONS, LLC	WHITFIELD	379	11/12/2008
7	PIERRE (ZARTIC, LLC.)	FLOYD	350	5/13/2010
8	SPRINGS GLOBAL US, INC.	GORDON	324	12/6/2006
9	SHAW INDUSTRIES	MURRAY	302	4/12/2011
10	BLUE BIRD	WALKER	300	6/25/2010
11	ACTIONMED PERSONNEL (NEXUS)	GORDON	280	1/24/2012
12	PILGRIM'S PRIDE	WHITFIELD	277	4/13/2009
13	SHAW INDUSTRIES, PLANT 20	WHITFIELD	275	10/11/2011
14	ROPER CORPORATION (GE)	WALKER	258	12/31/2008
15	MOUNT VERNON MILLS	CHATTOOGA	250	2/12/2008

Source: Georgia DOL, Business Layoff and Closure Listing, 2012.

### Employment Status

#### Employment Status within NWGRC Region – 2000-2010

Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2000	362,491	350,372	12,119	3.3%
2001	367,624	352,857	14,767	4.0%
2002	377,993	361,198	16,795	4.4%
2003	385,005	368,124	16,881	4.4%
2004	392,914	375,561	17,353	4.4%
2005	407,250	387,541	19,709	4.8%
2006	415,436	397,400	18,036	4.3%
2007	416,065	397,236	18,829	4.5%
2008	418,207	390,215	27,992	6.7%
2009	410,343	365,609	44,734	10.9%
2010	403,555	360,063	43,492	10.8%

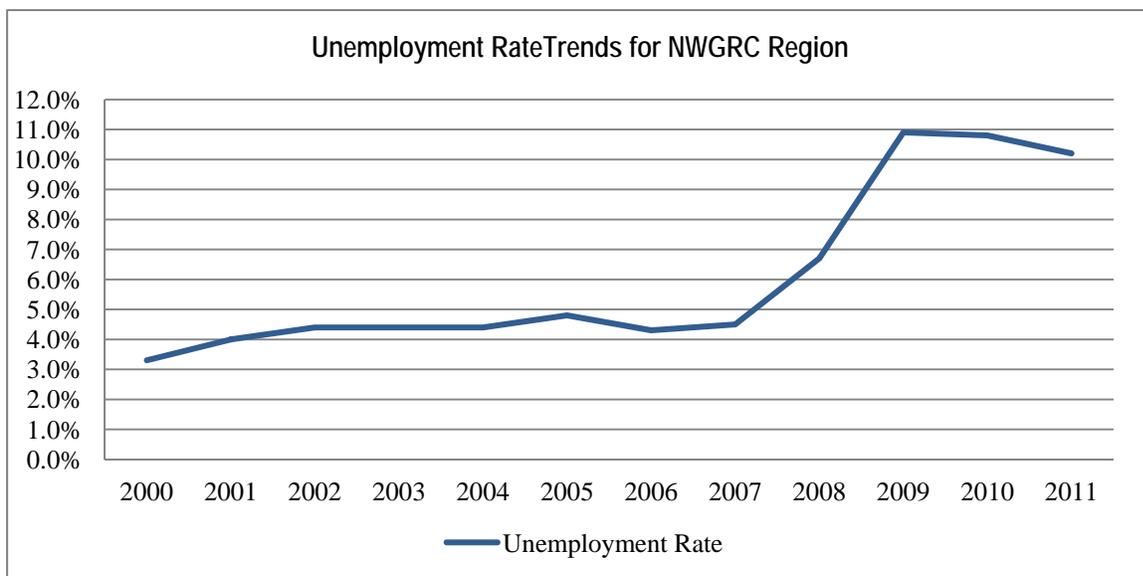
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Over the last ten years, the Northwest Georgia’s annual unemployment rate increased from 3.3% percent/year to 10.8% per year. Over that period, while the labor force increased by 41,064, the number of employed people increased by less than one-fourth of that number (9,691). The number of unemployed increased 3-fold over the ten years. In the comparison below the unemployment rate of the region is comparable to the unemployment rate of the Three Rivers Regional Commission (including Carrollton and LaGrange) though the workforce is much larger. The NWGRC’s unemployment rate remains higher than the State of Georgia’s and the US. Most recently in July 2012, unemployment increased in most counties in the region.

**Employment Status within NWGRC Region, Adjacent Regions, State, and Nation - 2011**

Area	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
<b>NWGRC</b>	<b>412,726</b>	<b>370,566</b>	<b>42,160</b>	<b>10.2%</b>
Georgia Mtns RC	303,654	277,639	26,015	8.6%
Atlanta RC	2,121,524	1,917,610	203,914	9.6%
Three Rivers RC	230,147	205,641	24,506	10.6%
Georgia	4,725,104	4,262,175	462,929	9.8%
United States	153,617,000	139,869,000	13,747,000	8.9%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Unemployment in the region, at a productive and healthy 3% in 2000, rose in 2007 and continued to climb sharply until 2009 where it leveled off and remained at 10-11% for the next two years. Conditions have changed in the region due in large part to national and international economic conditions that had a huge impact on demand for products manufactured by regional employers.

## Current Employment Sectors

### Industry Employment Distribution for NWGRC Region for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, 2011

Rank	Industry Sector	Establishments	Employees	
			Number	Percent
1	Manufacturing (31-33)	1,148	60,034	25.0%
2	Retail Trade (44 & 45)	2,564	30,849	12.8%
3	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,292	26,391	11.0%
4	Education Services	433	24,526	10.2%
5	Accommodation and Food Services	1,176	20,309	8.5%
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9	Wholesale Trade	983	9,482	3.9%
10	Professional, Scientific & Technical Svc	1,215	7,230	3.0%
11	Construction	1,537	7,034	2.9%
12	Other Services (except Public Admin.)	1,055	5,016	2.1%
13	Finance and Insurance	748	4,687	2.0%
14	Information	185	3,334	1.4%
15	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	149	1,955	0.8%
16	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	525	1,781	0.7%
17	Utilities	30	1,305	0.5%
18	Management of Companies and Enterprises	58	1,000	0.4%
19	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	118	935	0.4%
20	Mining	24	489	0.2%
-	All Industries	14,874	240,277	100.0%

*Source: Labor Market Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program*

In the third quarter of 2011, manufacturing led the five top sub-sectors of the regional economy, at 25% of total employment, followed by retail sales (12.8%), health care and social assistance (11.0%), education services (10.2%), and accommodation and food services (8.5%).

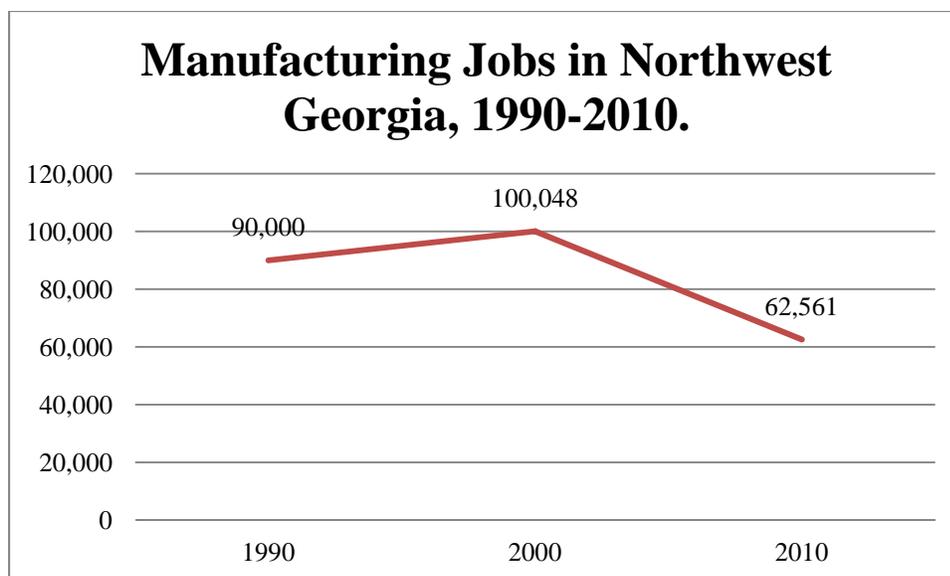
## Manufacturing

### Distribution of NWGRC Manufacturing Employers

Manufacturing Industry Mix, 2011				
	Number Employed	Percent Employed	Weekly Wage	
Manufacturing	59,826	100.00%	772	
Apparel	81	0.14%	449	
Beverage and Tobacco Product	589	0.98%	1,417	
Chemical	2,938	4.91%	987	
Computer and Electronic Product	489	0.82%	681	
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and	*		*	
Fabricated Metal Product	1,729	2.89%	874	
Food	3,378	5.65%	727	
Furniture and Related Product	1,819	3.04%	706	
Leather and Allied Product	*		*	
Machinery	1,509	2.52%	958	
Miscellaneous	585	0.98%	695	
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	780	1.30%	876	
Paper	1,163	1.94%	1,154	
Petroleum and Coal Products	*		*	
Plastics and Rubber Products	4,079	6.82%	793	
Primary Metal	1,204	2.01%	1,192	
Printing and Related Support Activities	1,997	3.34%	535	
Textile Mills	9,137	15.27%	663	
Textile Product Mills	22,418	37.47%	735	
Transportation Equipment	3,490	5.83%	827	
Wood Product	1,003	1.68%	715	

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Area Labor Profile, 2012.

Despite recent layoffs and closures, Textile Mills (15.3%), and Textile Product Mills including carpet/flooring manufacturing (37.5%), are far and away the top sectors of manufacturing employing the region's workers, followed distantly by Plastics and Rubber (6.8%), Transportation Equipment (5.8%), and Food Manufacturing (5.7%) of manufacturing jobs.



Manufacturing in Northwest Georgia rose slightly over the period 1990-2000 but declined drastically from 2000-2010. The majority or 19,974 of the 27,510 manufacturing jobs lost were in textile mills or textile product mills (including carpet manufacturing). Even with these losses, these are still the two sectors employing the most workers in manufacturing. The trend of decreasing employment in these sectors is projected to continue into 2018. However, with decreasing employment comes increasing mechanization and automation of the manufacturing process which will result in hiring higher skilled workers to oversee the automated production line.

<b>Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Area Industry Mix - Annual 2000-2010</b>					
INDUSTRY	Average Monthly Employment		Change in jobs	% change	
	2000	2010	2000-2010	2000-2010	
<b>Goods-Producing</b>	<b>98,442</b>	<b>68,103</b>	<b>-30339</b>	<b>-30.82%</b>	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	871	972	101	11.60%	
Mining	837	480	-357	-42.65%	
Construction	9,396	6,825	-2571	-27.36%	
Manufacturing	87,336	59,826	-27510	-31.50%	
Apparel	1,077	81	-996	-92.48%	
Beverage and Tobacco Product	922	589	-333	-36.12%	
Chemical	2,883	2,938	55	1.91%	
Computer and Electronic Product	223	489	266	119.28%	
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Computer and Electronic Product	2,511	*			

Fabricated Metal Product	2,290	1,729	<b>-561</b>	<b>-24.50%</b>
Food	5,165	3,378	<b>-1787</b>	<b>-34.60%</b>
Furniture and Related Product	2,344	1,819	<b>-525</b>	<b>-22.40%</b>
Leather and Allied Product	27	*		
Machinery	2,713	1,509	<b>-1204</b>	<b>-44.38%</b>
Miscellaneous	452	585	<b>133</b>	<b>29.42%</b>
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	1,422	780	<b>-642</b>	<b>-45.15%</b>
Paper	2,058	1,163	<b>-895</b>	<b>-43.49%</b>
Petroleum and Coal Products	25	*		
Plastics and Rubber Products	3,087	4,079	<b>992</b>	<b>32.13%</b>
Primary Metal	1,366	1,204	<b>-162</b>	<b>-11.86%</b>
Printing and Related Support	3,154	1,997	<b>-1157</b>	<b>-36.68%</b>
Textile Mills	18,228	9,137	<b>-9091</b>	<b>-49.87%</b>
Textile Product Mills	33,301	22,418	<b>-10883</b>	<b>-32.68%</b>
Transportation Equipment	2,966	3,490	<b>524</b>	<b>17.67%</b>
Wood Product	1,139	1,003	<b>-136</b>	<b>-11.94%</b>

*Georgia Department of Labor Area Labor Report, 2012.*

*Service Sector*

<b>Industry Mix: Service, 2011</b>	<b>Employment</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Weekly</b>
<b>Service-Providing</b>	131,315	100.00%	604
Utilities	1,311	1.00%	1,509
Wholesale Trade	9,323	7.10%	852
Retail Trade	30,962	23.58%	445
Transportation and Warehousing	9,062	6.90%	676
Information	3,145	2.40%	802
Finance and Insurance	4,738	3.61%	850
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,757	1.34%	614
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7,387	5.63%	899
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,010	0.77%	1,232
Administrative and Support and Waste Management Services	9,410	7.17%	472
Educational Services	2,024	1.54%	692
Health Care and Social Assistance	24,716	18.82%	803
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,703	1.30%	340
Accommodation and Food Services	20,044	15.26%	258
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,723	3.60%	529

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Area Labor Profile, 2012.

In the service-producing sector, employing a total of 131,315 workers, the top three sub-sectors were health care and social assistance (18.8% of service workers, average weekly wage of \$803), accommodation and food services (15.3% of service workers, average weekly wage of \$258), and retail trade (23.6% of service workers, average weekly wage of \$445). The service sector of the region's economy employs roughly twice as many workers as the goods-producing sector (131,315 v.68,206 workers), at an average weekly wage of \$604, compared to \$772 for manufacturing.

NWGRC Region's Ten Largest Employers in 2010

**Beaulieu Group LLC**

**Floyd Healthcare Management Inc.**

**Hamilton Medical Center Inc.**

**Mohawk Carpet Corp.**

**Mt. Vernon Mills Inc.**

**O'Reilly Automotive Inc.**

**Pilgrim's Pride Corp.**

**Roper Corporation**

**Shaw Industries Group Inc.**

**Wal-Mart**

Note: Represents employment covered by unemployment insurance excluding all government agencies except correctional institutions, state and local hospitals, state colleges and universities. Employers are listed alphabetically. Data is for the third quarter of 2010.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

The major employers in the region by number of employees are carpet and flooring manufacturers, healthcare providers, poultry processing plants or retail establishments. The list is ranked alphabetically, not by number of employees.

## Employment Projections

### Industry Employment Projections, Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Area, 2008 to 2018.

Industry Code	Industry Title	2008 Estimated Employment	2018 Projected Employment	Total 2008-2018 Employment Change	Annual Avg. Percent Change	Total Percent Change
0	Total Employment, All Jobs	300,809	331,031	30,222	0.96	10
101000	Goods-Producing	86,164	82,012	-4,152	-0.49	-4.8
101100	Natural Resources and Mining	4,184	4,038	-146	-0.35	-3.5
101200	Construction	10,277	10,107	-170	-0.17	-1.7
101300	Manufacturing	71,703	67,867	-3,836	-0.55	-5.3
102000	Services-Providing	188,153	218,663	30,510	1.51	16.2
102100	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	52,559	55,518	2,959	0.55	5.6
102200	Information	3,255	3,383	128	0.39	3.9
102300	Financial Activities	7,719	6,553	-1,166	-1.62	-15.1
102400	Professional and Business Services	20,947	25,239	4,292	1.88	20.5
102500	Education and Health Services	52,873	69,522	16,649	2.78	31.5
102600	Leisure and Hospitality	22,243	27,361	5,118	2.09	23
102700	Other Services (Except Government)	10,612	12,018	1,406	1.25	13.2
102800	Government	17,945	19,069	1,124	0.61	6.3

Projections for employment change in the region by subsector indicate that while overall employment is expected to increase by 10% from 2008 to 2018, not all sectors will increase. Employment in goods producing sectors including manufacturing, natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing is expected to decline by 5% overall. The Services sector is expected to increase by 16%, led by growth in professional and business services and educational and health services, but offset by a decline in employment in financial activities.

### **Industries with the Most Projected Job Growth – Northwest Georgia Region- by number of jobs created**

Industry Sector	Employment		Change 2008- 2018	Percent Change	Annual Growth Rate
	2008	2018			
<b>Educational Services</b>	27,690	35,390	7,700	27.81%	2.48%
<b>Food Services and Drinking Places</b>	19,070	23,750	4,680	24.52%	2.22%
<b>Ambulatory Health Care Services</b>	8,350	12,180	3,830	45.99%	3.86%
<b>Hospitals</b>	9,600	12,370	2,770	28.84%	2.57%
<b>Administrative and Support Services</b>	10,580	12,810	2,230	21.00%	1.92%
<b>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</b>	9,300	11,420	2,120	22.79%	2.07%
<b>General Merchandise Stores</b>	8,000	10,040	2,040	25.43%	2.29%
<b>Transportation Equipment Manufacturing</b>	5,060	6,620	1,560	30.72%	2.72%
<b>Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar</b>	4,860	6,170	1,310	26.94%	2.41%
<b>Nursing and Residential Care Facilities</b>	4,280	5,460	1,180	27.53%	2.46%

*Source: Georgia Department of Labor*

By 2018, several Health Care industries are expected to add thousands of jobs, especially ambulatory health care services and hospitals. Nursing/ assisted living facilities will also add jobs. Educational services and professional services are also expected to add jobs in a skilled, higher-paying career situation. Other growth industries include general merchandise and food service industries; these jobs while providing needed employment typically offer minimal pay and benefits and have high turnover.

## Health Care Facilities in the Region

Regional health care facilities also contribute greatly to the Northwest Georgia Region's economy. Rome serves as a major regional center for health care supporting two hospitals: Floyd Medical Center and Redmond Regional Medical Center, plus two specialized centers: Harbin Clinic, Windwood and Southeastern Cardiovascular Institute. Other regional medical centers include Hutcheson Medical Center in Fort Oglethorpe, Hamilton Health Care Center in Dalton, Gordon Hospital in Gordon County, Cartersville Medical Facility in Bartow County, and other medical facilities, clinics, and urgent care clinics. Primary Health Care Centers also provide care on a sliding scale basis for indigent care or those with no health insurance. The closure of Northwest Georgia Regional Hospital in 2011 meant the loss of 700 health care jobs in Northwest Georgia as well as the loss of the region's 465 bed state psychiatric care facility.

-Floyd Medical Center (Floyd County) is a 304 bed non-profit regional referral center providing state of the art medical services, including obstetrics, and the latest technologies to support health care and trauma/emergency care, with 2,000 employees.

-Redmond Regional Medical Center (Floyd County) is a 230 bed acute care facility, serving as a referral source for all of northwest Georgia and parts of Alabama. The hospital is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). Including its healthcare partners, Redmond has over 245 physicians with more than 30 specialties and a support staff of approximately 1,200 associates.

-Hutcheson Medical Center (Catoosa County) is a 228 bed non-profit regional medical facility providing comprehensive health care.

- Cartersville Medical Center (Bartow County)- The facility is a fully-accredited, 112-bed general acute-care hospital providing medical, surgical, obstetrical, pediatric, emergency, orthopaedic and outpatient services and a regional cancer center providing radiation oncology.

-Harbin Clinic - the largest privately owned multi-specialty physician group in Georgia. The staff includes 140 doctors who represent more 30 different medical specialties and sub-specialties including medical and radiation oncology, with a main campus in Rome and 20 satellite offices located throughout Rome, Calhoun, Cartersville, Cedartown, Adairsville, and Summerville including cardiac care and cancer research.

-Northwest Georgia Regional Cancer Coalition- provides referrals and information about providers and care facilities in Northwest Georgia.

-Southeastern Cardiovascular Institute/Harbin Clinic (Floyd County) is one of the nation's leading cardiac rehabilitation centers. Currently over 650 patients are enrolled in the three phase program.

-Windwood (Floyd County) is a 54 bed not-for-profit psychiatric/alcohol/substance abuse care facility associated with Floyd Medical Center.

-Greenleaf Center (Catoosa County) is a 90 bed for profit psychiatric/alcohol/substance abuse care facility.

-Renaissance Marquis Retirement Village (Floyd County) is a 500 bed state-of-the art senior living center opening in 1996.

Hamilton Medical Center- (Whitfield) a 282-bed regional acute-care hospital that offers major medical, surgical and diagnostic services, including accredited stroke and chest pain centers. Included under Hamilton Medical Center are the Bradley Wellness Center, Hamilton Specialty Care, Hamilton Home Health and Hamilton Hospice.

North Georgia Medical Center and Nursing Home (Gilmer County)- North Georgia Medical Center provides a variety of healthcare services to help families in Gilmer County, Georgia stay healthy and happy. The facility provides a 50 licensed-bed, acute-care hospital, along with a 100 bed skilled nursing facility. It is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization (“JCAHO”). Services include the establishment of an in-house Sleep Lab, the addition of a Pain Management specialist and Neurosurgeon to our Medical Staff, as well as community education programs.

Primary Health Care Center (Northwest Georgia) has operated as an independent, non-profit corporation since 1980, and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Center is a Federally Qualified Health Center and is a member agency of the United Way of Greater Chattanooga (TN). Primary Healthcare Centers is dedicated to improving the health status of all its patients by providing accessible, affordable, quality primary health care services (medical, dental, mental health) to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. Their geographic service area includes Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, and Walker Counties in Georgia; Jackson and DeKalb Counties in Alabama; Hamilton and Marion Counties in Tennessee. Services are available to the general public, regardless of residence or income.

## Industries with the Most Projected Job Losses – Northwest Georgia- by number of jobs lost

Industry Sector	Employment		Change	Percent Change	Annual Growth Rate
	2008	2018	2008-2018		
<b>Textile Product Mills</b>	27,950	25,570	-2,380	-8.51%	-0.89%
<b>Textile Mills</b>	10,170	8,870	-1,300	-12.77%	-1.36%
<b>Credit Intermediation and Related Activities</b>	4,130	3,010	-1,120	-27.00%	-3.10%
<b>Gasoline Stations</b>	2,670	1,700	-970	-36.53%	-4.44%
<b>Chemical Manufacturing</b>	3,010	2,160	-850	-28.13%	-3.25%
<b>Printing and Related Support Activities</b>	2,250	1,590	-660	-29.24%	-3.40%
<b>Personal and Laundry Services</b>	1,920	1,270	-650	-33.79%	-4.04%
<b>Warehousing and Storage</b>	2,450	1,940	-510	-21.08%	-2.34%
<b>Paper Manufacturing</b>	1,150	770	-380	-32.93%	-3.92%
<b>Miscellaneous Manufacturing</b>	670	390	-280	-41.44%	-5.21%

*Source: Georgia Department of Labor*

Decline in the textile and textile products industries are expected to continue. An additional 3,680 people may lose their jobs in the next few years in these two sectors. While the automation of these industries is ongoing and will create a demand for higher skilled jobs to work with the automated processes, the lower skilled jobs may never return. Other sectors are also declining. The number of employees affected will be significant. The service sector is also expected to see jobs loss, but this may be due to cyclical turnover as much as layoffs.

## Population

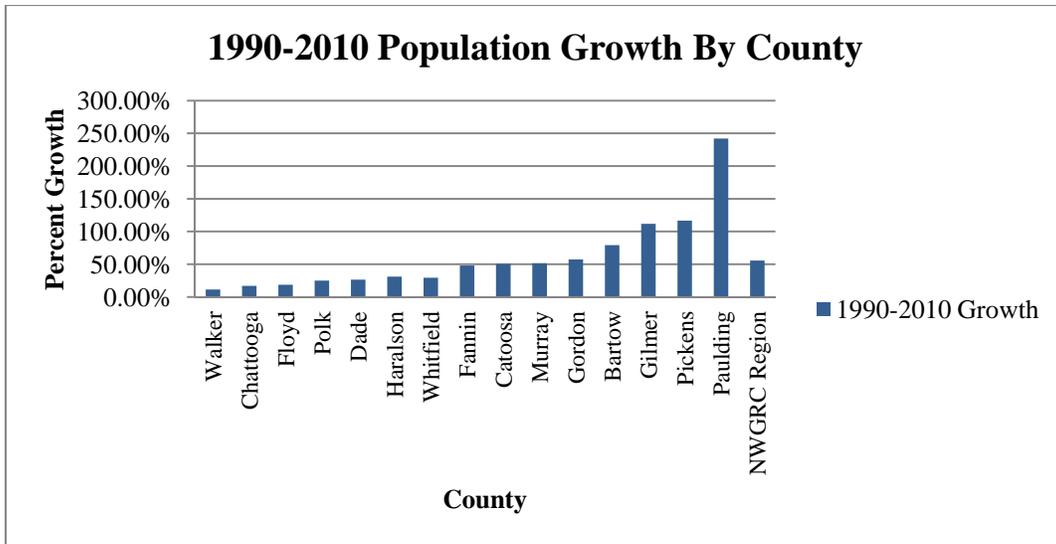
### Population growth

The table below shows population and percent growth for each county in Northwest Georgia compared to the region as a whole, Georgia, and the U.S. from 1990 to 2010. Some counties such as Paulding and Bartow grew enormously due to their location within commuting distance from the greater Metro Atlanta area, and some counties like Pickens and Gilmer experienced growth due to the construction of the four-laned highway SR 5/515 connecting these formerly rural counties easily to jobs in north Atlanta. Growth also came as retirees and those seeking a higher quality of life moved into these counties.

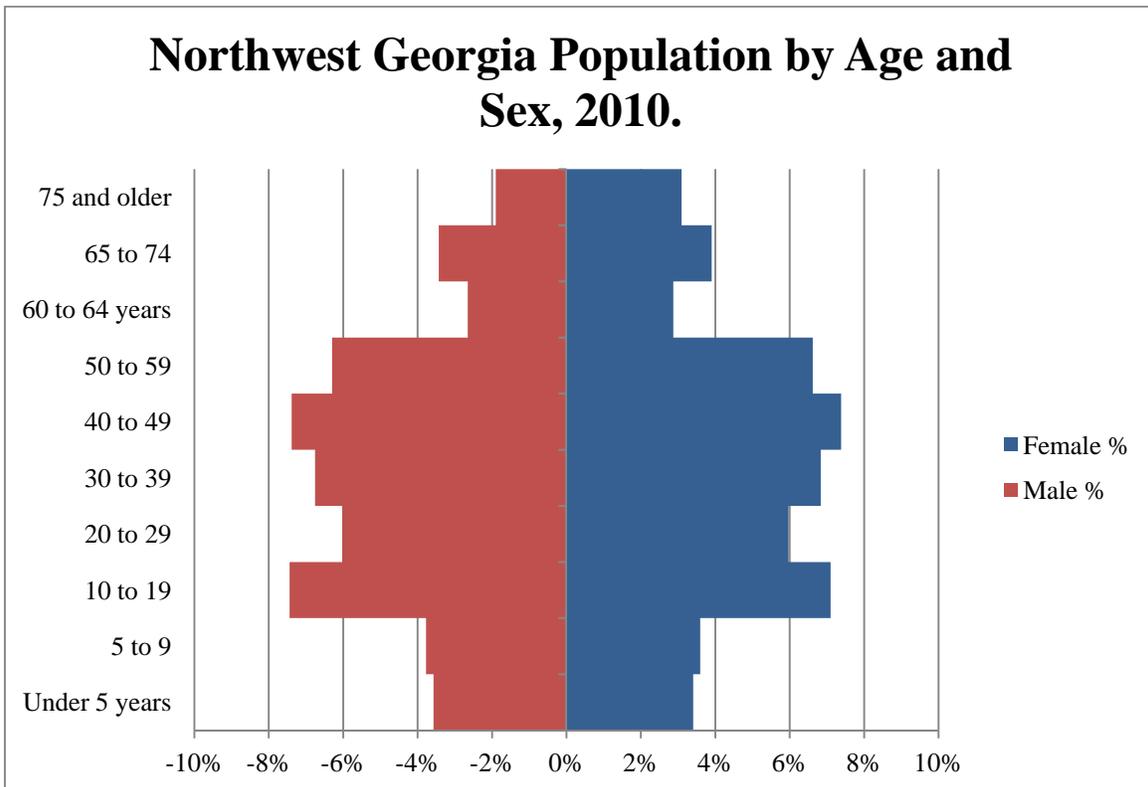
<b>Population Growth and Density, 1990-2010, U.S. Census Bureau, 2012.</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>1990 Population</b>	<b>2000 Population</b>	<b>2010 Population</b>	<b>1990 - 2000 Growth</b>	<b>2000 – 2010 Growth</b>
<b>Bartow</b>	55,911	76,019	100,157	35.96%	31.75%
<b>Catoosa</b>	42,464	53,282	63,942	25.48%	20.01%
<b>Chattooga</b>	22,242	25,470	26,015	14.51%	2.14%
<b>Dade</b>	13,147	15,154	16,633	15.27%	9.76%
<b>Fannin</b>	15,992	19,798	23,682	23.80%	19.62%
<b>Floyd</b>	81,251	90,565	96,317	11.46%	6.35%
<b>Gilmer</b>	13,368	23,456	28,292	75.46%	20.62%
<b>Gordon</b>	35,072	44,104	55,186	25.75%	25.13%
<b>Haralson</b>	21,966	25,690	28,780	16.95%	12.03%
<b>Murray</b>	26,147	36,506	39,628	39.62%	8.55%
<b>Paulding</b>	41,611	81,678	142,324	96.29%	74.25%
<b>Pickens</b>	14,432	22,983	31,264	59.25%	36.03%
<b>Polk</b>	33,815	38,127	42,298	12.75%	10.94%
<b>Walker</b>	58,340	61,053	64,983	4.65%	6.44%
<b>Whitfield</b>	72,462	83,525	93,698	15.27%	12.18%
<b>Region</b>	548,220	697,410	853,199	27.21%	22.34%
<b>Georgia</b>	6,478,216	8,186,453	9,687,653	26.37%	18.34%
<b>U.S.</b>	248,709,873	281,421,906	308,745,538	13.15%	9.71%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Factfinder.*

While Paulding County’s population grew by 242% from 1990-2010, the population in rural areas such as Walker and Chattooga Counties (11%, and 18% respectively) grew more slowly. Economic conditions played a role in growth rates; while loan interest rates were low, housing construction was strong and residential growth was strong. The recession of 2008 and the housing and construction crisis in 2007 put the brakes on new housing and made relocation from current homes to suburban locations financially difficult. The region overall grew at a modest rate from 1990-2010.



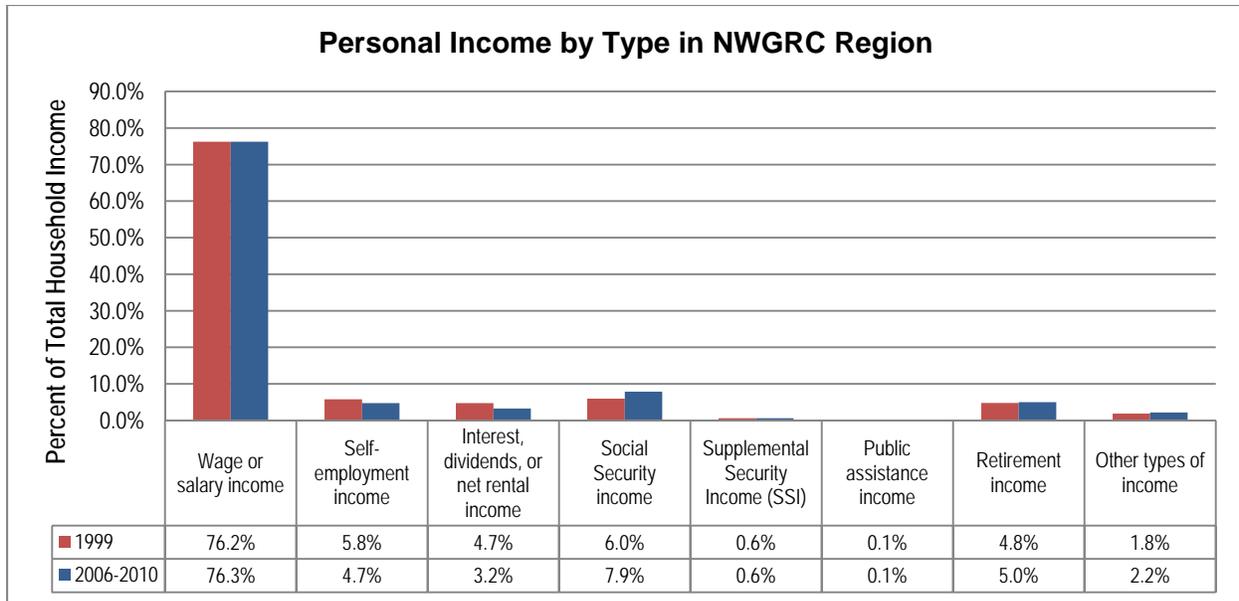
The population is continuing to age, and this poses significant concerns for today’s workforce. With many retirements expected in the coming years where will the skills, leadership and management experience for the next generation of workers be found?, There are significant numbers of young adults who will become the workforce of tomorrow, attracting them and keeping them in the region will be a challenge.



## Personal and Household Income

Personal and Household Income					
	Per Capita Income 2000	Per Capita income 2010	Percent Change in Per Capita Income (2000-10)	Median Household Income 2010	Percent Living at or Below Poverty 2010
Bartow	\$26,574.00	\$22,241.00	-16.31%	\$49,216.00	14.00%
Catoosa	\$22,691.00	\$22,563.00	-0.56%	\$46,544.00	11.20%
Chattooga	\$18,350.00	\$15,158.00	-17.40%	\$32,419.00	19.20%
Dade	\$21,262.00	\$20,168.00	-5.15%	\$39,760.00	15.50%
Fannin	\$21,769.00	\$21,103.00	-3.06%	\$34,145.00	16.20%
Floyd	\$23,707.00	\$20,640.00	-12.94%	\$41,066.00	18.70%
Gilmer	\$20,274.00	\$20,439.00	0.81%	\$36,741.00	18.10%
Gordon	\$22,336.00	\$18,285.00	-18.14%	\$40,916.00	17.10%
Haralson	\$21,384.00	\$19,033.00	-10.99%	\$38,996.00	20.40%
Murray	\$20,160.00	\$16,925.00	-16.05%	\$38,226.00	17.10%
Paulding	\$24,262.00	\$23,450.00	-3.35%	\$62,348.00	8.20%
Pickens	\$26,966.00	\$25,892.00	-3.98%	\$49,945.00	11.60%
Polk	\$19,097.00	\$18,214.00	-4.62%	\$38,646.00	19.30%
Walker	\$22,028.00	\$19,440.00	-11.75%	\$38,723.00	15.10%
Whitfield	\$25,618.00	\$19,780.00	-22.79%	\$42,345.00	19.20%
<b>NWGRC</b>	<b>\$22,425.00</b>	<b>\$20,222.07</b>	<b>-9.82%</b>	<b>\$42,002.40</b>	
Georgia	\$28,531.00	\$23,383.00	-18.04%	\$46,430.00	11.90%

Per capita incomes in each county have declined from 2000 to 2010, but not uniformly. Whitfield County, which lost hundreds of jobs in the recession due to decline of the carpet industry, saw the highest decline of 23%. However, counties such as Catoosa, Gilmer, Fannin, Pickens, and Dade Counties, which were not as affected by the decline of carpet, construction, or textile industries, maintained lower unemployment rates, and showed less of a decline in per capita incomes.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3; 2006-2010 American Community Survey

The majority of personal income in Northwest Georgia comes from wage or salary labor, and less than 5% in 2010 (and declining from 1999) from self-employment income. It is a difficult climate for small business owners, and many business owners may not be paying themselves a salary but investing any income in the business. Also an increase is seen in income from Social Security, from 6.0% in 1999 to 8% in 2010, but a parallel increase is not seen in retirement income from private sources.

## Average Weekly Wage

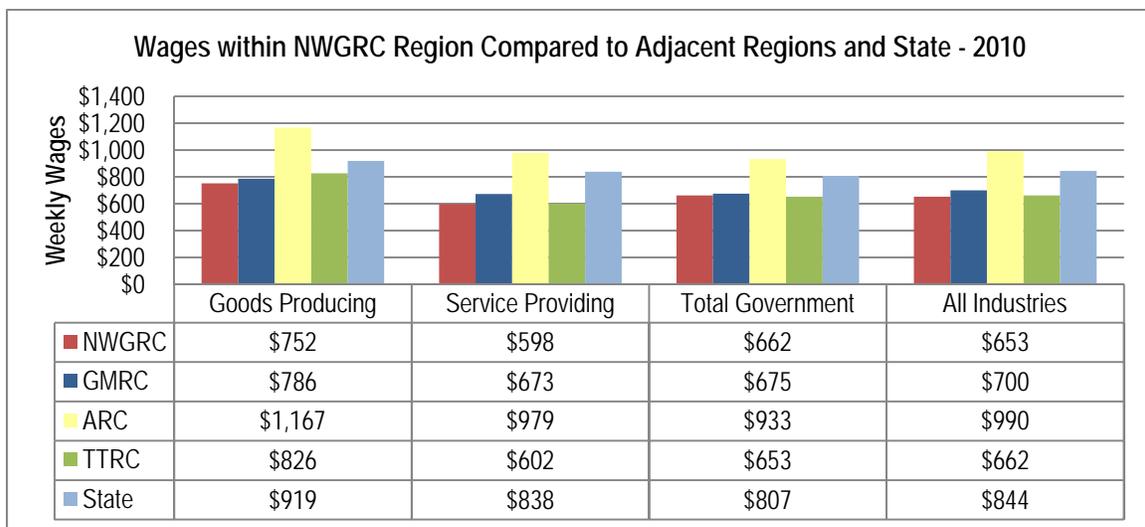
### Weekly Wages by Industry for NWGRC Region, Adjacent Regions, and State - 2010

NAICS Sector	NWGRC	GMRC	ARC	TRRC	Georgia	NWGRC as a % of:			
						GMRC	ARC	TRRC	State
<b>Goods-Producing</b>	\$752	\$786	\$1,167	\$826	\$919	95.7%	64.4%	91.0%	81.8%
<b>Agriculture, forestry, &amp; fishing</b>	\$551	\$749	\$970	\$608	\$523	73.6%	56.8%	90.6%	105.4%
<b>Mining</b>	\$924	\$987	\$1,226	\$890	\$1,042	93.6%	75.4%	103.8%	88.7%
<b>Construction</b>	\$710	\$795	\$1,008	\$798	\$876	89.3%	70.4%	89.0%	81.1%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	\$760	\$784	\$1,281	\$837	\$965	96.9%	59.3%	90.8%	78.8%
<b>Service-Providing</b>	\$598	\$673	\$979	\$602	\$838	88.9%	61.1%	99.3%	71.4%
<b>Utilities</b>	\$1,345	\$1,154	\$1,589	\$1,298	\$1,415	116.6%	84.6%	103.6%	95.1%
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	\$824	\$1,082	\$1,377	\$802	\$1,269	76.2%	59.8%	102.7%	64.9%
<b>Retail trade</b>	\$448	\$474	\$546	\$486	\$501	94.5%	82.1%	92.2%	89.4%
<b>Transportation and warehousing</b>	\$665	\$770	\$1,031	\$738	\$928	86.4%	64.5%	90.1%	71.7%
<b>Information</b>	\$780	\$922	\$1,627	\$823	\$1,432	84.6%	47.9%	94.8%	54.5%
<b>Finance and insurance</b>	\$820	\$940	\$1,607	\$867	\$1,357	87.2%	51.0%	94.6%	60.4%
<b>Real estate and rental and leasing</b>	\$542	\$601	\$991	\$563	\$857	90.2%	54.7%	96.3%	63.2%
<b>Professional, scientific/tech services</b>	\$922	\$1,071	\$1,525	\$830	\$1,361	86.1%	60.5%	111.1%	67.7%
<b>Management: companies/enterprises</b>	\$1,284	\$1,244	\$1,817	\$1,581	\$1,642	103.2%	70.7%	81.2%	78.2%
<b>Administrative and waste services</b>	\$493	\$544	\$696	\$490	\$636	90.6%	70.8%	100.6%	77.5%
<b>Educational services</b>	\$694	\$501	\$988	\$484	\$873	138.5%	70.2%	143.4%	79.5%
<b>Health care and social assistance</b>	\$789	\$770	\$905	\$743	\$839	102.5%	87.2%	106.2%	94.0%
<b>Arts, entertainment and</b>	\$335	\$1,719	\$654	\$393	\$617	19.5%	51.2%	85.2%	54.3%

<b>recreation</b>									
<b>Accommodation and food services</b>	\$257	\$267	\$361	\$242	\$315	96.3%	71.2%	106.2%	81.6%
<b>Other services (except government)</b>	\$521	\$495	\$629	\$512	\$577	105.3%	82.8%	101.8%	90.3%
<b>Unclassified</b>	\$579	\$797	\$1,015	\$587	\$938	72.6%	57.0%	98.6%	61.7%
<b>Total - Private Sector</b>	\$651	\$705	\$999	\$664	\$853	92.3%	65.2%	98.0%	76.3%
<b>Total - Government</b>	\$662	\$675	\$933	\$653	\$807	98.1%	71.0%	101.4%	82.0%
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	\$653	\$700	\$990	\$662	\$844	93.3%	66.0%	98.6%	77.4%

*Source: Georgia Department of Labor*

Weekly wages are higher overall in the goods-producing sector than in the services sector, with notable exceptions in both categories. For example, wages are higher for higher skilled service occupations including health care and professional and management positions. Overall, wages are fairly low, which in comparison to other regions, is a selling point for industries who seek a lower cost of skilled labor.



*Source: Georgia Department of Labor*

Of neighboring regions, including Georgia Mountains (Dahlonega, Gainesville) to the east and Three Rivers (Carrollton, LaGrange) to the south, as well as in comparison with the state of Georgia, Northwest Georgia has the lowest wages, resulting in lowest labor costs to employers in the region, of any of its neighbors.

## InFlow- OutFlow of Workers Living or Working within the Region



From U.S. Census Bureau On the Map Inflow/Outflow Analysis, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

### Inflow- Outflow Report- Northwest Georgia Region

According to the Census Bureau On The Map tool, 163,104 people are both employed in and living in Northwest Georgia. Others (63,934 workers) live outside the area but commute into Northwest Georgia to work. Many more (144,544 residents) live in Northwest Georgia but leave the area to work. More workers come into the region for goods-producing jobs, and manufacturing jobs, than any other employment sector. Growing and expanding small business and industry is a priority to employ the region's workforce.

#### Selection Area Labor Market Size (Primary Jobs)

	<b>2010</b>	
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
Employed in the Selection Area	227,038	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area	307,648	135.5%
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-80,610	-

### In-Area Labor Force Efficiency (Primary Jobs)

	2010	
	Count	Share
Living in the Selection Area	307,648	100.0%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	163,104	53.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	144,544	47.0%

### In-Area Employment Efficiency (Primary Jobs)

	2010	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	227,038	100.0%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	163,104	71.8%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	63,934	28.2%

### Worker Flow Patterns for NWGRC Counties and Region – 2000 Census.

Area	Employed Residents of Area	Worker Outflow		Employment (Persons Working in Area)	Worker Inflow	
		Worked Outside County of Residence	Worked Outside NWGRC		Employment from Outside County	Employment from Outside NWGRC
Bartow	35,953	15,261	12,216	32,491	11,799	6,473
Catoosa	26,710	19,543	13,148	13,255	6,088	2,637
Chattooga	10,497	3,789	406	8,447	1,739	761
Dade	6,983	4,620	3,602	3,617	1,254	1,142
Fannin	8,105	3,268	1,980	6,380	1,543	1,233
Floyd	39,622	7,182	2,153	41,530	9,090	3,227
Gilmer	10,213	3,889	1,903	8,032	1,708	467
Gordon	22,017	6,845	1,184	21,388	6,216	816
Haralson	11,040	6,011	5,234	7,107	2,078	1,662
Murray	17,441	9,505	646	13,589	5,653	1,508
Paulding	40,830	30,736	29,638	14,897	4,803	3,538
Pickens	11,116	5,798	5,118	8,491	3,173	1,941
Polk	15,552	6,970	2,020	11,637	3,055	1,263
Walker	27,223	15,979	9,855	17,823	6,579	2,270
Whitfield	38,909	5,113	1,554	56,711	22,915	4,903
NWGRC	322,211	144,509	90,657	265,395	87,693	33,841

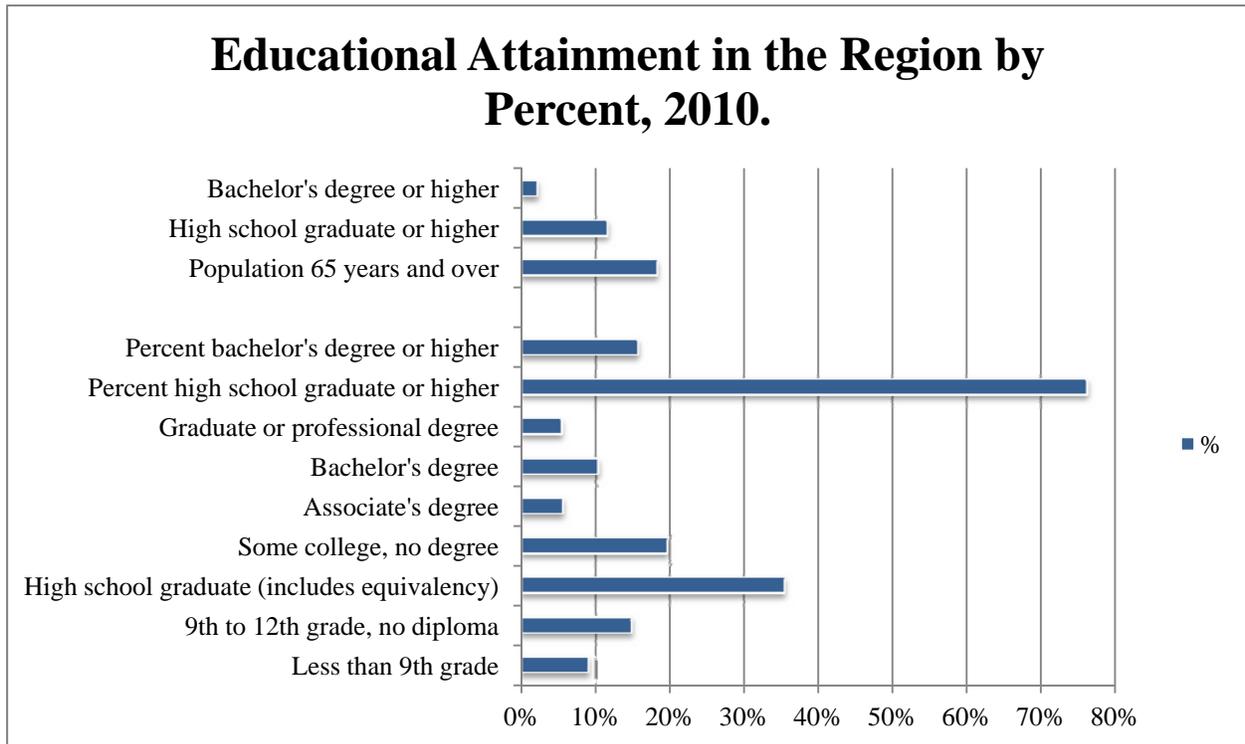
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 County-to-County Worker Flow Files

## Educational Attainment

Number of High School Graduates by County (Public Schools*), 2011			
County	Population age 15-19	# HS Graduates	% of Population
Bartow	7,262	729	10.04%
Catoosa	4,407	400	9.08%
Chattooga	1,585	117	7.38%
Dade	1,453	154	10.60%
Fannin	1,246	165	13.24%
Floyd	7,336	549	7.48%
Gilmer	1,739	247	14.20%
Gordon	4,096	401	9.79%
Haralson	2,014	193	9.58%
Murray	2,958	359	12.14%
Paulding	10,806	1,338	12.38%
Pickens	1,727	223	12.91%
Polk	2,698	351	13.01%
Walker	4,501	455	10.11%
Whitfield	7,757	724	9.33%
Northwest Georgia	61,585	6,405	10.40%

Each year, over 6,000 students graduate high school in the region. Proportionate to the population in each county, approximately 10-12% of the 15-19 year old age group graduates from high school. This is the workforce that will enter training to meet the workforce demand of future employers. Technical Schools and Colleges report that after high school many students leave the region to attend school. Those that do stay in the region choose health care focused programs. The demand for health care occupations will continue to grow and students are

encouraged to choose the high growth sectors for career training so that the workforce is trained and skilled to meet projected occupational demands. However students may choose occupations that are not in these demand occupations.



More than 70% of the population in the region who are over 25 years old are high school graduates or higher. Only 20% have an college degree, including an associate’s degree or higher, and only 10% have a bachelor’s degree, considered the standard for many professional jobs. For those over 65 years old, however, fewer than 20% are high school graduates. For the region to attract and retain professional or technology and information oriented employers, the workforce must contain skilled workers with technical certifications, degrees and training, as well as a college educated and professional workforce component. Workforce development in both these categories is a priority for the region.

SAT Mean Scores by State, by Participation Rate, all Schools													
	2012					2011					2002		
STATE	%*	CR	M	W	sum	%*	CR	M	W	sum	%*	CR	M
Georgia	81%	488	489	475	1452	80%	485	487	473	1445	74%	489	491
All students		496	514	488	1498		497	514	489	1500		504	516

Source: The College Board, The SAT Report on College and Career Readiness, 2012, and NWGRC calculations

\* The percentage of high school graduates is based upon the projection of high school graduates in 2002, 2011 and 2012 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)†, and the number of students in the class of 2002, 2011 and 2012 who took the SAT in each state.

The SAT recommends looking at both High School GPA and SAT scores as a measure of college readiness. The SAT Benchmark score of 1550 or higher indicates a student has a 65% chance of obtaining a B or higher average in the first year of college. Georgia's students have a combined mean score of 1452 which is below this benchmark for success in college and below the national average of , but is an increase of 7 points from 2011. SAT also recommends using High School GPA and other factors as indicators of success. SAT participation by Georgia's high school students rose to 81% in 2012 from 80% in 2011 and 74% in 2002. Georgia was seventh in the nation for SAT participation.

According to the Georgia Department of Education, states with higher participation rates typically see lower scores. However, increasing scores and increasing participation are encouraging for Georgia. Also according to the Georgia Department of Education's September 24, 2012 press release in the *Rome News-Tribune*, "Among the SAT takers in Georgia's class of 2012 who responded to optional questions about their college plans:

- 32 percent of students indicated plans to attain a bachelor's degree
- 52 percent indicated plans to attain a more advanced (master's or doctoral) degree
- 77 percent indicated that they planned to apply for financial aid."

### *Local Educational Reform Initiatives*

#### **Floyd County Performance Learning**

From the September 29, 2012 article in the *Rome News-Tribune*, "Performance Learning Center has First Graduate of 2012:"

"The Performance Learning Center (PLC) of Floyd County has produced the first graduate from the program for 2012...The program was started with a grant from Communities in Schools and is a result of flexibility granted to Floyd County Schools through charter system status...Before the Performance Learning Center, a student would have faced the dilemma of returning to high school when falling short of completing graduation requirements. Many do not make the decision to return to school and become a drop-out statistic." Now the Performance Learning Center allows students to work at their own pace to meet graduation requirements and complete their high school diploma.

#### **Dalton and Whitfield County Initiatives**

According to a September 3, 2012 article in the Dalton Daily Citizen, "Cultural changes key to economic revival?" the Dalton-Whitfield Chamber of Commerce, City of Dalton and Whitfield

County, and UGA’s Archway Partnership and other agencies are working together to improve education at all levels. To fill the skills gap that has resulted in the current workforce being unable to fill current skilled manufacturing openings, education at all levels must improve to combat 12.9% unemployment and the loss of 4,600 jobs from 2011-2012 in the Whitfield-Murray MSA. “Whitfield County Schools officials are investing \$800,000 to begin a focused literacy initiative in their highest-poverty elementary schools this year with plans to eventually expand it to all schools through eighth grade. Dalton Public Schools officials invested a similar amount to continue a program to have all children reading on grade level by third grade.” The community is emphasizing education in STEM or science, technology, engineering, and math to prepare the next generation workforce. The Northwest Georgia Career Academy will prepare high school and middle school students who need additional help, and Georgia Northwestern Technical College is coordinating with local employers to ramp up worker training to meet industry needs.

*Graduation Rates in Northwest Georgia*

Georgia and the rest of states in the nation recently received a new graduation rate formula from the U.S. Department of Education. According to the Georgia Department of Education, the primary difference in calculating the new graduation rate from the state’s current method is in the definition of the cohort. The new “four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate” defines the cohort based on when a student first becomes a freshman. The rate is calculated using the number of students who graduate within four years and includes adjustments for student transfers.

In contrast, Georgia’s current graduation rate calculation defines the cohort upon graduation, which may include students who take more than four years to graduate from high school. Over the past five years, the state’s traditional graduation rate has gradually increased, rising from 70.8 percent in 2006 to 80.9 percent in 2011.

<b>2011 State and District Cohort Graduation Rate</b>	
<b>SYSTEM NAME</b>	<b>GRADUATION RATE</b>
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>67.44%</b>
Bartow	66.22
Cartersville City	76.21
Catoosa	76.40
Chattooga	63.33
Trion City	95.88
Dade	70.23
Fannin	82.18
Floyd	71.49
Rome City	74.94
Gilmer	82.39

Gordon	81.76
Calhoun City	79.44
Haralson	56.83
Bremen City	93.18
Murray	66.07
Paulding	76.01
Pickens	80.74
Polk	60.47
Walker	67.59
Chickamauga City	97.44
Whitfield	63.44
Dalton City	80.57

City schools of Chickamauga, Trion and Bremen had the highest graduation rates in the region, at 97.44%, 95.88% and 93.18% respectively. Several schools were below the state average graduation rate of 67.44%. including Bartow, Chattooga, Murray, Polk, and Whitfield County schools. Because the new standards were used for the first time this year, school systems may need time to adopt programs to address the lower graduation rates.

## Economic Development Resources

All fifteen counties in the Northwest Georgia region have established economic development programs, which are carried out by a number of local economic development agencies identified below. These local agencies are considered regionally significant, because collectively, their planning and implementation activities can have region wide impact.

### Single-Jurisdiction Development Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development Offices

#### Bartow

- Adairsville Development Authority
- Adairsville Downtown Development Authority
- Development Authority of Bartow County
- Cartersville Building Authority
- Cartersville Development Authority
- Cartersville Downtown Development Authority
- Development Authority of Cartersville
- Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce
- City of Cartersville Economic Development Office
- Urban Redevelopment Agency of Euharlee Georgia

#### Catoosa

- Catoosa County Development Authority
- Catoosa County Chamber of Commerce
- Development Authority of Catoosa County
- Downtown Development Authority of the City of Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia
- Downtown Development Authority of the City of Ringgold, Georgia

#### Chattooga

- Development Authority of Chattooga County
- Chattooga County Development Authority

- Development Authority of the City of Summerville, Georgia
- Chattooga County Chamber of Commerce

**Dade**

- Trenton Downtown Development Authority
- Dade County Industrial Development Authority

- Dade County Chamber of Commerce

**Fannin**

- Fannin County Building Authority

- Fannin County Development Authority

**Floyd**

- Development Authority of Floyd County
- Downtown Development Authority of Cave Spring, Georgia

- Downtown Development Authority of the City of Rome
- Floyd County Chamber of Commerce

**Gilmer**

- Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce
- Development Authority of Gilmer County

- Downtown Development Authority of the City of Ellijay

**Gordon**

- Calhoun Downtown Development Authority
- Development Authority of Gordon County

- Gordon County Chamber of Commerce

**Haralson**

- Development Authority of Haralson County
- Downtown Development Authority of the City of Tallapoosa
- Bremen Housing Authority
- Downtown Development Authority of Bremen

- Downtown Development Authority of Buchanan
- Tallapoosa Development Authority
- The Development Authority of the City of Tallapoosa
- Haralson County Chamber of Commerce

**Murray**

- Murray County Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Development Authority of Chatsworth

- Murray County Industrial Development Authority

**Paulding**

- Downtown Development Authority of the City of Dallas, Georgia
- Paulding County Chamber of Commerce

- Paulding County Industrial Building Authority
- Urban Redevelopment Agency of the City of Dallas

**Pickens**

- Development Authority of the City of Jasper
- City of Jasper Industrial Authority
- Pickens County Chamber of Commerce

- The Development Authority of Pickens County
- Pickens County Office of Economic Development

**Polk**

- Development Authority of Polk County

- Cedartown Development Authority

- Cedartown Downtown Development Authority

- Polk County Chamber of Commerce
- Rockmart Development Authority

**Walker**

- Development Authority of LaFayette
- Downtown Development Authority of the City of LaFayette

- Downtown Development Authority of the City of Rossville
- Walker County Chamber of Commerce

**Whitfield**

- Development Authority of Whitfield County
- Downtown Dalton Development Authority
- Dalton/Whitfield County Chamber of Commerce
- Development Authority of the City of Dalton

In addition to the many local development authorities serving the region, a number of multi-jurisdictional development authorities have been organized in recent years as listed below.

### **Multi Jurisdictional Authorities in Northwest Georgia**

<b>Bartow-Cartersville Joint Development Authority</b>	Joint Development Authority of Gilmer County and Pickens County
<b>Joint Cartersville-Bartow County Regional Industrial Development Authority</b>	Lake Allatoona Preservation Authority
<b>Cartersville-Bartow County Airport Authority</b>	Northwest Georgia Housing Authority
<b>Calhoun-Gordon County Airport Authority</b>	Rome-Floyd County Development Authority
<b>Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority</b>	The Northwest Georgia Joint Development Authority (Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, and Walker Counties)
<b>Joint Development Authority of Bartow County and Pickens County</b>	West Georgia Airport Authority
<b>Joint Development Authority of Carroll, Haralson, Polk, Heard, Troup, Paulding and Douglas Counties</b>	West Georgia Joint Development Authority (Douglas and Paulding Counties)
<b>Joint Development Authority of Fannin County, Towns County and Union County</b>	Walker County Development Authority (Walker County, Chickamauga, LaFayette, Lookout Mountain, Rossville)

An advantage to multi-jurisdictional authorities is that businesses, which locate within the jurisdiction of a joint authority of two or more contiguous counties can receive an additional \$500 in job tax credits when new jobs are created. Other advantages include sharing in the costs and benefits of an industrial park owned by a joint authority.

### ***Regionally Significant Economic Development Programs or Tools***

There are a number of agencies in the area that provide economic development support and technical services to local authorities and other agencies on a region wide basis, and as a result, have had and will continue to have a significant impact within the region. These include:

### *Northwest Georgia Regional Commission ([www.nwgrc.org](http://www.nwgrc.org))*

The NWGRC serves as the Economic Development District, funded by the Economic Development Administration to provide a variety of technical assistance to local governments, chambers of commerce, industrial development authorities, and downtown development authorities in their economic development efforts. This technical assistance includes assisting local governments in formulating economic development strategies through long range planning; maintaining a positive relationship with statewide economic developers; assisting communities in preparing themselves for industrial/business recruitment; and, assisting communities in applying for state and federal loan and grant monies to aid in the economic development effort.

### *Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute ([www.innovate.gatech.edu](http://www.innovate.gatech.edu))*

Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute helps companies, entrepreneurs, economic developers, and communities improve their competitiveness through the application of science, technology, and innovation.

### *University of Georgia Small Business Development Center ([www.georgiasbdc.org](http://www.georgiasbdc.org))*

The Georgia SBDC Network provides low cost training and free consulting services including assistance with business plan development, market analysis and marketing strategies, financial analysis, compliance and legal issues, and preparation of loan submissions for individuals who want to start their own businesses or expand an existing one, located in Rome.

### *Statewide Economic Development Groups*

There are numerous agencies and organizations, which work toward the goal of recruiting new industry and retaining existing business and industry in the region with great success. These include Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Power Company, Georgia EMC, Oglethorpe Power Company, MEAG Power Company, Tennessee Valley Authority, major financial institutions and others.

### *Trade and Convention Centers*

The region is home to two major trade and convention centers, which can support large trade shows, conventions, and entertainment activities. The Forum, a civic center complex with over 83,000 square feet of total space, is located in downtown Rome. It contains 34,300 square feet of exhibit space, an arena seating 4,174 persons and additional meeting and banquet facilities. The Northwest Georgia Trade and Convention Center, located west of Dalton and easily accessible from Interstate 75, is a 200,000 square foot multi-purpose convention facility suitable for large trade shows, conventions, concerts, sports events, and entertainment activities. The local facility provides a venue for carpet industry activities previously hosted by Atlanta or Chattanooga. The facility has an estimated economic impact of \$10,000,000 per year.

### *Historic High Country Travel Association ([www.ngeorgia.com/travel](http://www.ngeorgia.com/travel))*

The Association was established in 1979 to market the Historic High Country (Northwest Georgia) Travel Region (one of nine regions in the state) as well as to assist in marketing

Georgia as a tourist destination. As a private sector, not-for-profit marketing cooperative, the Association is supported by Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitor’s Bureaus, and tourism related businesses in the area. The Georgia Department of Economic Development also provides a staff representative in support of the Association’s activities. In 2011, the Association developed a new logo and are now developing a new brochure and website. The long term objective is to utilize the new marketing tools to increase tourism visitation and expenditures in the northwest Georgia area.

*Highway 27 Association ([www.georgiaushighway27.com](http://www.georgiaushighway27.com))*

The Georgia U.S. Highway 27 Association was formed in 1994 to promote economic development along the highway which runs the full length of the western portion of the state. A 2009 travel marketing assessment recommended the association incorporate as a nonprofit, promote a united Highway 27 in Georgia, and pursue funding for marketing, signage, and tourism product. The average visitor to Highway 27 spends over \$500 over 1.22 days.

*Industrial Parks*

Business/industrial parks are an essential tool to facilitate economic expansion within an area. Such parks, in order to be competitive in attracting business and industry need to be fully developed with all utilities and ready for immediate occupancy. One county without a public industrial park is Catoosa. In addition, Georgia economic development partners maintain listings of GRAD (Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development) sites, including the Highland 75 Industrial Park in Bartow County and the Carbondale Business Park in Whitfield County. Surveys already conducted for these sites include topographical, geotechnical, and environmental (Phase I), and investigations for cultural resources and endangered species.

<b>Full Service Public Industrial Parks with Available Acreage in Northwest Georgia</b>		
<b>Industrial Park</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Available Acreage</b>
Cartersville West Industrial Park	Bartow County	427 acres
Summerville Industrial Park	Chattooga County	25 acres
Dade County Industrial Park	Dade County	106 acres
Floyd County Industrial Park	Floyd County	58 acres
Northwest Regional Industrial Park	Floyd County (owned and operated by Gordon-Floyd Joint Development Authority)	64 acres
Bremen Industrial Park	Haralson County	348 acres
Buchanan Industrial Park	Haralson County	17 acres
Tallapoosa Industrial Park	Haralson County	58 acres

North Industrial Park	Paulding County	12 acres
Cedartown Industrial Park	Polk County	35 acres
Highway 27 North Industrial Park	Polk County	154 acres
Old Rockmart Industrial Park	Polk County	1 available bldg
Rockmart 101 Industrial Park	Polk County	44 acres
Lafayette North Industrial Park	Walker County	13 acres
Pickens County Industrial Park	Pickens County	11 acres*
Airport Technology Park	Pickens County	68 acres**
Fannin-Blue Ridge Industrial Park	Fannin County	New spec Building being renovated,
Fannin-McCaysville Industrial Park	Fannin County	11.5 acres
Whitfield County Industrial Park	Whitfield County	0 acres
Highland 75 Industrial Park	Bartow County	707 acres
Carbondale Business Park	Whitfield County	184 acres
Trion Industrial Park	Chattooga County	133 acres
North Floyd Industrial Park	Floyd County	230 acres
Georgia West Business Park	Haralson County	189 acres
Walker County Business Park	Walker County	40 acres with option of 500
Cedartown North Business Park	Polk County	235 acres

\*One lot: approx. 2 acres usable

\*\*under development

*Source: Local Comprehensive Plans/Chambers of Commerce, 2008 North Georgia RDC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2008 Coosa Valley RDC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*

### *Business Development Programs*

There are a number of federal, state, and local business development programs, which can be utilized as incentives to encourage business expansion within an area. Local initiatives may

include tax abatement, land and/or infrastructure donations and other initiatives. Federal programs typically consist of a variety of grant-in-aid or loan programs through such agencies as the Economic Development Administration, Rural Development, Housing and Urban Development and the Appalachian Regional Commission, which can be used to pay for infrastructure improvements that will serve business and industrial facilities. The State likewise offers several grant-in-aid or loans programs for the same purposes. Perhaps the most regionally significant incentive offered by the State is the Job Tax Credit program.

The *Job Tax Credit program* was designed to encourage businesses to locate and expand in the state by providing tax credits for certain businesses that create new jobs. The state is divided into three tiers based on a demographic calculation of economic distress. Tier 1 counties (most distressed) are eligible for \$2,500 per job tax credit for creation of 2-5 jobs; Tier 2 counties are eligible for \$1,500 tax credits per job for creation of 10 jobs; Tier 3 counties are eligible for \$1,250 tax credits per new job created for creation of 15 jobs; and Tier 4 counties are eligible for \$750 per job created with at least 25 jobs. Most recently the bottom-forty Tier 1 counties had the job threshold lowered to 2 jobs, not husband and wife, for any lawful job type, for a \$3,500 job tax credit. Counties participating in a Joint Development Authority also receive an additional \$500 per job tax credit.

### *Opportunity Zones*

(<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/DevelopmentTools/programs/opportunityZones.asp>)

The Opportunity Zone is designed to create economic opportunity by encouraging local governments to use existing redevelopment statutes in an innovative fashion to revitalize blighted commercial, industrial and adjoining residential areas; and rewarding local governments and businesses that undertake such revitalization with access to maximum State Job Tax Credits. By locating in an Opportunity Zone and creating 2 jobs, a business can receive the maximum state job tax credit of \$3,500 per job for any legal business, including retail, against 100% of tax liability and payroll withholding. In order to apply for Opportunity Zone designation, the local jurisdiction must have areas of pervasive poverty, and either an Enterprise Zone or an Urban Redevelopment Plan in place.

### *Regionally Significant Education and Training Opportunities*

Education and training is a vital component of the any economic development success. The Northwest Georgia region is fortunate to have a number of institutions that provide a variety of educational and training services to improve the skills of the labor force.

*Dalton State College* ([www.daltonstate.edu](http://www.daltonstate.edu)), in Whitfield County, is a four year coeducational institution of the University System of Georgia, offering targeted bachelor's degrees, a full range of associate's degrees and career certificate programs, and a wide variety of public service activities. Dalton State expanded within the last decade from a two-year to four-year college, expanding course and degree offerings at the same time. The College's work is strengthened by partnerships between the College and Northwest Georgia businesses and industries, governments, and schools. Technical education is by far the most popular program.

*Berry College* ([berry.edu](http://berry.edu)) in Floyd County, is a comprehensive liberal arts college located just north of Rome, was founded in 1902 by Martha McChesney Berry as a school for rural boys. Seven years later, a girls school was added. A junior college was established in 1926, and a four-year college followed in 1930. Graduate programs outside the liberal arts were added in 1972.

The college was one of several "Berry Schools" that were established to provide poor children in the north Georgia mountains with the opportunity to earn an education. Though the others have long closed, the college continues to enjoy a reputation as a respected regional institution, with its biblical motto, "not to be ministered unto but to minister." Martha Berry gained national renown for her schools, including recognition in 1930 from *Good Housekeeping* magazine as one of the nation's twelve most influential women.

*Shorter University (shorter.edu)* in Floyd County, is a private, coeducational, liberal arts Christian university historically affiliated with the Georgia Baptist Convention. Shorter University, a 155-acre campus located in Rome, Georgia, offers undergraduate and graduate degrees through seven colleges and schools and has current enrollment of 3,500 traditional and non-traditional students. Shorter was founded in 1873 as a Baptist-affiliated women's college. During the 1920s Shorter became accredited with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In the 1950s, the college became co-ed, began intercollegiate athletics, the Georgia Baptist Convention was given control over the election of trustees; and the first African-American student graduated from the college. There are adult education and graduate programs at distance learning facilities in Duluth, North Atlanta, and Riverdale. In addition Shorter operates the Robert H. Ledbetter College of Business and the School of Nursing at off-campus facilities in the Rome area.

*Georgia Highlands College (highlands.edu)* in Floyd County. Since 1970, Georgia Highlands College has served the citizens of Northwest Georgia and Northeast Alabama. Founded as Floyd Junior College, it now serves more than 5,700 students in the region. It became a limited-mission, four-year state college in May 2011. GHC has added other teaching sites over the years, and now provides instruction at the founding campus in Floyd County; Heritage Hall in downtown Rome, which houses health sciences; the Cartersville campus, which is constructing a student center for completion in 2012; a site in Marietta on the campus of Southern Polytechnic State University; a campus in Paulding County, on the square in Dallas; and an instructional site in Douglas on Stewart Parkway in Douglasville. To maximize convenience, Georgia Highlands has also expanded its offerings of online, DVD and hybrid courses.

*Covenant College (covenant.edu)* in Dade County is a private four year liberal arts college offering majors in both liberal arts and professional areas. Covenant College's signal program, the Quest Program, offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Management.

*Georgia Northwestern Technical College (gntc.edu)* in Floyd County, is a state owned post secondary technical institute accredited by the Commission on Occupational Education Institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Georgia Northwestern Technical College offers Quick Start Program training in technical areas such as data entry/computer operations, data processing, drafting/design, and electronics. Other programs and services offered by the institute include: business programs including accounting, marketing/management, and business development, health care careers including practical nursing and medical office assistance, skilled trades including auto body repair, auto mechanics, carpentry, and electrical maintenance, GED testing, seminars/workshops, Single Parent and Displaced Homemaker Program, WIA Job Training, and the PEACH Program.

*Chattahoochee Technical College (www.chattahoocheetech.edu)* Chattahoochee Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, will be one of several sites nationwide – and the only in Georgia – to take part in a pilot program for military men and

women to become prepared for careers after their service during the week of July 23. Organized by the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council, 200 service members will be able to gain industry-recognized, nationally-portable certifications for high-demand manufacturing jobs. “This is an effort between industry, education and the public sector to grow a skilled manufacturing workforce and strengthen the US economy,” said Chattahoochee Technical College Vice President of Community and Economic Development Glenn Rasco. “The MSSC will be paying for the cost of these examinations as a part of this pilot program.”

### *Technical Colleges and Economic Development*

Each Technical College has an Economic Development Department that works to create and retain jobs in their service area, by providing skill-based training for the workforce including adult literacy and General Equivalency Diploma training and testing, and by providing new and existing business and industry with customized training and technical assistance for organizational performance.

*Georgia Quick Start* ([www.georgiaquickstart.org](http://www.georgiaquickstart.org)) Area Development's 2011 survey credits Georgia's Quick Start program as the No. 1 workforce development program in the country. For more than 40 years, Quick Start has provided customized workforce training free-of-charge to qualified businesses in Georgia. Today, the program is one of the state's key assets for supporting new and expanding industries. Quick Start delivers training in classrooms, mobile labs or directly on the plant floor, wherever it works best for a company. To ensure that all economic development personnel are prepared with the latest skills and strategies for workforce training, Quick Start also administers an ongoing program for professional development, the Certified Economic Developer Trainer.

### *Georgia's Retraining Tax Credit* ([www.georgiaquickstart.org/econdev/retrain.html](http://www.georgiaquickstart.org/econdev/retrain.html))

The Georgia Tax Credit for Retraining of Employees provides tax credits according to the “Georgia Business Expansion Support Act of 1994” as amended. An eligible business enterprise may be granted tax credits against its Georgia state tax liability:

- equal to one half of the direct cost of retraining;
- up to \$500 per approved training program per year for each full-time employee who has successfully completed an approved retraining program; The credit amount shall not exceed \$1,250 per year per full-time employee who has successfully completed more than one approved retraining program
- up to 50 percent of the amount of the taxpayer's income tax liability for the taxable year as computed without regard to this Code.

Any tax credit claimed under this Code for any taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 1998, but not used for any such taxable year may be carried forward for ten years from the close of the taxable year in which the tax credit was granted. Credit can be claimed in the tax year that the retraining occurs. If cost for a retraining program spans more than one year, the costs are to be claimed in the year in which the retraining occurs.

*Workforce Investment Act (careerdepot.org)* is a federal program administered by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, used to meet basic employment and training needs of low income adults and youth throughout the fifteen county region and assist those who have lost their job due to permanent layoffs and plant closings. Programs offered by the WIA include Training for Employment, Retaining Dislocated Workers, and Summer Training and Employment Program.

### *Regional Attributes and Infrastructure*

The northwest Georgia area is fortunate to have three interstate highways (I-75, I-59, and I-20,) as well as Appalachian Development Highway 5 which connects I-575 and north Atlanta to the North Georgia Mountains, all of which provide a direct connection to Atlanta, Birmingham, and Chattanooga, forming what is known as the A-B-C triangle. These key highways provide excellent access to the southeastern United States market area and give the northwest Georgia region a strategic advantage in economic development. Not all counties within the region, however, benefit from this advantage. Counties without direct access to these interstates are not growing as rapidly, and not recovering as quickly from manufacturing jobs loss, as those with direct access. Highways that provide access to the Interstate are also key corridors. Highway 27 is being marketed as both a direct route to Chattanooga's manufacturing and industrial areas, as well as an alternative to I-75 for travelers who want to explore Georgia's heritage, natural resource, and cultural tourism opportunities.

### *Funding Opportunities*

This section discusses general grant opportunities, program specific grant opportunities, and loan programs.

#### *Small Business Development*

Participants interested in starting a small business, entrepreneurial and self-employment training are referred to Appalachian Community Enterprise (ACE) and local chambers of commerce. Additionally Chattahoochee Technical College offers an Entrepreneur program through their continuing education department ("Starting A Small Successful Business").

#### *North Georgia Certified Development Corporation (NGCDC, Inc.)*

NGCDC, Inc., staffed by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, was incorporated in 1981 for the purpose of providing gap financing to small business and industry in the region. Through FY-2007, the organization has provided financing for 140 businesses, which have created 2,256 jobs. Its Revolving Loan Fund has grown from \$550,000 to \$1,004,480 in total assets. The Revolving Loan Fund has financed 81 projects resulting in an area investment of \$17.6 million. NGCDC, Inc. has also packaged 59 Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 loans accounting for an area investment of \$52.5 million. NGCDC, Inc. has a statewide service area, although marketing efforts are concentrated in Northwest Georgia. The Revolving Loan Fund program is available only in Fannin, Gilmer, Murray, Pickens, and Whitfield Counties.

#### *USDA Rural Development*

USDA RD offers a number of opportunities for financing local infrastructure projects, including granting for small municipal and rural water wastewater and solid waste systems and a rural economic development loan and grant program. In addition to grants, the USDA offers loans at a

discounted rate to qualifying local governments for infrastructure and community facility projects.

### *Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)*

The ARC awards Area Development Funds on an annual basis. The matching fund program is designed to support eligible applicants (local governments, authorities, and non-profits) to support economic development projects in four goal areas. The goals are to 1) increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation; 2) strengthen the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy; 3) develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive; and, 4) Build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia's isolation.

### *Employee Incentive Program (EIP)*

The EIP is a State-administered pool of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds that have been set aside to provide funding essential to promote specific local economic projects. Often referred to as “gap financing,” the EIP funds are used either as a grant to local governments to provide essential infrastructure, or as a grant to local governments who may then loan the funds to provide essential financing to the prospective company. In either case, the funding must both be deemed essential to bring the project to fruition as well as be the source of job creation for low- and moderate- income persons. A local government may retain repayments from loan funds, including principle and interest, to capitalize their revolving loan fund (RLF). RLF funds may in turn be used to finance future project meeting EIP criteria.

### *OneGeorgia Equity Fund*

One Georgia is a community and economic development tool providing financial assistance including grants and loans that promote the health, welfare, safety, and economic security of the citizens of the state through the development and retention of employment opportunities and the enhancement of various infrastructures that accomplish that goal. Eligible recipients of grant and loan funds include general-purpose local governments (municipalities and counties), local government authorities and joint of multi-county development authorities in rural counties suffering from high poverty rates. Equity funds may be used for a multitude of economic development activities provided they are designed to increase employment opportunities.

### *OneGeorgia EDGE Fund*

The Economic Development, Growth and Enterprise (EDGE) Fund is a specialized economic development tool that may be used to enhance Georgia's competitiveness in attracting significant economic development projects. EDGE should not be used when other state or federal programs could be used or when local funds are sufficient to accomplish stated economic development goals. Due to the specialized nature of the program and the limited resources available, potential applicants are encouraged to contact the OneGeorgia Authority. Generally, EDGE funds are targeted for competitive projects in rural counties suffering from high poverty. “Competitive Projects” generally describes a situation in which a business is considering no less than two communities as a site for relocation or expansion where at least one community is outside the Georgia and at least one but not more than one is in Georgia Project-specific grant opportunities

### *OneGeorgia BRIDGE*

The Broadband Rural Initiative to Develop Georgia’s Economy (BRIDGE) is open to Eligible and Conditionally Eligible Georgia Counties (see OneGeorgia above). The program is designed to bring high-speed broadband connectivity to rural Georgia by providing grants to publicly owned infrastructure based on the number of rural counties receiving new or enhanced high speed broadband services. The BRIDGE fund will grant \$200,000 for single county projects and \$400,000 for projects impacting two counties. Regional projects serving three or more counties will not have an award maximum. Funding determinations are based on the strength of the regional application including technology design, strategy and sustainability. Governor Perdue's budgeted five million as initial funding for the BRIDGE.

### *AirGeorgia*

AirGeorgia is a component of the OneGeorgia program specifically targeted toward making infrastructure improvements to Georgia’s rural airports part of a plan for rural economic development. The OneGeorgia Authority structured a new financing program with a 15 million dollar budget with a goal to extend rural airport runways to at least 5,000 feet, placing every Georgian within a 30-minute drive of an airport capable of serving 85 percent of the corporate aircraft flying today. The program is targeted to the 49 Level I and Level II airports in rural Georgia (e.g. Gilmer County), and will accelerate a number of projects including runway extensions, installation of navigational aids, weather reporting stations and other projects deemed necessary to increase accessibility of Georgia’s rural airports and Loan program

### *Other Programs And Tools*

#### *Entrepreneur Friendly*

The Entrepreneur & Small Business Office (ESB) of the Georgia Department of Economic Development provided support to the fifteen Northwest Georgia Counties, all of which are certified “Entrepreneur Friendly.” This initiative leads local leadership teams through a set of key guidelines that identifies resources, entrepreneurs and needs, and creates stimulus to begin building sustainable support programs, incorporating into the community’s overall economic development plan.

#### *Georgia Centers of Innovation (<http://energy.georgiainnovation.org>)*

The Georgia Centers of Innovation help companies in Georgia’s strategic industries grow and compete by providing expertise and connections to Georgia’s network of business, academic and government resources. While many services of the Centers of Innovation (COI) are similar across industries, each center offers industry specific contacts and business intelligence.

- Aerospace. Leads industry, academia and government collaboration to develop statewide aerospace opportunities.
- Agribusiness. Provides on-site access to state and national research laboratory facilities.
- Energy. This Center accelerates the development of new ideas and business models for Georgia’s energy ecosystem.
- Life Sciences. This Center helps Georgia life science companies grow and compete globally.

- Logistics. Georgia's leading statewide resource for fueling logistics industry growth and global competitiveness.
- Manufacturing. Facilitates the formation of multidisciplinary teams to help Georgia's manufacturers address barriers to operational success.

## Transportation

An adequate transportation network with access to rural areas is vital to the economic development of the Northwest Georgia Region. The Region's transportation network includes interstates I-75 and I-59 as well as several US and state highways, railways, airports and public transit. Rail is an increasing alternative for moving goods while relieving congestion and avoiding congested routes. Two major rail routes through northwest Georgia are rated for 50-74 tons and from 75-99 tons; there are smaller connector routes throughout the region as well. A proposed high speed rail route between Atlanta and Chattanooga could provide another transportation alternative for the region. Northwest Georgia Regional Commission participates in planning activities with Georgia DOT District 12 in Cartersville, with the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Rome Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Metro Atlanta Metropolitan Planning Organization and other agencies including those supporting the disabled, cyclists and pedestrians (Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia).

### *Improvements Needed*

The following projects were identified in Northwest Georgia's Regional Transportation Plan as being important for the region's continued development.

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#### **Needed Transportation Improvements**

**Right-of-way acquisition and initial construction of the Outer Perimeter Highway.**

**Construction of US 411 Connector to provide a direct connection between US 411 and I-75.**

**Completion of planning, route selection, and design construction of recommended improvements for an east-west route from I-59 in northwest Georgia to I-85 in Northeast Georgia (Appalachian Scenic Parkway).**

**Widening Georgia Route 5 to five lanes from Blue Ridge to McCaysville and construction of the McCaysville/Copperhill By-pass.**

**Completion of APD 515 from Blairsville to U.S. Highway 64.**

**Completion of planning, route selection and design for the Georgia Portion of the**

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**Memphis to Atlanta Highway.**

**Construction of a spur route connecting APD 515 at Ball Ground with Georgia 400 in Forsyth County.**

**Widen U.S. 411 from the Tennessee state line to Cartersville, and coordinate with Tennessee DOT to widen this route north to Knoxville.**

**Continue widening of U.S. 27 to four lanes along its entire length.**

**Construction of a connector road from Georgia Route 282 to the Dalton By-pass.**

**Continued widening of Georgia State Route 278 from Rockmart to Cedartown.**

**Widening Georgia State Route 282 to five lanes from Maddox Drive in Ellijay to APD 515.**

**Widen Georgia State Route 53 to four lanes from APD 515 to Industrial Boulevard in Jasper.**

**Add passing lanes to Georgia State Route 53 in Pickens County on two locations: west of Jasper and east of Tate.**

**Redesign and improve interchange where I-575, APD 515, and Georgia Route 372 meet in south Pickens County near Ball Ground.**

**Continued widening improvements along U.S. Highway 41.**

**Widen Georgia Highway 60 Spur in Fannin County between Highway 60 and the North Carolina line.**

**Widen Georgia Highway 101 from Rome to Rockmart.**

**The continuation and completion of all improvements and widening projects identified in The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Chattanooga Urban Area Transportation Study (Georgia Portion).**

**Existing and current levels of service and road networks are adequate based on existing traffic counts, but will not meet future needs of the region. Much needed projects include an improved East-West Connector Route from I-59 in Northwest Georgia to I-85 in Northeast Georgia and completion of the outer perimeter (Northern Arc) from Highway 411 to I-85.**

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## *Non-road Transportation Systems*

Non-road transportation systems important to the Northwest Georgia Region include transit, rail, high speed commuter rail, and aviation. Mass transit services are provided in Rome, Georgia with fixed bus route services inside the city boundaries. The Region is also served by 10 Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation Programs, which, provide a variety of services to each local community. Recent studies along the I-75 corridor (Bartow, Gordon, Whitfield and Catoosa Counties), Dalton/Whitfield and other counties indicate a need for connectivity between counties as well as increased access within county systems. While each county currently provides its own transit service, a coordinated approach to the delivery of these transportation services could be cost efficient and equally effective for all participants. Rail service is primarily provided by CSX and Norfolk Southern Railroads. Overall, existing rail service throughout the region is adequate with short-line operators moving into areas that might have otherwise been abandoned. While there is currently no high speed commuter rail service in the region, state commuter rail studies are underway. Commuter rail service could significantly affect the economic competitiveness of the region. Three main Air Carrier Commuter Airports serve residents of the region; Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta, Lovell Field Airport in Chattanooga, Tennessee and Birmingham Airport in Birmingham, Alabama. Additionally, nine general aviation airports are located within Northwest Georgia. Several improvements to area airports have been identified in the Statewide Aviation Plan including increased runway length and other upgrades.

## **BroadBand Capability**

### *Appalachian Valley Fiber Network ([www.afvn.com](http://www.afvn.com))*

In 2009, the U.S. Commerce Department's NTIA awarded a \$21M Grant for Northwest Georgia and Eastern Alabama to Appalachian Valley Fiber Network (AVFN), a public-private partnership established to develop and expand broadband in the underserved areas of the region. The Grant award was a collaborative success based on the effort of The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, The Alabama Broadband Initiative, multiple state agencies, county governments and development authorities within the region along with the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute and private partner Parker FiberNet, LLC.

Job creation and business development are closely tied to the availability of high capacity broadband based on a 2009 TechSmart study commissioned by four counties in Northwest Georgia and prepared by the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute. To read the study, [click here](#).

The grant includes construction of at least 187 miles of new fiber optic cable with enhanced and expanded service capabilities. The total combined network, upon completion, will include over 500 miles of high-capacity infrastructure. The grant will include construction projects in 8 Georgia Counties including Bartow, Chattooga, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Paulding, Polk and Walker Counties, as well as along the I-20 Corridor of Alabama in Cleburne and Calhoun Counties.

## Regionally Important Resources

Included in the Regional Plan Update 2012-2016 is a discussion of regionally important resources including Civil War and other historic and cultural heritage sites across Northwest Georgia, environmentally sensitive land features, rivers, and forests, and the role that the Regional Commission should play in preserving these resources. Northwest Georgia contains many steep sloped mountain ridges, which comprise the significant views of the region. Although some of these areas fall within the National Forest areas and receive protection from development via that designation, many other prominent ridges are in private ownership and are subject to development activity.

The major river corridors of the region (Toccoa, Coosawattee, Conasauga, Oostanaula, Etowah, Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Chattooga Rivers) are also vitally important to the region. They are not only the principle sources of public water supply for the region, but also serve as recreation areas and provide unique habitat corridors for a variety of wildlife. The many public water supply watersheds are also important to the development of the region. Since some of these resources cross jurisdictional lines, cooperative efforts between local governments will be needed to preserve the environmental integrity of these watersheds.

The Region contains a number of significant historic resources; however, the most unique of these are the many Civil War Battle sites found throughout the region. Of eighteen battlefields identified in Georgia still considered to have fair or good integrity, ten are located in northwest Georgia. These are located in Bartow, Catoosa, Gordon, Paulding, Walker and Whitfield Counties. Eight of the ten sites cross jurisdictional lines. These sites face unprecedented threats to their survival from inappropriate land use. Preserving these sites simply for their historical significance is important; however, they also represent a substantial tourism potential and could become an important contributor to the region's economic development. The Regional Plan proposes a Conceptual Development Plan to preserve these Regionally Important Resources. Please See the Appendix for the detailed plan.

## Tourism Locations in Northwest Georgia

### Cloudland Canyon State Park

Rising Fawn | Historic High Country

Explore the gorge on hiking trails and overlooks; see waterfalls at the bottom. Disc golf course, camping, cottages and tennis are available.

### Oak Hill / Martha Berry Museum

Rome | Historic High Country

Oak Hill and the Martha Berry Museum is an All-America Selections Display Garden, on the register of Historic sites, and an AAA Star Attraction featuring a remarkable collection of art, memorabilia, gardens, trails and more.

### **Booth Western Art Museum**

Cartersville | Historic High Country

See America's Story through contemporary Western art, Civil War art, Presidential letters, Native American artifacts, and so much more.

### **Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site**

Cartersville | Historic High Country

This 54-acre site contains six earthen mounds, a plaza and village. It was home to thousands of Native Americans between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1550.

### **Barnsley Gardens Resort - Golf**

Adairsville | Historic High Country

Get away to where golf and luxury are hand in hand. Golf "The General" at Barnsley Gardens and discover a whole other experience unlike any others when you challenge yourself on our championship Jim Fazio-designed course.

### **Lee & Gordon's Mills**

Chickamauga | Historic High Country

One of the oldest grist mills in the state that was established in 1836 and utilized by both the Union and Confederate Armies during the Battle of Chickamauga. Open daily 11:00 am until 5:00 pm. Also home of the Veterans of All Wars Museum. Admission is free to both but donations are encouraged.

### **Chieftains Museum / Major Ridge Home**

Rome | Historic High Country

This National Landmark, built in 1794, is the original home of prominent Cherokee leader, Major Ridge. Artifacts discovered on the grounds behind the house, as well as other materials relating to the removal of the Cherokees from the Georgia area are on display.

### **Red Top Mountain State Park**

Cartersville | Historic High Country

This park offers a seasonal beach, boating, fishing, hiking trails, picnic areas, mini-golf, camping and cottages and is located on Lake Allatoona.

### **Mill Town Music Hall**

Bremen | Historic High Country

Mill Town Music Hall is a concert venue located in Bremen, GA specializing in family friendly entertainment. It is the largest facility of its kind in West Georgia. The facility will host Southern Gospel, Country and Bluegrass events featuring local, regional and national acts.

### **Blue & Gray Trail**

Dalton | Historic High Country

This Northwest corner of Georgia, roughly from Chattanooga to the outskirts of Atlanta, was the setting for some of the Civil War's most dramatic events. This Trail maps the sites of battlefields, heritage museums, cemeteries, statues and more.

### **Dub Denman Canoe Trail**

Tallapoosa | Historic High Country

The Dub Denman Canoe Trail is located on the Tallapoosa River. At approximately 27 miles long in Haralson County, GA, the trail connects to the Alabama Canoe Trail. There are five launch sites along the river.

### **Georgia Mountain Parkway**

Blue Ridge | Historic High Country

Whether you are heading north to visit one of Georgia's great mountain lakes, hike to a waterfall, ride a train to bygone days, learn at a history museum, go to the local jail or enjoy one of the famous mountain festivals, the Georgia Mountain Parkway should be on your itinerary.

### **Chieftains Trail**

Cartersville | Historic High Country

This scenic 150-mile auto route in northwest Georgia tells the story of the Native American Indians who once lived in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

### **The Georgia Winery and Tasting Center**

Ringgold | Historic High Country

Prepare your palate for a taste of Southern hospitality at its best at Georgia's first farm winery. Our staff is dedicated to bringing you the ultimate wine experience. Over 20 different wines to choose from, from dry to sweet, light to full-bodied - something for every discriminating taste!

### **Blue Ridge Scenic Railway**

Blue Ridge | Historic High Country

Along hills by the Toccoa River, a restored train takes passengers on a 3.5-hour, 26-mile route to McCaysville, Ga., and Copperhill, Tenn.

### **Historic Prater's Mill**

Dalton | Historic High Country

This historic gristmill was built in 1855. Historic background includes Native American heritage and the Old Federal Road, site of both Union and Confederate camps in 1864 during the Civil War, and Appalachian heritage life. Grounds open daily. Country Fair each October.

### **Battle of Ringgold Gap - Atlanta Campaign Pocket Park**

Ringgold | Historic High Country

Following the Union victory at Missionary Ridge and the Rebel retreat, Yankee troops set out in pursuit. Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne's command fell back to hold control of Ringgold Gap and Taylor's Ridge against Maj. Gen. Joseph B. Hooker who was unsuccessful after 5 hours of fighting.

### **Cohutta-Chattahoochee Scenic Byway**

Dalton | Historic High Country

From the historic Prater's Mill grist mill to the Cohutta Fishery to the top of Fort Mountain, a drive along the CC Scenic Byway affords a view of northwest Georgia natural beauty and historic sites. Shop in the downtowns of Dalton and Chatsworth, eat at local diners and enjoy the flavor of our Southern mountain communities.

### **Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park**

Fort Oglethorpe | Historic High Country

The nation's oldest National Military Park has Civil War commemorative monuments, an orientation video, and driving tour.

### **6th Cavalry Museum**

Fort Oglethorpe | Historic High Country

Preserves the rich military history of the 'Fighting Sixth' Cavalry, US Army Post and Third WAC Training Center 1902-1946.

### **Old Federal Road Driving Tour**

Dalton | Historic High Country

Welcome to the route of the Old Federal Road, crucial to the Cherokee-U.S. relations and Trail of Tears, Georgia Gold Rush, and the American Civil War. The driving tour explores this heritage and takes the driver as close to the original route as possible.

### **Civil War Driving Tour**

Dalton | Historic High Country

WAR COMES TO DALTON. Take a guided driving tour with the "War Comes To Dalton" Civil War driving tour.

Whitfield County is home to a rich Civil War heritage, this driving tour highlights those sites in Dalton and Whitfield County.

### **The Rome Little Theatre**

Rome | Historic High Country

The Rome Little Theatre, located at the Historic DeSoto Theatre in downtown Rome, Georgia, showcases entertaining productions throughout the year. Celebrating more than 25 years at the DeSoto, The Rome Little Theatre invites you to join in the fun and excitement of live theatre!  
Rock City Gardens

### **Lookout Mountain | Historic High Country**

A woodland path leads visitors past rock formations, caves and lush gardens, with more than 400 species of native plants.

### **Western and Atlantic Railroad Tunnel**

Tunnel Hill | Historic High Country

The Western and Atlantic Railroad Tunnel, attraction site, is one of the oldest railroad tunnels in the South. During the Civil War, the tunnel played a part in the Great Locomotive Train Chase as the "General" and "Texas" raced through. Take guided tours of the Tunnel on a limo golf cart.

### **Chief Vann House Historic Site**

Chatsworth | Historic High Country

Visitors can tour this chief's 1804 mansion, the 'Showplace of the Cherokee Nation.' It is one of the best-preserved Cherokee plantation houses.

### **Gordon-Lee Mansion**

Chickamauga | Historic High Country

This antebellum plantation house is the only structure left standing that was used by both armies during the Battle of Chickamauga. New Interpretive Theater open Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 am until 4:00 pm. Open for tours on Saturdays Memorial Day - Labor Day 11:00 am until 3:00 pm. Admission \$3.00.

### **Tellus Science Museum**

Cartersville | Historic High Country

A 120,000 square foot world-class museum located in Cartersville, GA featuring dinosaurs, rockets, gems, minerals, vintage cars, a planetarium and more.

### **Lake Blue Ridge Recreation Area**

Blue Ridge | Historic High Country

Blue Ridge Reservoir is located in the Chattahoochee National Forest of north Georgia. There's a scenic overlook above the dam and a shaded picnic area near the powerhouse. The river is noted among fishermen for its sunfish, trout, and bass.

### **Marsh House**

Lafayette | Historic High Country

The Marsh house was built in 1836 by Spencer Stewart Marsh. Union troops occupied the house during the Civil War. When the family returned to its home after the war, the floors in the downstairs hall were marked with hoof prints and many bullets were found in the outer walls of the house.

### **Pickett's Mill Battlefield State Historic Site**

Dallas | Historic High Country

One of the best-preserved Civil War battlefields, it has a museum, film, earth-works and trails.

### **Chattooga Academy**

Lafayette | Historic High Country

The building is the oldest standing brick school in the state of Georgia, built in 1836. It was used by Confederate General Braxton Bragg as his headquarters during the Civil War. The Battle of Chickamauga was planned under an old oak tree that stood in front of the school.

### **New Echota Cherokee Capital Historic Site**

Calhoun | Historic High Country

See where the infamous 'Trail of Tears' began and the printshop where Cherokees produced their bilingual newspaper.

### **Lookout Mountain Parkway & Scenic Hwy**

Trenton | Historic High Country

A scenic 93-mile auto route, follows a two-lane highway atop Lookout Mountain spans three states from Gadsden, Alabama, and continues through Georgia to Chattanooga, Tennessee.

### **Euharlee Covered Bridge & History Museum**

Cartersville | Historic High Country

Built in 1886 by Washington King, the bridge is on the Georgia Covered Bridge Trail as well as the National Historical Register. It's one of the oldest remaining covered bridges in the state.

### **Pocket Recreation Area**

Lafayette | Historic High Country

Nearly 100 miles northwest of Atlanta, the geological area known as The Pocket has never been a great center of civilization. Today, a small, 24-site campground sits here in a holding that is part of the Chattahoochee National Forest.

### **Silver Comet Trail**

Rockmart | Historic High Country

The Silver Comet Trail rails-to-trails path connects Atlanta to the Alabama state line, and is accessible from the cities of downtown Rockmart and Cedartown.

### **Benton MacKaye Trail**

Ellijay | Historic High Country

The Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) is a footpath of nearly 300 miles (480 km) through the Appalachian mountains of the southeastern United States. It is designed for foot travel in the tradition of the Appalachian Trail (AT).

### **Calhoun's GEM Theatre**

Calhoun | Historic High Country

Calhoun's historic GEM Theatre has been restored to its 1939 grandeur with the addition of state-of-the-art amenities. In addition to hosting productions, the theatre is available for tours and rentals.

### **Allatoona Lake & Visitor Center**

Cartersville | Historic High Country

Recreation abounds around 12,000-acre Lake Allatoona. Visit the lake and enjoy pristine hiking trails along with 600 lakeside campsites, accommodating RVs and tent campers. Bring your boat or rent one at one of the four marinas in Cartersville. Open daily year-round.

### **Appalachian Trail**

East Ellijay | Historic High Country

A wilderness public footpath that extends from Georgia to Maine and winds through scenic, wooded, pastoral and culturally resonant lands across 2,155 miles of Appalachian Mountain ridgelines. Primarily used for day hikes, adventurers have been known to pack the entire route.

### **Allatoona Pass Battlefield**

Cartersville | Historic High Country

Fought Oct. 5, 1864, this battle was the beginning of the Nashville Campaign. Two earthen forts, miles of trench works and interpretive trail markers can be seen.

### **Paradise Gardens Park and Museum**

Summerville | Historic High Country

World-renowned folk artist Howard Finster began creating Paradise Gardens in 1951. It is listed as one of Georgia's noted art attractions. Finster's outsider art -- sculpture and paintings -- draws tourists from around the world.

### **Rome Braves Professional Baseball Club**

Rome | Historic High Country

Class A Minor League Affiliate of the Atlanta Braves in Rome, GA

### **Cartecay Vineyards**

Ellijay | Historic High Country

Wine Tastings, Weddings and Events. Agritourism.

### **Cave Spring's Cave**

Cave Spring | Historic High Country

A natural attraction with impressive stalagmites and the legendary 'Devil's Stool' formation.

### **Historic Tate House**

Tate | Historic High Country

Recently named one of the top “must see” places in Georgia by Georgia Magazine, the beautiful pink marble mansion is one of the most photographed privately owned homes in Georgia, and is listed as the Pink Palace in the National Register of Historic Places.

## **Workforce Development**

### **Labor Force and Labor Demand**

The Georgia Department of Labor predicts that from 2008 to 2018, the fifteen fastest growing occupations for Northwest Georgia will involve health care positions with a range of training requirements, teaching and computer related occupations. These occupations which range from 5.1% to 3.6% annual growth rates will include home health aides, medical assistants, physical therapy assistants, physician assistants, pharmacy technicians, network systems and data communication analysts, dental hygienists, dental assistants, athletic trainers, self-enrichment education teachers, computer software engineers, philosophy and religion teachers, post secondary, physical therapists, biological science teachers, postsecondary, and education teachers, postsecondary.

Similarly, those fifteen occupations which will see most annual openings, mostly from turnover in retail industries, and most of which require on the job training, include retail salespeople, food service workers, cashiers, wait staff, customer service representatives, elementary school teachers, laborers/freight/stock/material movers, registered nurses, retail sales supervisors, team assemblers, child care workers, secondary school teachers, office clerks, teacher assistants and truck drivers.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor's 2011 annual labor force report *Dimensions: Measuring Georgia's Workforce*: With 3,880,000 total jobs in 2011, Georgia payrolls grew by 37,300 over the year, a growth rate of 1.0 percent after 3 years of job losses (2008, 2009, and 2010). Sectors with job losses from 2010 to 2011 include Government, Construction, Information, Other Services, and Mining and Logging. Employment sectors adding workers in 2011 were Professional and Business Services, Educational and Health Services, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, Leisure and Hospitality, Manufacturing, and Financial Activities.

The Dalton MSA employment declined for the fifth year in a row; over 14,000 jobs have been lost since 2006. Goods-Producing industries accounted for 500 of the jobs lost over the year and Service-Providing industries an additional 300. Employment in Textile Product Mills decreased by 800 over the year. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities employment increased by 300. With 800 positions lost over the year, Dalton saw the third highest losses in the state.

The Rome MSA saw its sixth consecutive year of job losses in 2011. With this continuous decline since 2005, Rome has lost 5,600 jobs. Of the 1,000 positions shed in 2011, 400 were in Goods-Producing industries and 600 were in Service-Providing industries. State Government employment dropped by 400 over the year. Despite losses in Government and Manufacturing, sectors such as Education and Health Services saw over-the-year gains in employment.

## Work Ready

Georgia Work Ready (<http://gaworkready.org/>) was launched in August 2006 by Georgia governor Sonny Perdue and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce to improve the job training and marketability of Georgia's workforce and drive future economic growth for the state. It is the only initiative of its kind to be conducted through a partnership between a state government and state chamber of commerce, ensuring that companies can more reliably match the right people with the right jobs. This workforce training initiative assesses the skills of Georgia's workers, determines valuable job training opportunities and assures companies that the state can provide a long-term, qualified labor supply.

Through a voluntary workforce assessment system called Work Ready, the program measures the "real world" skills that employers believe are critical for job success today and for mastering the innovative technologies tomorrow's jobs will require. Work Ready utilizes the nationally accredited WorkKeys® assessment system developed by ACT to measure individual worker's skills in the areas of applied mathematics, reading for information and locating information. Participating individuals then receive a Work Ready Certificate that indicates their level of work readiness based on their performance. As of July 1, 2012, the Governor's Office of Workforce Development will cease to cover the cost of the Work Ready assessment, assessment realms, and the costs associated with the administration of the Work Ready assessment.

Core Work Ready partners include:

- State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) - oversee Georgia Work Ready and make policy recommendations to the Governor

- Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) - interface between Work Ready and WIA directors who serve dislocated workers, under-employed workers, at-risk youth and high school dropouts (out-of-school youth) in their service delivery areas
- Technical Colleges - service delivery provider of Work Ready Certificates, job profiles and gap training
- Work Ready Community partners - local chambers, development authorities, education community leaders, workforce agencies, economic developers, businesses and others who comprise Work Ready Community teams at county level to accomplish community Work Ready Certificate and high school graduation rate goals

## Workforce Investment Act

*Workforce Investment Act* is a federal program used to meet basic employment and training needs of low income adults and youth throughout the fifteen county region and assist those who have lost their job due to permanent layoffs and plant closings. Programs offered by the WIA include Training for Employment, Retaining Dislocated Workers, and Summer Training and Employment Program.

In Georgia, there are 12 State Service Delivery Regions and 20 local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) service delivery areas. In each of the 20 local areas there is a local Workforce Investment Board responsible for designing local One-Stop workforce systems that are employer-led, demand-driven, customer-friendly, and continuously improving. Each area has at least one comprehensive or full-service One-Stop Center providing a wide range of workforce services. The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission administers the federally-funded WIA program for the chief elected officials in our fifteen counties.

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission serves as the region's Workforce Investment Area. The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the Northwest Georgia Council of Chief Elected Officials (CCEO), consisting of members representing each of the area's fifteen counties, hold joint meetings at least bi-monthly.

### *One Stop System*

Northwest Georgia began developing its one-stop system in 1997. It started by building upon the successful "cluster" working relationships that had been functioning in the region for many years. The Operators of, and partners in, the one-stop system include Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Family and Children Services, and five local colleges. All partners provide some, if not all, core services. The Department of Labor provides limited intensive service; and Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Family and Children Services, and the five partner colleges provide intensive services. In addition, each one-stop center coordinates and cooperates with agencies and organizations that expand the availability of core and intensive services for customers of the system.

NWGRC WIA publishes a bi-monthly newsletter sent to approximately 600 agencies and individuals involved in workforce development. The area's web site ([CareerDepot.org](http://CareerDepot.org)) serves as

a universally available virtual one-stop with job search information, training and education opportunities, community resources and business services featured.

### *Regional Plan*

Every two years the WIB updates its regional plan which includes a needs assessment showing high growth sectors of the economy, and the educational and skills training plan for technical schools and other programs to train the workforce to meet those demand occupations.

This plan references 146 Demand Occupations by Total Growth for Northwest Georgia from the Department of Labor; but the list contains many occupations which are entry level, Low-paying positions, such as cashiers, retail, salespersons, waiters and waitress, general office clerks, or food preparation workers. WIA does not train individuals for those positions, instead training train individuals for long-term careers that lead to self-sufficiency and an improved standard of living. The WIB and TriState focus will be on advanced manufacturing, construction, energy, transportation, and automotive.

### **Trends**

By 2010, manufacturing made up less than 30 percent of Northwest Georgia's employment base. Of the Georgia Department of Labor's projections from the 2008 base to 2018 for 15 manufacturing categories, Printing and Related Support Activities is showing a substantial growth of 13.4 percent followed by Transportation Equipment Manufacturing with a 9.8 percent growth. Seven categories have projected growth from 2.3 percent up to 13.4 percent, and eight categories have negative growth.

Although the manufacturing recession continues to impact our region, our region has shown slight employment growth due to existing manufacturing companies restructuring and expanding, and new businesses coming to our area. But our low basic literacy skills Dislocated Workers, Adults and Older Youth are still faced with the challenge to compete with the large numbers of Dislocated Workers with experience and skills for the existing jobs. In addition, dislocated workers who are leaving relatively high paying manufacturing jobs are often finding it difficult to replace their wages. It is particularly difficult for individuals without high school diplomas and low basic skills. Northwest Georgia's unemployment percentages have grown at alarming rates during the last two years. The region has exceeded the State and National average for the last three years with 6.6 percent in 2008; 10.8 percent in 2009; and 10.8 percent in 2010. Bartow, Chattooga, Gordon, Haralson, and Murray Counties are designated as Surplus Labor areas as are Dalton and Rome.

The textile industries, except carpet and related businesses, continue to decline. There are very few remaining in the region. As a result of the high numbers of layoffs and the need for workers to be retrained, the Region has requested additional funding from the Department of Labor.

The Tri-State Region's economic fingerprint industries include three sectors which are Transportation Products and Delivery, Fabric Product Manufacturing and Specialized Economies (which includes food, furniture, chemical, machinery, and plastics and rubber manufacturing).

The medical field within our region is expanding with the development of a long-term acute hospital, a cancer treatment facility and a new non-special mega-voltage radiation therapy service. But, with the same token we are experiencing the closing of the North Georgia Regional Hospital, which will take place at the end of September 2011. This closure will impact 764 workers. Also, an additional 74 medical field workers were laid off in the northern part of our region. There is a need for more specialized training such as long-term acute care registered nurses (LTAC RN). Some of our local colleges have waiting list for many of their medical programs including Licensed Practical Nurses and Registered Nurses. As a result, the WIB has funded stand-alone nursing classes when a significant number of Dislocated Workers want training in that occupation. Without our funding the programs, the individuals could not have enrolled in the LPN programs for several months.

Most employers, 20 percent of manufacturers, have a need of technical skilled workers rather than “soft skilled”, which has a 14 percent need. Due to advances in technology, they also have a need for workers with basic math, English and computer literacy skills. Northwest Georgia has been making progress in reducing the percentage of high school dropouts; however, we still have a large number of individuals in the workforce who do not have high school diplomas or GEDs. These workers face increased difficulties once affected by layoff and company closures. We continue to work closely with the local literacy programs to provide training for them and encourage them to continue on a higher education. The remediation available to all customers under the Governor’s Work Ready Certification program is beneficial in raising workers’ skill levels.

### *Assistance to Employers*

Northwest Georgia is offering OJT employers reimbursement using a sliding scale based upon the size of the employer as provided for PY 2010-2011 by the state waiver under WIA section 189(i)(4)(B). Many employers are taking advantage of the great opportunity to receive reimbursement of up to 90% of training wages.

Both DOL and Mercy Senior Care (MSC) market directly to employers via Employer Committee meetings, Chamber of Commerce contacts, community job fairs, press releases, continuing relationships with past employers, and employer recommendations to potential new employers.

### *HOPE Scholarship*

Recent changes to the HOPE Scholarship program have resulted in reduced scholarship grants to students at technical colleges, added a required 3.0 GPA standard after 30 semester hours for technical college students, limited the time period of the scholarship to 60 semester hours and taken away payments for books and fees.

### *Georgia Appalachian Center for Higher Education*

The Georgia Appalachian Center for Higher Education, or GACHE, is a federally funded program through the Appalachian Regional Commission, an agency which serves 13 Appalachian states. Sponsored by North Georgia College & State University, GACHE invites eligible high schools in the Appalachian region of Georgia to submit a proposal for a grant to

implement strategies that encourage and assist at-risk students to continue their education beyond high school. Their motto is, "**Moving the finish line from high school graduation to post-secondary and career success!**"

## Analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities

### Industry Cluster Analysis- What Businesses Produce

Using the Know Your Region cluster analysis website, staff developed a matrix of 17 key industry clusters in order to compare employment in these industries within the region to that across the US. We use this comparison of employment, presented by a location quotient, to identify the basic competitive strengths in Northwest Georgia's regional economy. A location quotient over 1.2 means that a region has a higher concentration of employment in a particular industry than the national average. We can use the matrix below to see the overall competitive strengths of the region, and weaknesses, as well as those of individual counties, and how those sectors may be connected within the region. From *A Practitioner's Guide To Economic Development Tools for Regional Competitiveness in a Knowledge-Based Economy*, U.S. Dept of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

Higher concentrations or expanding clusters within several counties were seen in chemical and chemical manufacturing, primary metal manufacture and fabricated metal production, mining, forestry and transportation and logistics. Other smaller clusters were in education, biotechnology and transportation equipment manufacture.

Additionally, high cluster location quotients, coupled with high loss of employment from 2001-2010 were seen in apparel and textile manufacturing, electrical equipment manufacturing, and printing. Without diversification of industrial employment, we will continue to see significant economic impact from the loss of jobs in these areas, with no offset. Because the industries are highly concentrated here, people can't go find other jobs in these industries in other regions, and the impact of jobs loss and revenue loss is concentrated in northwest Georgia.

Notable lack of employment clusters, compared to national averages, were seen in the business and financial services, defense and security, energy (fossil and renewable), information technology/telecommunications, and computer and electronic manufacturing. This does not mean that there are not individual businesses or even strong sectors within the region, but it does mean that there is not a concentration or cluster compared to the national average.

**know Your Region: Location Quotients for Growing and Declining Industry Clusters**

	Bartow	Catoosa	Chattooga	Dade	Fannin	Floyd	Gilmer	Gordon	Haralson	Murray	Paulding	Pickens	Polk	Walker	Whitfield	Region
Advanced Materials			2.18						2.97							
Agribusiness, Food Processing/Tech			1.88				5.36									
<b>Apparel &amp; Textiles</b>	13.1	4.61	31.1	8.24		2.96	5.68	38	2.07	56			6.33	22.1	37.3	18.7
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Ind																
Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences)						1.35				.44**						
Business & Financial Serv																
Chemicals & Chemical Based Products	3.78		3.37		2.48			4.89	7.93					1.75		
Defense & Security																
Education/ Knowledge				2.75		1.57										
Energy (Fossil & Renewable)																
Forest & Wood Products			5.7			2.71	2.45	1.77	2.76			1.57				
Glass & Ceramics											2.06					
Information Technology & Telecommunications																
Transportation & Logistics	2.59	2.58													2.19	1.3
Manufacturing Supercluster																
Primary Metal Mfg		1.93		18.9		3.93										3.18
Fabr Metal Product Mfg			2.99								0.88**			1.56		
Machinery Mfg	1.67									1.14**				1.51		
Computer & Electronic Mfg																
<b>Electrical Equipment, Appliance &amp; Component Mfg</b>						3.19								18.4	1.83	2.56
TranspEquipment Mfg	1.25				2.67	1.88							3.3			
Mining							5.78*				1.26*	18.4				
Printing & Publishing										1.57						

\* This sector currently employs few employees but may be a growing sector. \*\*This sector has a low LQ but employs many workers; a growing industry. **This industry has a high LQ but rapidly declining employment**

## Regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

Based on the analysis of key economic development trends, the Strategy Committee approved five key trends for the region. These included:

- Job Creation and Retention in Key Economic Sectors
- Workforce Development
- Innovation in Infrastructure
- Tourism
- Local Food

For these trends, the strategy committee listed **strengths and weaknesses** within the region, and **opportunities and threats** from outside the region. The top three strengths and weaknesses of each will be selected and grouped into Assets and Challenges. From this list, goals will be developed.

### Job Creation and Retention in Key Economic Sectors

#### Strengths (Within Region)

1. Educational Resources/ HOPE Scholarship
2. Entrepreneurs created the carpet industry, culture of entrepreneurship and invention/innovation/adaptation in the region
3. Shift Work mentality/ Hard working/ strong work ethic/ family tradition of working is part of our culture and heritage
4. Good geographic location (Atlanta-Birmingham-Chattanooga triangle)
5. Attractive place to live, many natural and cultural resources
6. Broadband infrastructure expanding
7. Transportation Corridors- Interstate 75, 20; Railroads, Highway 27, SR 515

#### Weakness (Within region)

1. Lack of Local Access to Railroad (lack of railroad spurs at industrial parks, although railroad comes right through location)
2. Lack of East-West Corridors
3. Lack of skilled workforce
  - a. Utilizing educational resources
  - b. Declining enrollment in manufacturing/industrial skilled technical programs as opposed to healthcare programs
  - c. Younger generation's lack of interest/awareness of technical school programs
  - d. Lack of secondary school support for manufacturing
4. Ten percent of the population in the region has a bachelor's degree
  - a. Competitive educational level?
5. Mindset that technical school is "trade school" or of less value than four-year college
6. Family perception of manufacturing jobs (layoffs have influenced next generation's desire for manufacturing)

7. Layoff aversion (retrain or reassign employees rather than laying off)

### **Opportunities (From outside region)**

1. Changing business models can open the door for new businesses (what will come after current changes in manufacturing?)
2. Redefine job perception among students- emphasize importance of technical skills
3. Teach critical thinking skill set to make workforce more flexible

### **Innovation in Infrastructure**

#### *Strengths (Within region)*

1. Water Resources- quality, amount of water
2. Broadband- public/private partnership
3. Interstate System/ Highways (Connecting metro areas and rural areas and meeting the needs of these diverse areas)
4. Sustainability in conservation, culture of natural resources conservation
5. Georgia Power/Georgia EMCs, etc –Dalton Utilities, Plant Bowen, Plant Hammond, Rocky Mountain Project
6. Air Carrier System

#### *Weaknesses*

1. Aging infrastructure
2. Public Perception of public sector spending (impact on local leaders/elected officials)

#### *Opportunities*

1. Savannah Harbor Deepening –rail, roads
2. Proximity to Chattanooga/Birmingham/Alabama
3. Funding infrastructure- TSPLOST and what happens after

#### *Threats*

1. Funding (grants more competitive), local taxing ability and public opinion
2. Governmental regulations
3. Water Dispute FL/AL/GA

### **Workforce Development**

#### *Strengths*

1. QuickStart Program
2. Incumbent Worker Training from Governors' Office of Workready Development
3. Career Academy- Whitfield, Floyd Counties, a new initiative, successful
4. Dual Enrollment
5. Southwire Program as Model for high school training and job opportunity on graduation
6. Department of Labor Programs- Chattahoochee Tech's relationship with manufacturers
7. Tri-State Workforce Alliance- see what other areas are doing (TN, AL, GA)

### ***Weaknesses***

1. Lack of partnership between industry/schools/technical colleges/community
2. Losing youth from the region to more metro areas
3. Perception of opportunities for employment in the region
4. Cost for GED online (\$160) was previously paid by DOL

### **Tourism**

#### ***Strengths***

1. Plenty of attractions (Chickamauga Battlefield, Natural Resources, Restaurants)
2. AgriTourism
3. Heritage Tourism- "Authentic"
4. Greenways/Blue Trails
5. Scenic Railways
6. Smithsonian affiliated museums (Booth Western Art Museum, Tellus Science Museum both in Cartersville)
7. Staycations because of down economy bringing more people to explore hometown and region
8. Regional Travel Association, the "Historic High Country Travel Association"

#### ***Weaknesses***

1. Residents' negative perception of value of tourism
2. Lack of Customer service training from employers who rely on tourism
3. Lack of understanding of economic impact
4. Insufficient incentives for tourism product development
5. Government regulations with grant funding
6. Lack of research specific to region

### **Local Food/Agriculture**

#### ***Strengths***

1. Keeps jobs in region
2. People in the region are looking for opportunities to buy local food from local farmers (they want connection to their food and to the farmer)
3. People in the region are seeking an authentic agritourism experience from Community-Supported Agriculture, farmers markets, restaurants
4. Large grocery chains want to buy local to save cost of transportation
5. Restaurants want to buy local and will promote and seek out local farmers/growers- an example is 61 Main, a restaurant in Jasper that highlights local food menu items
6. Creates jobs
7. Potential for shared regional USDA inspector for processing poultry and beef
8. Local produce has fewer requirements or regulations to sell to stores than poultry/beef
9. Georgia Naturally Grown is a certification that is not as rigorous or expensive as organic
10. Scale- local sales at local stores versus retail by regional distributors
11. Marketing using Facebook, other social media- takes time and familiarity
12. Promotion is key and tools are available through Georgia Grown, other programs
13. Partnership with local educational systems, colleges and universities, using programs such as Department of Agriculture's Farm to School program (can be a slow process to make the connection); example- Emory University's goal is to have 80% of its food come from local growers
14. Grants are available for marketing and production assistance (USDA and others)
15. Coordination and Education between consumer, local governments, local grower for regulations, market and distribution, availability of product
16. High demand gives a higher price point and more value of local food crop
17. Changing demographics and methods- younger growers, retirees and second career growers, small space growing
18. Georgia Grown Marketing and Promotion program

## *Weaknesses*

1. Lack of qualified agricultural labor- perception of low pay, low skill
2. Distance/Access to USDA inspected processing facility (one location in Tennessee); cost to hire a full-time inspector for individual poultry or beef grower is prohibitively high as opposed to commercial operations
3. National and State regulations regarding transportation, sales and retail requirements- cost, amount of time and effort involved, factor of scale if small growers must meet same requirements as large commercial growers
4. No sense of urgency at state, local or regional level to address concerns of local farmers to allow them to meet market demand
5. What is “Local”? How big of an area are we talking about? Do we need to define locally grown for the region? Usually left up to the farmers markets or other organizations to define for their area.
6. Distribution- much of Georgia produce in stores comes from Georgia State Farmers Market in Atlanta which uses a large-scale distribution system
7. Is Local chicken sold at stores within region? Is it available at local restaurants?
8. Must meet uniformity requirements (size, shape, color etc must meet standard) for large scale retail
9. For schools, the growing season does not align with the school year, and many farmers may not have a way to preserve products for sale for the fall/winter
10. No large-scale, USDA inspected processing/cannery facility to allow processing for canned, frozen products to extend product season to serve schools
11. Farmers are concerned about upcoming unknown regulations
12. Cost of certification for retail sales
13. No one knows how to address these concerns
14. Cost of growing certified organic produce and achieving organic certification
15. Need a better class of seed for this area, which is calibrated or designed for our growing season and climate, to extend growing season to meet market demand, coupled with more education for consumers on growing season, availability of produce.

## Existing Plans and Analysis

### County Comprehensive Plans

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission assists member local governments with implementing the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Local comprehensive plans address community needs and objectives for economic development, community facilities, natural and historic resources, housing, and land use. Plans must be updated every ten years.

The NWGRC encourages counties and municipalities to work together to identify common problems and opportunities and to seek countywide solutions through joint plans. Local plans were used to develop a joint regional plan that identifies opportunities for counties and municipalities to work together on a multi-county basis. The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission have prepared a regional plan for the 15-county State Service Delivery Region 1. The NWGRC also assists local governments with preparing solid waste management plans as required by the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act. These services are implemented in partnership with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Further information on planning in Georgia can be found on-line at [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com).

### Local Plan 10-Year Update Schedule

Bartow County February 28, 2018	Haralson County February 28, 2018
Catoosa County February 29, 2011	Murray County October 31, 2012
Chattooga County February 28, 2011	Paulding County June 30, 2017
Dade County June 30, 2012	Pickens County June 30, 2018
Fannin County October 31, 2016	Polk County February 28, 2017
Floyd County October 31, 2018	Walker County February 28, 2012
Gilmer County October 31, 2014	Whitfield County June 30, 2018
Gordon County June 30, 2018	

## **Regional Comprehensive Plan**

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 provides that coordinated and comprehensive planning by local governments, regional development centers, and state government is of vital importance to the state and its residents. County and municipal governments were required to complete local comprehensive plans by 1995. Each regional development center is also required to prepare a regional comprehensive plan, using local plans as a guide.

Regional planning provides an opportunity to take a broader planning perspective than is taken in local planning, to identify problems and opportunities that are evident from a regional perspective, and to focus on issues that are beyond the abilities of individual governments to address. The regional plan is used to coordinate the activities of the regional development centers, local governments, state government, other public agencies and the private sector in furtherance of mutually agreed upon regional goals and objectives.

Since northwest Georgia has many economic and natural resources that crossed regional boundaries and growth and development issues are similar to most jurisdictions throughout the area, the former Coosa Valley Regional Development Center (RDC) and the former North Georgia Regional Development Center agreed to prepare a joint regional plan for the entire northwest Georgia area. The former RDCs merged into the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission on July 16, 2009 as required by House Bill 1216.

## **Workforce Investment Act Plan**

Every two years the Workforce Investment Board of Northwest Georgia updates its regional plan which includes a needs assessment showing high growth sectors of the economy, and the educational and skills training plan for technical schools and other programs to train the workforce to meet those demand occupations. This plan references 146 Demand Occupations by Total Growth for Northwest Georgia from the Department of Labor; but the list contains many occupations which are entry level, Low-paying positions, such as cashiers, retail, salespersons, waiters and waitress, general office clerks, or food preparation workers. WIA does not train individuals for those positions, instead training train individuals for long-term careers that lead to self-sufficiency and an improved standard of living. The WIB and TriState focus will be on advanced manufacturing, construction, energy, transportation, and automotive.

## **Other Regional Planning Efforts**

### ***Kennesaw State University***

In Spring 2012, Kennesaw State University conducted a survey of local government leaders and residents in Northwest Georgia and determined what priorities were of greatest concern to these two groups. KSU then conducted a regional leadership workshop on March 2, 2012, focusing on regional innovations in workforce development and tourism/ historic preservation. The full summary is included in the Appendix.

Key items in the workforce development discussion included need for communication and coordination between employers and schools/ institutions; regional goals communicated to local leaders; promotion of Northwest Georgia as the place for business; and promotion of blue-collar jobs as high skilled, high paying jobs. KSU proposed a needs assessment in Northwest Georgia to gather information on employer needs, the strategies of current job training and placement programs, and residents' awareness of job training resources in their area.

In the area of Tourism and Historic Preservation, the emerging themes were the need to create an “experience” for residents and visitors; the need to use technology and social media to coordinate and promote tourism, perhaps using Georgia celebrities; the need to take advantage of the 150th Civil War anniversaries; and the need to explore promoting underutilized resources; and increasing collaboration within the region. Participants suggested promoting existing landmarks that include cemeteries, museums, battlefields, various trails (bike, walking, hiking, horse), state parks, carpet mills and breweries in a coordinated manner. KSU proposed that the region develop tools for distributing tourism information including a regional website that can link to each community's website with graphics and promotional documents containing relevant information that each municipality could place on their respective website. (The Highway 27 Association and the Historic High Country Travel Association are two such websites that can be linked locally.)

### *Southeast Tennessee Development District's THRIVE 2055*

A three year planning effort beginning in 2012 is being undertaken by nine counties in Southeast Tennessee (Bledsoe, Bradley, Hamilton, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Polk, Rhea and Sequatchie), five Northwest Georgia counties (Catoosa, Dade, Murray, Walker, and Whitfield) and two Northeast Alabama counties (Jackson and DeKalb). This region is defined by common watersheds, transportation corridors, shared workforce, natural resources, cultural and heritage assets encompassing the Greater Chattanooga region.



THRIVE 2055 aims to create an inspiring vision and to build a plan to develop the tools for future planned growth of the region that is widely supported by the shared regional values, aspirations and identity of the residents of the region. This plan will develop a common vision and prioritized action agenda for the entire region that is supported by decision-making tools, strategic transformative project ideas and metrics. These tools will assist stakeholders at the local and regional level to make more informed decisions that will result in the long-term economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the region.

## **Regional Needs**

### **National Issues Impacting the Region**

### *Economic Instability especially in Housing*

According to the latest numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics as reported by Jacques Couret of the Atlanta Business Chronicle, Every U.S. state lost manufacturing jobs from May 2007 to May 2012, including Georgia who ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in job losses, losing 78,000 jobs over the period, with 431,800 manufacturing jobs in May compared to 353,800 in May 2007, or 18% of its manufacturing jobs. The housing crisis in Georgia led to a cliff dive in demand for carpet and flooring which resulted in massive layoffs, closures and retooling of the carpet and flooring industry which continues today. However the impact was not limited to carpet industry, rather having an impact on all industry and services including education and government as lost jobs led to home foreclosures coupled with a loss of tax base and revenues for local governments and schools. Programs such as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program seek to offset the economic and community impact of foreclosures by placing qualified home buyers in existing homes.

### *Globalization of Trade*

The ongoing effects of global trade including trade agreements, tax incentives, on-shoring trends, deepening the port of Savannah, emphasis on just in time shipping, and tendency of automotive industry and suppliers to move to their markets combines for a time of lean industry where workers must be highly skilled and adaptable.

### *Innovation and Technology*

The aging population creates an increasing labor demand for health care workers, and we see new nursing and other in-demand occupational education programs being developed. Electronic medical records and use of technology in this and every other field create a demand for innovative development and use of new technology. Use of technology to communicate and work together is especially necessary.

## **CEDS Goals and Objectives- Defining Regional Expectations**

### **Economic Development Needs**

The following economic development needs have been identified based upon the inventory and analysis of conditions, trends, and issues described in the CEDS.

### **Job Creation**

Overall the region has key assets to offer employers including a good geographic location (Atlanta-Birmingham-Chattanooga triangle). Infrastructure including broadband fiber is expanding. Transportation Corridors- Interstate 75, 20; Railroads, Highway 27, SR 515, are key to moving people and goods across the region. However, challenges exist, including a lack of

East-West Corridors; a lack of college and technical education- only ten percent of the population in the region has a bachelor's degree; finally, many in the region have the mindset that technical schools are "trade schools" or of less value than the four-year college.

### **Infrastructure**

The region's assets include its water resources including the quality and amount of water available; Broadband infrastructure including the public/private partnership that was created to develop the middle-mile Appalachian Valley Fiber Network project; and the strong Interstate System and highway which connect metro areas and rural areas in the region, and assist in meeting the needs of these diverse areas. The region's challenges in infrastructure include rapidly aging basic infrastructure (roads, bridges, water, sewer, utilities, sidewalks, telecommunications, affecting industrial parks as well as hospitals and schools); negative or uninformed public perception of public sector spending, and its impact on local leaders/elected officials. Many feel that government regulations are a barrier to developing needed infrastructure projects.

### **Workforce Development**

The region benefits from key workforce strengths including the Georgia QuickStart Program, a workforce training program that assists newly located industry by developing a customized training system for the company. Other assets include the assistance of the Department of Labor in bridging the communication gap between technical and educational institutes and business and industry- an example is the Chattahoochee Tech relationship with manufacturers, and recent assistance from DOL with industrial hiring. The Tri-State Workforce Alliance (Georgia-Alabama-Tennessee) is also an asset to the region to learn from other agencies and share best practices. Workforce development challenges for the region include the lack of partnership between industry, K-12 schools, colleges and technical colleges, and the community; and the fact that we continue to lose youth from the region to more metro areas; and the negative perception of opportunities for employment in the region.

### **Tourism**

Northwest Georgia has plenty of attractions, including historic Civil War sites such as the Chickamauga Battlefield, beautiful parks, forests, rivers and mountains, even local restaurants; AgriTourism, an authentic farm tourism experience; and the regional travel association, the Historic High Country Travel Association. Tourism challenges include a negative perception from residents of the value of tourism; a lack of employee customer service training from employers who rely on tourism; and a general lack of understanding of the economic impact of tourism. Regional cooperative efforts should be undertaken to more aggressively market and promote existing attractions, and develop new attractions. As the area grows and increasingly becomes a destination for both tourist and convention centers and trade shows, there is an increasing need for places for people to stay. The region should adopt a strategy for increased hotel/motel development.

### **Local Food/Agriculture**

Local food keeps jobs in Northwest Georgia both directly and indirectly as it boosts sales at grocery stores, local restaurants, and spurs interest in the community from tourists and residents alike. Additionally, people in the region are looking for opportunities to buy local food from local farmers, because they want that connection to their food and to the farmer. Other communities have successfully used this desire to their advantage. Also, people in the region are seeking an authentic agritourism experience from Community-Supported Agriculture, farmers markets, restaurants and roadside stands, and at-farm markets. But there are also challenges for local food, including the lack of qualified agricultural labor due to a wrong perception that it is a low-pay, low-skilled job. Another challenge is the distance and lack of access to USDA inspected processing facilities (the closest may be in Tennessee). The cost for an individual poultry or beef grower, as opposed to commercial operations, to hire a full-time inspector is prohibitively high. Farmers are concerned over national and State regulations regarding transportation, sales and retail requirements; specifically, the cost and amount of time and effort needed to meet the requirements, as well as the fairness factor of scale if small growers must meet the same requirements as large commercial growers. Finally, there is no sense of urgency seen at state, local or regional level to address concerns of local farmers to allow them to meet market demand.

### **Industrial Development**

The region's manufacturing base is heavily concentrated in one industry type – textiles, which employs 51.9% of total manufacturing employment. The vast majority of this employment is in carpet production. Efforts should be made to focus industrial recruitment or diversified industry types that are compatible with available labor supply; and to encourage and support entrepreneurial small business development through the establishment of incubators, training programs, and small business financial assistance.

Based upon economic data, the region is a manufacturing employment growth area and likely to remain so during the planning period. The accommodation of this growth will require developed commercial and industrial sites.

**Affordable Housing** continues to be a region-wide need.

## Regional Comprehensive Economic And Community Development Goals 2012-2016

### Job Creation And Retention

GOAL 1. ENSURE that all counties are adequately prepared to accommodate continued industrial development in the region.

OBJECTIVE 1. DEVELOP regionally significant industrial and commercial sites with complete infrastructure in place that can immediately accommodate prospects coming into or expanding in the region.

OBJECTIVE 2. IMPROVE each county's competitiveness for industrial development.

- Use market research and analysis to assist small business and industry to identify markets and expand their customer base etc
- Use best available data and research to inform regional priorities.

### Industrial Development

GOAL: CONTINUE to diversify the manufacturing base.

OBJECTIVE 1: FOCUS industrial recruitment on diversified industry types that are compatible with available labor supply.

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSIFY the region's economic base to decrease reliance on a major industry sector and lessen the impact of economic cycles.

*Strategy 1: Assist* business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region through programs such as:

- Export trade assistance
- Expand alternative financing assistance including SBA 504, EDA Revolving Loan Fund, USDA IRP and other funding programs, and partner with other funding agencies
- Industrial planning, engineering and other services
- Business planning and other services

- Cooperative, regional marketing and recruitment of diversified business and industries
- Investigating the feasibility of establishing additional business incubators
- Conducting entrepreneur assistance workshops and creating entrepreneurial networks
- Including entrepreneurial training in school curriculums
- Continue to seek local and regional needs assessment input for development of economic and community development assistance capacities
- Strengthen partnerships with local and regional partners for small business and industry assistance including networks of industries and suppliers, distribution and logistics support, financing assistance, and other assistance

*Strategy 2: Assist the region's downtowns to remain economically viable through Main Street, Better Home Town and other technical assistance programs.*

**OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP** regionally significant industrial and commercial sites with complete infrastructure in place that will be ready to immediately accommodate prospects coming to or expanding in the region.

*Strategy 1: Identify and determine* feasibility of potential regionally significant industrial and commercial sites (minimum of 100 acres) with respect to existing and needed infrastructure, environmental constraints, potential marketability and consistency with the Regional Conceptual Development Plan.

*Strategy 2: Encourage* multi-jurisdictional development efforts through Regional Development Authorities, regional promotion, and regional sharing of costs and benefits.

*Strategy 3: Assist* Development Authorities to acquire, prepare, and promote sites.

## **Workforce Development**

**GOAL 1: IMPROVE** the public notice process for available opportunities for employment.

OBJECTIVE: WORK with Department of Labor and Chambers of Commerce and industries to coordinate job notice postings.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE targeted career information to parents and students to change perceptions that technical and agricultural education and careers are less desirable choices.

OBJECTIVE: BRING local Chambers of Commerce, Technical Schools and K-12 schools together to develop policies to ensure communication between agencies and promotion of technical skilled education.

GOAL 3: ENCOURAGE partnership between industry, business, K-12 and technical schools.

OBJECTIVE: USING Southwire Company, Carrolton Georgia, as a model, develop and implement a youth apprenticeship and OJT program in conjunction with middle and high schools and technical colleges to integrate high school classes with job training, teach students core manufacturing skills, and allow them to progress to a full-time job or additional technical training after graduation

## Infrastructure

GOAL 1: IMPROVE the quality of public information on infrastructure needs and the impact of these needs on daily lives of citizens. Encourage transparency in infrastructure projects.

OBJECTIVE: WORK with local governments to use comprehensive plans, CEDS, and other available planning tools to develop, fund and implement needed infrastructure projects.

GOAL 2: ASSURE that all vital infrastructure necessary to ensure continue economic development is in place when needed.

OBJECTIVE: Improve telecommunications services including broadband/fiber to expand accessibility and speed of service to all residential, business, institutional and governmental sectors in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Assist with efforts to replace aging infrastructure throughout region including financing, planning, innovation and leveraging resources

GOAL 3: DEVELOP strong East-West corridors in the region for transportation and broadband.

OBJECTIVE 1: EXPAND Broadband fiber throughout the region especially along east-west routes.

OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN regional transportation routes especially along east-west routes.

## Tourism

GOAL 1: EDUCATE the public of the benefits of tourism and what it brings to their community.

OBJECTIVE 1: WORK with local chambers of commerce to develop tourism-oriented customer service training for businesses and their staff.

OBJECTIVE 2: ENCOURAGE businesses that rely on tourism to research their customer base, using surveys to develop market research and real data to show the benefits of tourism in that community.

GOAL 2: RECOGNIZE AND PROMOTE tourism's impact on the local economy as well as the impact of traditional economic development. Encourage economic development organizations to promote the economic benefits of tourism.

OBJECTIVE 1. CONTINUE to nurture and develop the amenities that attract retirees to the region.

OBJECTIVE 2. REGIONAL cooperative efforts should be undertaken to more aggressively market and promote existing attractions, and develop new attractions.

OBJECTIVE 3. AS THE AREA GROWS and increasingly becomes a destination for both tourist and convention centers and trade shows, there is an increasing need for places for people to stay. The region should adopt a strategy for increased hotel/motel development.

OBJECTIVE 4: INCREASE tourism visitation and expenditures in the region on a par with State increases.

## Local Foods

**GOAL:** DEVELOP a consortium of local growers to share common issues and seek solutions.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** SEEK funding and technical assistance to develop a regional and local farmers and growers group to identify solutions for training, marketing and promotion, processing, distribution and other shared needs.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** SEEK to address regulations on growing, production, sales and distribution that affect local, small scale growers adversely and disproportionately from large scale commercial growers.

**Overall Goal:** Ensure that all parts of the region enjoy the benefits of continued economic growth and community improvement.

## General Policies

The general policies for Northwest Georgia's community and economic development, indicated by the goals, objectives and implementation strategies contained in this section are as follows:

- To promote and encourage diversified economic expansion throughout the region.
- To support economic expansion through the planned development of business and industrial sites.
- To provide technical assistance to business and industry in support of their expansion needs.
- To encourage development of homegrown talent, to assist existing business and industries to survive and expand, and to improve the technology infrastructure and climate of the region.
- To continue to develop local and regional initiative, leadership, knowledge, skills and abilities, capacity and innovation at all levels and at every opportunity.

## Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities

**Suggested Projects:** The goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that follow are based upon on staff recommendations, which have been reviewed and revised and/or added to from area citizens during the planning process.

**Goal:** Ensure that all parts of the region enjoy the benefits of continued economic growth and community improvement.

Issues and Opportunities	Implementation Strategies	SFY	SFY	SFY	SFY	SFY	Responsibility	Cost	Funding
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017		Estimate	Source(s)
Develop regionally significant industrial and commercial sites with complete infrastructure in place.	A1.1 Identify and determine feasibility of potential regionally significant industrial and commercial sites (minimum of 100 acres) with respect to existing and needed infrastructure, environmental constraints, potential marketability and consistency with the Regional Conceptual Development Plan and CEDS.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Dev. Authorities	\$40,000	State, Federal, local govts.
	A1.2 Encourage multi-jurisdictional development efforts through Regional Development Authorities, regional promotion, and regional sharing of costs and benefits.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Local govts., GaDEcD, Chambers	\$10,000/yr	State, Federal, Local govts.
	A1.3 Assist Development Authorities to acquire, prepare, and promote sites.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts, Chambers	\$10,000/yr	State, Federal, Local govts.
Increase tourism visitation and expenditures.	A2.1 Support the Historic High Country Travel Association and other organizations' efforts to cooperatively market and promote tourist attractions of the region.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga DEcD, Chambers of Commerce	\$30,000/yr	State, Federal, Local govts.
	A2.2 Identify and assess hotel, motel and other lodging improvements that are necessary to accommodate additional tourists attracted to the region.		X				RC, Chambers of Commerce	\$10,000	State, Federal, Local govts.
	A2.3 Assist local governments and other entities in developing new tourist attractions in the region which capitalize on the region's historic, cultural and natural resources.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga DCA, Ga DEcD	\$5,000/yr	State, Federal, Local govts.

**Goal:** Ensure that all parts of the region enjoy the benefits of continued economic growth and community improvement.

Issues and Opportunities	Implementation Strategies	SFY	SFY	SFY	SFY	SFY	Responsibility	Cost	Funding
		2013	2014	2015	201	2017		Estimate	Source(s)
Diversify the region's economic base.	A3.1 Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region through programs such as:								
	* export trade assistance	X	X	X	X	X	IT&T, RC	?	State, Federal
	* alternative financing assistance	X	X	X	X	X	NGCDC, Inc.; Bus. Dev. Corp, State, Federal	\$130,000/yr	SBA, RLF, State, Federal
	* industrial planning, engineering and other services	X	X	X	X	X	Ga. Tech	?	Ga. Tech
	* business planning and other services	X	X	X	X	X	UGA Bus. Outreach	?	UGA, Private Sector.
	* Cooperative, regional marketing and recruitment of diversified business and industries	X	X	X	X	X	IT&T, Dev. Auths, Chambers	?	State, local, private sector
	* investigating the feasibility of establishing additional business incubators	X					RC, Ga. Tech	\$20,000	State, Federal, local, Schools
	* conducting entrepreneur assistance workshops and creating entrepreneurial networks	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Bus. Outreach	\$3,000/yr	Federal
	* including entrepreneurial training in school curriculums	X	X	X	X	X	School systems	\$250,000	School Systems, Federal
	* Implement Northwest Georgia Clean Cities Initiative to expand bio-fuels usage and production facilities in the region	X	X				RC, Northwest Georgia Clean Cities Coalition	\$225,000	Local, Federal, private sector

Issues and Opportunities	Implementation Strategies	SFY	SFY	SFY	SFY	SFY	Responsibility	Cost	Funding
		2013	2014	2015	201	2017		Estimate	Source(s)
	A3.2 Assist the region's downtowns to remain economically viable through Main Street, Better Home Town and other technical assistance programs.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, DCA, GaDCeD, local govts., Dev. Authorities.	\$5,000/yr	State, Federal, RC, local govts
	Economic and Community Development Efforts and Projects consisted with the CEDS, local and regional plans and the needs of the community	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local, regional, state partners	\$5,000/yr +	State, Federal, RC, local govts, private sector

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## Vital Projects

All fifteen counties within the northwest Georgia region have established economic development objectives and implementation activities in their local comprehensive plans. The following is a listing of those local implementation activities identified in each county's plan. This plan also incorporates by reference the individual projects listed in each county's comprehensive plan and work programs, as well as projects listed in the Northwest Georgia regional comprehensive plan.

Counties are also developing coordinated economic development plans as they position themselves to recover from the recession by building on available resources, developing strong partnerships for workforce development and educational improvement, thinking and planning creatively to address the needs of the new economy. As these plans are developed and implemented there will be specific projects that come to the forefront in each community.

### Bartow County

- Promote and facilitate economic development through Bartow-Cartersville Joint Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce.
- Encourage a diversity of industrial development with minimal environmental impact.
- Strengthen and utilize educational resources to attract a variety of employers and shape the labor force appropriately.
- Analyze all financial resources and opportunities and identify an overall economic development strategy.
- Promote the expansion of existing business and industry.
- Encourage the cooperation of public and private sectors for economic growth.
- Promote utilization, preservation and development of historic resources for tourism development.
- Complete infrastructure development, roads, and grading at joint city-county industrial park and other industrial parks

The Bartow- Cartersville Joint Development Authority's Mission: To develop and promote trade, commerce, industry and employment opportunities for the public good and general welfare of Cartersville, Bartow County and of the state of Georgia for current and future generations.

- Goal: Retain and expand existing companies and recruit new ones
- Goal: Develop Industrial Property
- Goal: Workforce & Community Development
- Goal: Develop a Comprehensive Financial and Administrative Plan

## Cartersville

- Continue to participate in the Bartow-Cartersville Joint Development Authority, and implement the strategies as set forth in the Economic Development Strategy
- Develop a Neighborhood Business Ownership Program, including business incubators and assistance to encourage entrepreneurship among neighborhood residents
- Develop an infill development program which provides development incentives.
- Redevelop old entertainment venues in the City like the bowling alley, skating rink and parks, gymnasiums
- Support the redevelopment of industrial sites through low interest loans and investigate Brownfield redevelopment grants and programs
- Review and consider all available economic development programs as resources for redevelopment, housing development and economic development incentive activities. Publicize the availability of these programs to the public
- Promote sports and historic-based tourism. Create an entertainment attraction such as a forum or coliseum
- Continue alliance with the County in the development of the joint venture business park on the north side.
- Adopt programs and provide services, particularly education and recreation programs, which assist the Hispanic population in participating more fully in the workforce and as active members of the community.
- Coordinate with Chattahoochee Technical College and the Georgia Highlands College, Cartersville Campus for specialized job training venues.
- Continue to work with the Downtown Development Authority in the redevelopment of properties and attraction of businesses in the downtown
- Consider the establishment of an Urban Redevelopment Agency
- Market specialty shops to draw people downtown

## Catoosa County

From the 2011-2031 Community Agenda (and including by reference all projects and strategies therein):

- Continue to promote low pollution, high wage industries.
- Continue to support education at all levels.
- Extend sewer in planned stages to promote industry location.
- Maintain an active and effective Economic Development Authority.

- Support an active and effective Chamber of Commerce.
- Encourage additional post-secondary education facilities to locate in the county.
- Continue to offer Freeport exemptions (100%).
- Encourage new employment centers by providing the infrastructure necessary to accommodate new industry, while also remaining flexible to future economic shifts and needs
- Pursue a Multiple Property National Historic listing of sites and districts associated with “Dixie Highway,” US-41
- Coordinate senior services and development
- Develop small area/community plans for large undeveloped areas where growth is planned
- Create public-private partnerships to develop revitalization plans and infrastructure improvements for underutilized centers and corridors.
- Develop a countywide master plan for economic development (underway)
- Actively market districts identified in the Future Development Guide for concentrated areas of industrial and large-scale business development, and for small and medium sized businesses
- Establish and promote efforts to revitalize downtown areas
- Establish marketing efforts that pair park-related activities with significant Native American sites and other county attractions
- Coordinate adult education opportunities that enhance the job skills of the workforce and that meet the needs of existing or desired businesses
- Identify development incentives to encourage appropriate, job-creating business to locate in districts identified in the Future Development Guide
- Develop a marketing study to determine demand for shopping, dining and entertainment options.
- Conduct joint countywide housing study to identify affordable housing needs
- Develop publicly-owned Industrial Park: (SR-151) Catoosa Commerce Center
- Develop publicly-owned industrial park: I-75 Exit 345
- Cities: Develop a Downtown Farmers Market
- Cities: Form a Downtown Merchants Association
- Create local tour guide for historic and cultural resources (underway) coordinated among county and cities
- Coordinate adult education opportunities that enhance the job skills of the workforce and that meet the needs of existing or desired businesses
- Establish and promote efforts to revitalize downtown areas of Fort Oglethorpe
- Continue coordination with US-27 alternative tourism route efforts

- Coordinate working relationships with planning staff, local businesses and local economic development organizations to ensure new and existing business developments are in line with the principles of the Future Development Guide
- Create public-private partnerships to develop revitalization plans and infrastructure improvements for underutilized centers and corridors
- Encourage new employment centers by providing the infrastructure necessary to accommodate new industry, while also remaining flexible to future economic shifts and needs
- Pursue a Multiple Property National Historic listing of sites and districts associated with “Dixie Highway,” US-41

## Chattooga County

### From the 2011-2031 Community Agenda:

- Enhance government websites to improve communication with citizens, businesses, visitors, and potential investors
- Develop a vacant site/lot inventory; identify those that are suitable for infill development.
- Coordinate infrastructure expansion to areas identified as appropriate for new development and redevelopment.
- “Repurpose” vacant store fronts through partnerships with downtown landowners of vacant buildings.
- Establish a land bank public authority to efficiently acquire, hold, manage and develop tax foreclosed property.
- Coordinate infrastructure expansion to areas identified as appropriate for new development and redevelopment.
- Create long-term maintenance and site master plan for the Howard Finster home in the Pennville area.
- Develop a countywide master plan for economic development that provides a proactive set of goals, policies and measurable strategies, including the following:
  - Develop reinvestment financing tools for landowners;
  - Inventory vacant Brownfield land to identify sites that are suitable for development and redevelopment.
  - Create local tour guide for historic and cultural resources.
  - Actively market areas identified in the Future Development Map for small/medium sized businesses.
  - Create public-private partnerships to develop revitalization plans and infrastructure improvements for underutilized centers and corridors.

- Develop a marketing study to determine demand for shopping, dining and entertainment options.
- Encourage new employment centers (including technological, industrial and commercial development)
- Actively market districts in the Future Development Guide for industrial, large-scale business development.
- Coordinate adult education opportunities with skills of workforce, needs of businesses, coordinate with Georgia Northwestern Technical College and Dalton State College.
- Promote Agritourism and Ecotourism
- Promote efforts to revitalize downtown areas of Lyerly, Menlo, Summerville and Trion.
- Establish marketing efforts that pair park, Native American sites and other county attractions.
- Continue coordination with US-27 alternative tourism route efforts.
- Promote natural resources such as the Chattooga River for canoe trips.
- Market community as a retirement community.

## Dade County

- Market industrial park and speculative building.
- Build additional speculative buildings.
- Promote vocational/technical school training.
- Site new industrial park.
- Support commercial development of existing commercial corridors along State Routes 59 and I24.
- Encourage rehabilitation of older buildings and historic properties as well as development of new buildings for office and retail space.
- Complete Infrastructure for the Trenton/Dade County Industrial Park.
- Develop sewer connector to Moccasin Bend Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Develop a marketing program to attract new business to Dade County
- Develop master plan to expand existing industrial park including possible site location in North Dade along Hwy 11.
- Complete City Streetscape Project
- Develop Additional Parking for Downtown
- Develop a Safe Biking Program

- Work with Downtown Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce to revitalize and retain local businesses, through “Shop Trenton First” and “Your City for Family Living” marketing themes as well as new business development and recruitment
- Support improvement of unattractive commercial areas near town center by exploring programs to implement public improvements, needed regulations to guide growth, and incentives to property owners/tenants to clean up properties and invest in the community.
- As part of “Shop Trenton First” effort, assess retail, commercial needs of City; work with local merchants to align needs with products carried.
- Support Infill Development of vacant properties
- Support Tourism opportunities to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War
- Support for Trenton Arts Council to continue to build alliances and explore ideas for innovative, sustainable approaches to economic development

## Fannin County

- Industrial Site Feasibility Studies
- Industrial Park Development
- Targeted Industry Analysis and recruitment programs
- Business and Industrial Expansion Technical Assistance
- Implement the State’s recommended Business Retention Program
- Include entrepreneurial training in all school levels
- Business Incubator
- Downtown Streetscape Improvements, City of Blue Ridge
- Preparation of a retiree development strategy
- Development of Active Adult and Continuing Care Retirement Communities
- Expanded Water Distribution System, City of Blue Ridge
- Encourage the development of assisted living, active adult retirement communities and other elderly living arrangements in locations that are convenient to good transportation routes, shopping, and medical facilities.
- Continue financial support to the Fannin County Economic Development Authority in their marketing, promotion and business development.
- Continue to support the Fannin County Workforce Development and Business Resource Center in Epworth, and advocate local work internships in retail and service sectors for youth.
- A variety of choices should be provided for senior living. Blue Ridge should capitalize on this opportunity.
- Seek Federal and State business development grants and incentives as a means of encouraging business expansions.
- Establish a Business/Industrial Park.

- Nominate county roads for scenic byway designation, possibly including Aska Road, Snake Nation, Stanley Creek, Highway 60, and Highway 515 from Highway 60 to Union County.

## Floyd County

- Develop a revolving loan fund with capital assets of \$1 million dollars.
- Create a small business advisory body composed of retired executives and others who could provide guidance to small business owners or startup operations.
- Study the organization and focus of industrial development activities.
- Construct a rail spur to the Floyd County Industrial Park.
- Complete the development of the first and second phases of Technology Parkway.
- Tennis Center of Georgia at Berry College
- Full-service hotel and conference center on West Third

## Gilmer County

- Industrial Site Feasibility Studies
- Industrial Park Development
- Targeted Industry Analysis and recruitment programs
- Business and Industrial Expansion Technical Assistance
- Implement the State's recommended Business Retention Program
- Include entrepreneurial training in all school levels
- Preparation of a retiree development strategy
- Development of Active Adult and Continuing Care Retirement Communities
- Water and Sewer lines to new hospital-City of Ellijay
- Expansion of broadband and wireless services
- Marketing of available industrial and commercial sites
- Working with existing industries and employers to retain and add jobs

## Gordon County

- Establish a review committee to study the activities of the Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Development Authority, City of Calhoun, Gordon County, city and county schools, in relation to the common goal of economic development.
- Study taxing methods and their effects on business and recruitment efforts.
- Expand Adult Literacy Program.
- Extend sewer line to industrial park.
- Union Grove Interchange Development
- Continue expansion and recruitment activities for diversification of industries and businesses
- Downtown Development, including streetscaping and redevelopment
- Marketing and promotion of county resources
- Continued investment in infrastructure, education and quality of life improvements

## Haralson County

- Support new commercial development along all major corridors and within other selected sites as provided by both the cities and county.
- Market current industrial parks through development organizations such as the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia EMC, and Georgia Power.
- Target industries for location that provide the best match for current services and facilities offered by Haralson County and all cities within the county.
- Pursue development of an active arts and crafts committee and pursue funding for coordination of such activities.
- Further develop programs that provide partnership between schools and business such as the Mentor Program.
- Eliminate the general diploma currently available at area high schools.
- Promote activities which provide for expansion and retention of existing industry.
- Promote utilization, preservation and development of scenic sites for tourism and other economic development.
- Create Opportunity Zones within qualified areas.
- Provide development-ready industrial sites.
- Make Workforce Development a Top Priority by integrating workforce/talent development and economic development.
- Update the incentive program for new industry location.
- Create an incentive program for existing industry expansion.

## Murray County

- Develop a water and sewer facilities master plan, investigate multi-jurisdictional use of water supply resources and wastewater treatment facilities, and pursue options for alternative water sources.
- Adopt and implement design guidelines for the Cohutta Chattahoochee Scenic Byway.
- Conduct an industrial site suitability analysis
- Develop an informative, well-designed county government website.
- Pursue grant funding for streetscaping and additional amenities which would attract business people, shoppers, and tourists to the downtown area.
- Develop a water and sewer facilities master plan, investigate multi-jurisdictional use of water supply resources and wastewater treatment facilities, and pursue options for alternative water sources.
- Adopt and implement design guidelines for the Cohutta Chattahoochee Scenic Byway.
- Hire a full-time Economic Development Administrator.
- Conduct an industrial site suitability analysis.
- Develop an informative, well-designed county government website.
- Pursue grant funding for streetscaping and additional amenities which would attract business people, shoppers, and tourists to the downtown area.
- Development of a Community Health Center
- Development of industrial sites and buildings

## Paulding County

- Establish coordinated “one-stop shopping” economic development office for business and industrial prospects to obtain information on Paulding County.
- Develop economic development packet for business and industrial prospects.
- Continue to improve public water, sewer, and roads to enhance commercial and industrial development.
- Target and promote clean, high tech, quality industry that strengthens the economic base and minimizes air, water and noise pollution to meet “non-attainment” air pollution goals.
- Target industries which match the skill levels of the work force
- Secure site/property for new industrial park/Develop/construct new industrial park
- Continue to work with existing businesses and industry for retention.
- Market community facilities and infrastructure to businesses and industries in an effort for them to locate in Paulding Co.
- Market and develop Paulding Commerce Park, West Memorial Industrial Park, and Paulding Northwest Atlanta Airport Park

## Pickens County

- Industrial Site Feasibility Studies
- Industrial Park Development
- Targeted Industry Analysis and recruitment programs
- Business and Industrial Expansion Technical Assistance
- Implement the State's recommended Business Retention Program
- Include entrepreneurial training in all school levels
- Preparation of a retiree development strategy
- Development of Active Adult and Continuing Care Retirement Communities
- Wastewater Treatment System improvements, City of Jasper
- Expansion of broadband and wireless services
- Airport Improvements

## Polk County

- Support new commercial development along all major corridors and within other selected sites as provided by both the cities and county.
- Market current industrial parks through development organizations such as the Georgia Industrial Developers Association and other related organizations.
- Target industries for location that provide the best match for current services and facilities offered by Polk County and all cities within the county
- Recommend use of Local Option Sales Tax for industrial development.
- Develop incentive program for industrial location.
- Focus industrial development recruitment efforts towards industries which use products or services offered by existing industry.
- Provide for continued solid waste disposal for existing industry.
- Increase industrial development market activities by hiring a person specifically for industrial development recruitment.
- Provide dedicated source for funding industrial development recruitment person.
- Dedicate franchise fee from utilities towards industrial development.
- Further develop programs that provide partnership between schools and business such as these outlined by the Polk 2000 Program.
  - Promote activities which provide for expansion and retention of existing industry.
  - Promote utilization, preservation and development of scenic sites for tourism and other economic development.
  - Construct new industrial parks.

- Encourage downtown redevelopment.
- Encourage residential development of downtown areas.

## Walker County

- Update economic development element of comprehensive plan.
- Develop comprehensive tourism plan.
- Business survey information through Planning Commission office.
- Livestock auction facility.
- Downtown redevelopment of Rossville and LaFayette.
- Industrial park development.
- Increase participation and utilization of economic development services available by participating in the Northwest Georgia Joint Development Authority
- Periodically review the standard incentive package used to encourage industrial and commercial businesses to locate in Walker County. Revise as needed.
- Periodically review the inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for new or redevelopment and/or infill development. Update regularly.
- Develop a written business development strategy based on our community's strengths, assets, and weaknesses. Consider the types of businesses already in our community and our available workforce and create a plan to recruit business/industry that will be compatible. Using the business plans and participating in the NWGAJDA, encourage new jobs for skilled and unskilled labor, as well as professional and managerial jobs.
- Develop U.S. Hwy 27 Tourism Corridor – including frontage roads. Consider an overlay zoning district for the area to support the plan.
- Develop a written comprehensive tourism plan for all of Walker County in addition to the U.S. Hwy 27 Tourism Corridor. Include in the plan mapping, advertising in print, with billboards, websites, TV, radio, etc.
- Actively participate in encouraging utilization and enhancement of the greenways trail system. Include maps of these trail systems on our GIS system and website.
- Actively work toward the redevelopment of brownfields as the opportunity arises.
- Pursue redevelopment of the GA Hwy 2 corridor in Walker County, possibly incorporating a frontage road and Wilson Road interchange.
- Industrial Park Development on Hwy 27 & West Reed Road
- Ongoing exploration of new industrial development and use of Industrial Revenue Bonds
- Embrace and encourage cultural heritage (i.e. artists, writers, etc.) in economic development by hosting art exhibits and other cultural activities.

- Encourage new development of hotels, bed & breakfast, and other overnight accommodations to allow for overnight tourist to our area. Possibly a Shields Crossroads Hotel and Welcome Center
- Actively pursue sit-down restaurants to encourage them to locate in areas of Walker County in an effort to support the tourism plan.
- Continue to actively market Walker County as a location for filming for Motion Picture Industry
- Pursue opportunities for Broadband in Walker County
- Increase participation and utilization of economic development services available by participating in the Northwest Georgia Joint Development Authority.
- State Park Lodge or Private Hotel/Conference Center on Lookout Mountain or Pigeon Mountain.
- Continue to pursue the possibility of an equestrian center somewhere in Walker County...
- Pursue opportunities to locate a sports complex such as YMCA or other similar organization.
- Identify intersections with the highest volume of traffic and market those as points of interest for development.
- Incorporate a new business license program for the unincorporated area of Walker County.
- Install a new electronic sign at the Walker County Civic Center to better inform the public of special events at the Civic Center.
- Market the community and recruit new businesses in coordination with Chamber of Commerce, WCDA, NWGJDA, and SEIDA.
- Market Chickamauga as a heritage tourism destination.
- Market old Chickamauga's city hall property for a "Victorian" hotel development.
- Expand LaFayette's DDA area to add more businesses.
- Promote the LaFayette Main Street Program and maintain annual accreditation.
- LaFayette: Promote greenspace creation and management (consider greenway/heritage corridor approach to link parks with historic resources from the Square North along N. Main Street including Fort Cumming).
- Promote Increased Job Training efforts with Georgia Northwestern Technical College and Georgia Dept. of Labor.
- Target industries and businesses that match skills to the local workforce.
- Continue LaFayette DDA's community awareness program and local preservation advocacy.
- Cities: Work with Walker County Chamber of Commerce to promote heritage tourism.
- Promote establishing enterprise zones, opportunity zones and redevelopment areas in brownfield/grayfield areas.

- Identify types of small businesses (restaurants, coffee shops, tailor, spa) that fit with Lookout Mountain’s vision and contribute to the city’s tax base, and identify incentives for these types of businesses to locate in Lookout Mountain.
- Redevelop vacant town center properties in Lookout Mountain.
- Encourage and assist with the redevelopment of the Peerless Mill complex.
- Develop and implement a façade improvement program for Rossville’s downtown.
- Seek an Opportunity Zone designation for Rossville.
- Recruit commercial development in Rossville.
- Revise Rossville’s zoning ordinance to allow appropriate residential development in commercial area.
- Promote the John Ross House/Festival & coordinate local activities with the Chattanooga Tourism Bureau.
- Continue to partner with the Rossville Downtown Development Authority for development.

## Whitfield County

- Tourism and Retiree Development- Development of additional lodging accommodations
- Development of a major “resort” type of development In the region
- Preparation of a retiree development strategy
- Development of Active Adult and Continuing Care Retirement Communities
- New Wastewater Collection System, City of Tunnel Hill
- Expansion of broadband and wireless services
- Development of Carbondale Business Park
- Development of Opportunity Zones for Carbondale Business Park and Connector 3
- Redevelopment of Connector 3 Area/corridor
- Diversification of Industry
- Focused Literacy Initiatives in Whitfield and Dalton Schools to bring up reading levels to grade level
- Dalton and Whitfield County Schools’ Investments in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) education to prepare the next generation workforce ready for what educators and economists say are the jobs of the future

## **CEDS Plan of Action**

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, the NWGRC CEDS Committee, Northwest Georgia counties and cities, local/regional/state economic development individuals/groups are all responsible for implementation of the CEDS goals/objectives and work program. The NWGRC, utilizing Economic Development Administration Planning Investment funds, will assist and guide responsible parties in the implementation of the CEDS.

In addition to EDA grant funds the NWGRC will employ the following implementation tools in meeting the CEDS goals and projects: Georgia Department of Community Affairs Business Development Funds, Appalachian Regional Commission Grant Funds, US Department of Agriculture-Rural Development Economic Development Programs, OneGeorgia Authority and local and statewide initiatives such as Freeport Exemption, Job Tax Credits, Enterprise Zones and job training programs.

### **Cooperating and integrating the CEDS into Georgia's economic development priorities**

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) has provided a letter to the NWGRC stating that “Activities identified in the CEDS that do not conflict with State goals are deemed consistent with the efforts of GDEcD.” State goals are encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, locating new markets for Georgia products, attracting tourist to Georgia and promoting the state as a location for film, video and music projects, as well as planning and mobilizing state resources for economic development. The NWGRC's CEDS is consistent with Georgia Department of Economic Development goals.

## Performance Measures

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's quarterly and annual report of accomplishments to EDA will be used to evaluate the successful development and implementation of the CEDS. Also, the annual Benchmark Report prepared for the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions will be utilized in determining economic development performance. Evaluation criteria will include private sector jobs created/retained, private investment, number and types of businesses/industries assisted and the economic environment of the region. As annual CEDS updates are prepared, NWGRC staff will measure the success of meeting identified CEDS goals and objectives and report the same to the NWGRC CEDS Committee and NWGRC Council.

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## Appendix

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**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Council Resolution**

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## A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Committee has prepared a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for 2012-2016 for the Northwest Georgia Region, in compliance with the Economic Development Administration's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies Summary of Requirements and 13 CFR § 303.7:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

That the Draft 2012-2016 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is hereby authorized to be transmitted to the Economic Development Administration for review, pending changes and comments received through September 28, 2012.

SO RESOLVED, THIS 20th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2012.



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W. Michael Babb  
Chairperson  
Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

**Letter From Georgia Department Of Economic Development**

DRAFT



July 10, 2012

TO: Georgia's Regional Commission Executive Directors

FROM: Gretchen Corbin, Deputy Commissioner

SUBJECT: Economic Development Priorities in Georgia

It is our pleasure to assist your Regional Commission as you complete your Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Economic Development Administration under the U.S. Department of Commerce. Continued funding from EDA is critical to our economic development efforts and projects in Georgia.

Georgia is home to world-renowned research centers, top ranked universities and Fortune 500 companies. Georgia combines a talented workforce and high quality of living with abundant resources and a thriving economy to create a fertile environment for economic development. The Georgia Department of Economic Development helps drive Georgia's economic growth.

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) is the state's sales and marketing arm, the lead agency for attracting new business investment, encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, locating new markets for Georgia products, attracting tourists to Georgia, and promoting the state as a location for film, video and music projects, as well as planning and mobilizing state resources for economic development. GDEcD is a global agency and one-stop-shop for accessing Georgia's assets and finding the right components for success. We accomplish these goals through the combined efforts of our Global Commerce Team, Tourism Team, Film, Video & Music Team and our Marketing & Communications Team.

Activities identified in the CEDS that do not conflict with the goals stated above would be deemed consistent with the efforts of GDEcD. Efforts by your RC, coupled with the efforts of all other entities involved in creating lasting jobs and investment within our state are essential to ensure the continued economic vitality within the state of Georgia.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 404-962-4029.

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## A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research

### Regional Collaboration in Northwest Georgia Meeting March 2, 2012 Kennesaw State University

#### **Discussion Summary**

#### **Session 1 Topic: Workforce and Economic Development**

*Themes that emerged from discussion groups:*

- Need for greater communication, coordination, and collaboration between private sector employers and educational institutions
- Need for a system that will communicate regional goals and action items to local leaders.
- Need to promote Northwest Georgia as an attractive place for businesses; e.g., capable workforce, high quality schools, excellent quality of life
- Need to promote “blue-collar” jobs that are available as high-skilled and well-paid

There are several mentions of the need for stronger collaboration between employers and educational institutions to better prepare students entering the workforce. This includes better communication about the skills that are in demand, more technical training, and developing formalized internship or mentoring programs for high school and college students. Increased career development can be facilitated through better access to career centers, skill assessments, and jump-starting the Georgia’s Quick Start job training program.

It was also suggested that a regional plan that outlines the common goals and necessary actions to develop the region’s workforce be communicated to local leaders. Several groups mentioned the need for a comprehensive communication system for the region, including an up to date website and increased exposure to social media.

Several groups mentioned promoting the region. This could be done through a media campaign (perhaps using well known people with a Northwest Georgia background), and information sources that outline the benefits of the region.

A couple of discussion groups noted that good, blue-collar positions were going unfilled in their areas. Skills like HVAC technician and veterinary assistant are positions that require technical skills and training, and pay well. We need a way to raise the profile of those sorts of jobs.

## **Action Item:**

The Burruss Institute suggests conducting a needs assessment in Northwest Georgia to gather information on employer needs, the strategies of current job training and placement programs, and residents' awareness of job training resources in their area.

The goal would be to identify resources used for both job seeking and job training within the region, and to determine how employers, job training programs, and residents interact. The result of a series of surveys of employers, job training facilities, and residents will be a picture of where strategies align, and where gaps exist between what employers need and what those seeking jobs are doing to train for and find employment.

## **Session 2 Topic: Tourism and Historic Preservation**

*Themes that emerged from discussion groups:*

- Need to create an “experience” for residents and visitors
- Need to use technology and social media to coordinate and promote tourism, perhaps using Georgia celebrities
- Need to take advantage of the 150<sup>th</sup> Civil War anniversaries
- Need to explore promoting underutilized resources

The discussions on regional tourism and historic preservation focused on increasing collaboration within the region. Participants suggested promoting existing landmarks that include cemeteries, museums, battlefields, various trails (bike, walking, hiking, horse), state parks, carpet mills and breweries in a coordinated manner.

Participants suggested increased use of technology to promote area; including internet, social media, smart phone applications and film making. Along the lines of “thinking outside the box”, participants have specific mentions of celebrities promoting the area in hopes of broadening the target audience and suggested loyalty rewards/discounts for repeat or frequent business customers.

There appeared to be considerable time spent on ways to celebrate, promote and bring attention to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War in the northwest Georgia region. Discussions included strategies such as marketing opportunities, local and multi-state collaboration, and festivals.

Finally, several groups thought that it would be a good idea to aggregate a list of under promoted and underutilized resources, and to use that list to provide a richer list of options to residents and visitors who are exploring recreational and tourism options in the region.

## **Action Item:**

The Burruss Institute proposes that the region work to identify and compile a list of historic sites and attractions in northwest Georgia that can potentially help to draw tourists to the region, and partner with the local municipalities to develop processes the region can use to gather information and coordinate tourism efforts. Initial ideas include, but not limited to, developing a website, flyers, tourist brochures, and web banners to highlight and feature multiple destinations and bring awareness to the attractions of the area. As an additional feature of the website, visitors may find it helpful to access prepopulated itineraries, tour options, and maps that provide suggestions for landmarks and attractions to visit, along with associated maps and travel routes. We propose developing “themed” tours (e.g., walking/hiking trails, battlefields, museums, etc.), as well as those defined by geographic locations and travel distances.

We propose that the region begin by developing tools for distributing tourism information such as an independent website with a unique domain that can be linked to each local municipality’s website or create graphic images and promotional documents containing relevant information that each municipality could place on their respective website.

## **Burruss Institute Participation**

The Burruss Institute and Kennesaw State University would like to remain engaged in moving forward on the Northwest Georgia region’s effort to promote workforce development and tourism. The Action Items outlined above are examples of work the Institute can perform, coordinate and/or assist thorough other kinds of contributions. We hope that the Northwest Georgia Regional Collaboration meeting in March helps to draw attention to the potential for coordination on these issues, and helps to point out regional needs and resources that are useful in the region’s planning process.