



GREATER HALL  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# 2013 Economic Development Report

## Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia

- The 2013 Milken Institute report rated the Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia MSA among the “Best Small Metro Areas” in the US based on job and salary growth for the fourth consecutive year. In the latest report, Gainesville-Hall County was ranked 39th overall and 2nd in the nation for short-term job growth.
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) in Gainesville has been named one of America’s 50 Best Hospitals for 2013 by HealthGrades® and is the only hospital in Georgia named to the list.
- HealthGrades® also rated NGMC #1 in Georgia for General Surgery, Cardiology and Gastrointestinal Services and in the top 5% in the nation for Coronary Interventional Procedures, Critical Care, Pulmonary Services and Women’s Health.
- *Newgeography.com* ranked Gainesville in the “Best 100 Cities in the U.S. for Job Growth” in the June 2011 report.
- *Forbes Magazine* rated Gainesville one of the “Best Small Places for Business & Careers” for the last three years.
- *Bloomberg Businessweek’s* online edition ranked Gainesville 14th in its August 2011 “America’s Most Fun, Affordable Cities” report.
- Brenau University joined an elite group of national universities gaining “Honor Roll” status in *The Chronicle of Higher Education’s* 2011 “Great Colleges to Work For” rankings.
- A 2011 CBS Money Watch story named Gainesville-Hall County as one of the nation’s biggest winners in home value appreciation.
- The *Civic Economics Indie City Index* ranked Gainesville-Hall County #10 in the nation for independent retailer activity and recirculation of dollars within the community in 2011.
- *Where to Retire Magazine* named Gainesville one of the “Top 5 Places to Retire Affordably” in 2012.
- *AARP The Magazine* named Gainesville in the top “5 Best Places in Affordable Cities for Retirement” in 2011.
- The 2012 *Garner Economic Report* cited Gainesville-Hall County as one of only 23 metro areas in the nation that has consistently outperformed national job growth each month for two consecutive years.

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*Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia is a vibrant and growing, solid and diverse community located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Surrounded by beautiful Lake Sidney Lanier, the area offers an unparalleled quality of life and a sound economic future for business and industry. Gainesville-Hall County is home to 47 Fortune 500 firms, more than 300 manufacturing and processing concerns, and 41 international companies representing 15 foreign countries. Georgia’s Governor Nathan Deal and Lt. Governor Casey Cagle both call Hall County home.*

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April 2013

**Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce**

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G R E A T E R H A L L C H A M B E R . C O M

## RETAIL

- Recent census data indicates Gainesville-Hall County has a primary trade area serving a population of over 462,000 Northeast Georgia residents and is the region's only major retail center, offering Lakeshore Mall, Super Target, Sam's Club, Best Buy, Belk, JC Penney, Michaels, Jo-Ann Fabric, PetSmart, Office Depot, Office Max, Kohl's, and a full spectrum of the most popular automotive brand dealers.
- Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar is the third completed restaurant in the Beechwood Crossing Shopping Center on Highway 53 in Gainesville and is adjacent to Olive Garden and Cheddar's restaurants. Highway 53 continues to be a successful retail corridor with over a million square feet of retail space. Other area retail locations include Ulta, Kirkland's, Plato's Closet, The Children's Place and Aldi. Beechwood Crossing on Highway 53 includes a new master planned shopping center of more than 250,000 square feet.
- Construction is underway on the new Kroger-anchored New Holland Market Retail and Commercial Complex. The developer, Carolina Holdings and Pacolet Milliken, plans for 700,000-square-foot of retail space near Exit 24 on I-985, at the intersection of Limestone and Jesse Jewell Parkways in Gainesville.
- The new Thurmon Tanner Parkway extension is generating retail interest from I-985 Exits 16 and 17 in Oakwood to the highly successful 500,000-square-foot Stonebridge Village Center on Spout Springs Road in Flowery Branch. Restaurants, hotel development and the relocation of a local dealership are leading the new retail activity on the South Hall corridor.
- Gainesville's Lakeshore Mall is revitalizing and constructing a new 50,000-square-foot Dick's Sporting Goods to open in 2013. Garrison Investment Group has retained Urban Retail to manage the mall and to reinvigorate the property.
- Highway 365 North is poised as a new retail and commercial corridor with access and infrastructure improvements.

## HOUSING

- The average residential home purchase price in 2012 in Gainesville-Hall County was \$152,500.
- Housing developments such as Sterling on the Lake (894 acres in Flowery Branch), Marina Bay on Lake Lanier (385 acres in North Hall County), Reunion (550 acres in Braselton) and Mundy Mill (400 acres in South Hall County) offer master-planned communities with amenities.
- High quality, gated retirement developments are located in Hall County. Dogwood Forest now has 146 units. Lanier Village Estates has 340 residences with extended care. Cresswinds on Lanier, a 214-acre development on the shores of Lake Lanier, will offer more than 700 homes. The Village at Deaton Creek in South Hall is consistently ranked one of the fastest growing residential developments in Metro Atlanta and Georgia, with 818 new homes developed since 2008.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Lake Sidney Lanier, a 38,000 acre reservoir with 692 miles of shoreline, is a multi-purpose lake that provides recreation for 7.5 million visitors annually.
- The City of Gainesville and Hall County are working together to develop Cedar Creek and Glade Farm water reservoirs.
- The Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax for Hall County infrastructure projects includes public works, water and sewer, building construction, parks, courthouse and administration, fire and EMS, and other municipal projects.
- Thurmon Tanner Parkway extension opened in 2012 and provides a parallel access road connecting Exits 12, 16 and 17 on Interstate 985.
- Sewer planned for Highway 365 is under development with funding support from the infrastructure SPLOST.
- Gainesville's Lee Gilmer Airport continues to attract corporate executive air travel, with two runways at 4,000 and 5,500 feet, an Instrument Landing System (ILS) and 93 hangars.

# BUSINESS

- In 2013, *Site Selection Magazine* ranked the Gainesville-Hall County MSA fourth (4th) in the nation among metro areas for the number of new and expanded industries.
- In 2012-2013, 24 new and expanded businesses created 1,660 jobs, retained 1,530 existing jobs and generated \$203 million in capital investment for Gainesville-Hall County. Global firms expanding their North American business include Atlanta Biologicals, KIK Custom Products, Procure Rx, Bitzer, Yazaki, Elringklinger, Kubota, Atex, IMS Gear, Zebra Technologies and Lupold.
- Bitzer recently completed a 95,000-square-foot North American headquarters and manufacturing operation at Tanners Creek Business Park and will employ 120 people.
- In 2013, Atlanta Biologicals will complete a new 36,000-square-foot life science facility to employ 30 and serve as the company's North American headquarters, research and development and production for specialized cell culture products.
- The Georgia Poultry Laboratory Network is constructing a new science laboratory and headquarters in the new Gateway Industrial Centre to fulfill an important food-safety role for Georgia's poultry industry.
- International Business continues to grow in Hall County. Forty-one international firms have operations in Hall County, and in most, Hall County serves as their North American headquarters. Four new international firms are slated to open in 2013.
- ZF Wind Power has invested \$100 million in a 250,000-square-foot manufacturing facility and division headquarters in Gainesville Business Park, creating 160 new jobs. ZF Group was named "Georgia Manufacturer of the Year 2011" by Governor Nathan Deal.
- Procure Rx opened a new 43,000-square-foot headquarters and operations center in the new Procure Park at Exit 20 on I-985. Procure Rx is a leading pharmacy benefits management company that will ultimately employ 160 and add to the established base of pharmaceutical companies in Gainesville-Hall County.

**In 2012-2013, Gainesville-Hall County had 24 new and expanded businesses that created 1,660 jobs, retained 1,530 existing jobs, and generated \$203 million in capital investment. Gainesville ranked 2nd in the nation in job growth.\***

- Pattillo Industrial Real Estate is actively marketing a new 77,000-square-foot industrial speculative building in the 175-acre Gainesville Business Park. Pattillo, Radial Property Group, Prologis and Majestic Realty have built speculative buildings in various industrial parks for expanding and new industry in Gainesville-Hall County.
- Presco Properties completed a 27,500-square-foot speculative office/business building in Interstate Ridge Business Park at Exit 22 on I-985 in Gainesville.
- New and developing business parks in Hall County include Gainesville Business Park, Procure Park, Gateway Industrial Centre, and Mountain View Business Park.
- Hall County companies Alkermes, Theragenics, Atlanta Biologicals, Georgia Poultry Laboratory Network and Merial are among the top life science firms in the area.
- The Manufacturing Development Center (MDC), established by Lanier Technical College through a public/private partnership, is housed in the Featherbone Communiversity. Sixteen businesses have been launched from the MDC, and 10 more start-ups are in the incubator. Nine patents and three copyrights have been developed at the MDC. The MDC provides affordable space, access to professional services and educational/technical assistance. Small businesses launched in the MDC have been responsible for the creation of more than 400 jobs since the organization opened six years ago.

*\*The 2013 Milken Institute report rated the Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia MSA among the "Best Small Metro Areas" in the U.S. based on job and salary growth and 2nd in the nation for short-term job growth.*

# HEALTHCARE

- Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) in Gainesville has been named one of America's 50 Best Hospitals for 2013 by Healthgrades® and is the only hospital in Georgia named to the list. To make the list, hospitals must have had risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates that were among the lowest 5% in the nation for a minimum of seven years.
- In addition to America's 50 Best, Healthgrades® also rated NGMC #1 in Georgia for General Surgery, Cardiology and Gastrointestinal Services and in the top 5% in the nation for Coronary Interventional Procedures, Critical Care, Pulmonary Services and Women's Health. NGMC also received the Joint Replacement Excellence Award and the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence.
- NGMC was also named a 100 Top Hospitals® award winner for 2013 by Truven Health Analytics, formerly the healthcare business of Thomson Reuters. NGMC is one of only 20 "Large Community Hospitals" selected and the only hospital in Georgia to make the list in any category.
- Construction is underway for the new Northeast Georgia Medical Center Braselton, set to open in Spring 2015 in South Hall County. The 100-bed hospital will serve the healthcare needs of this growing community.
- NGMC Braselton will be located on a 119-acre tract of land called River Place. A 100,000-square-foot medical office building already anchors this healthcare campus that includes an urgent care center, imaging center, physical and occupational therapy, and 27 physician offices representing 22 medical specialties. A second medical office building, to be located adjacent to the new NGMC Braselton, will open in early 2015 just prior to the hospital opening.
- Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) opened a new medical office building, Medical Plaza 400, in Dawsonville. The multi-specialty building will house an urgent care center, imaging center, outpatient lab and physician offices representing numerous specialties.
- NGHS was named one of Metro Atlanta's Top 100 Workplaces by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* for 2011 and 2012, placing as one of 20 in the large company category.
- The Cancer Center at NGMC is accredited with commendation by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer.
- Northeast Georgia Heart Center was awarded Heart/Stroke Recognition through the Heart/Stroke Recognition Program of the National Committee for Quality Assurance, a national program that recognizes physicians and physician groups who provide high-quality cardiovascular or stroke care.
- 55 new physicians joined the staff at NGMC in 2011. More than 500 physicians, representing more than 50 specialties, are currently on staff at NGMC.
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center is the seventh largest hospital in the state based on bed size, with 557 inpatient beds.
- NGMC is home to the fourth-busiest Emergency Department in the state. NGMC's Women and Children's Center ranks sixth in the state in number of deliveries.
- NGMC has achieved Stage 6 designation of the Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Analytics™ Hospital Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Adoption Model. This distinction honors NGMC's accomplishments in implementing technology solutions to improve patient safety and quality of care.
- NGHS was on the *InformationWeek 500* lists for 2011 and 2012, an annual listing of the nation's most innovative users of business information technology (IT).
- NGHS is participating in a \$20.75 million Health Care Innovation Challenge grant from The Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation for a multi-community partnership project to develop patient centered medical neighborhoods, which will connect acute care hospitals with primary care, specialty and subspecialty practices to drive better quality and superior patient experience at a more affordable cost.
- Three physician groups based in Hall County – The Longstreet Clinic, Northeast Georgia Physicians Group and Northeast Georgia Diagnostic Clinic – are listed in Atlanta's "Top 25 Physician Group Practices" by the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*.

# EDUCATION

- Three Gainesville-Hall County institutions – Brenau University, University of North Georgia (UNG) and Lanier Technical College – are at record enrollment, with a combined enrollment of more than 16,000 students.
- Brenau began repurposing the Georgia Mountains Center in 2013 as Brenau Downtown Center to house multiple professional healthcare master’s and doctoral degree programs. The 135-year-old, private, liberal arts university based in Gainesville generates close to 800 jobs and provides about \$92 million in economic impact annually. That impact is expected to grow to \$150 million when the Downtown Center is fully operational.
- University of North Georgia Gainesville’s new five-story, 130,000-square-foot academic building is located on a 144-acre site and houses the college’s School of Humanities and Fine Arts and the School of Business, Education, Health and Wellness. The economic impact of the UNG Gainesville Campus in 2011 reached \$206 million and generated 2,250 jobs.
- Lanier Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, provides technical education, customized industry training and adult education. Lanier Tech is home to the Georgia Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center with technologies in automation, controls and robotics and received the Gold-standard of accreditation in December 2011.

**With the merger of Gainesville State College and North Georgia State College & University, the new University of North Georgia now has campuses in Cumming, Dahlonega, Gainesville and Oconee and over 15,000 students.**

- UNG Dahlonega had a regional economic impact of more than \$171 million and accounted for 1,917 jobs in a six-county area in fiscal year 2011. Expansion of its strategic language programs earned the university designation in 2011 as an ROTC flagship institution.
- Lanier Charter Career Academy, a part of the Hall County School System, offers non-traditional students the opportunity to earn a high school degree and develop career skills in digital marketing, culinary arts, cosmetology and hospitality. The Oaks is Lanier Charter Career Academy’s 24,000-square-foot facility with a student-operated gift shop, design center and café providing hands-on learning.
- There are 11 private schools in Gainesville-Hall County, including Lakeview Academy, Riverside Military Academy and North Georgia Christian School.
- One of 11 charter schools for the Hall County School System, The World Language Academy provides an immersion language school with curriculum in Spanish, English and Mandarin Chinese. The DaVinci Academy provides in-depth learning in the arts, sciences and technology, and it is one of 12 programs of choice in the Hall County School System, including three International Baccalaureate programs and the new Science, Technology and Math (STEM) program.
- Gainesville City Schools includes eight charter schools, an International Baccalaureate Program and focused programs in math and science, language, leadership, the arts and robotics. The Gainesville City School system offers open enrollment for parent choice.
- In 2013, Elachee Nature Science Center will open a nature-based preschool for 3 to 5 year olds. This innovative preschool will be the first of this type in Georgia and the Southeast, where children will spend over 50% of their time learning outdoors.
- Gainesville City and Hall County Schools offer apprenticeship opportunities with local businesses through career preparation academies at Wood’s Mill and Lanier Career Academy in addition to apprenticeships at businesses through traditional high schools in both systems.



# REDEVELOPMENT

- Midtown Gainesville is being redeveloped with the help of a TAD (Tax Allocation District) and an Opportunity Zone.
- The first phase of the Midtown Greenway is complete with a pathway connecting Downtown Gainesville and Rock Creek Greenway to the University of North Georgia and Elachee Nature Science Center.
- The cities of Flowery Branch and Oakwood are redeveloping their downtown areas with Tax Allocation District designations. Both cities are planning for future growth around the Thurmon Tanner Parkway corridor.
- A pedestrian bridge was completed connecting Gainesville's Downtown businesses with Midtown developments, to include the construction of a hotel-conference center, a parking garage and office buildings with retail and restaurants.
- In downtown Gainesville, Brenau University's Center for Graduate School programs in physical therapy and pharmaceutical technology is under construction in 2013. Brenau anticipates 700 graduate students will be enrolled at the center.
- Business leaders on the Lanier Islands Parkway corridor in South Hall County are working to establish a Community Improvement District to support improvements on this important tourism and business corridor.

**Road Atlanta attracts 320,000 visitors annually and will host the 16th Petit Le Mans in fall 2013, drawing some 150,000 visitors from around the world.**

## TOURISM

- Lake Lanier Islands Resort, a world-class 1,500-acre property in South Hall County, completed Lanier World and Phase II of its investment in the Legacy Lodge Hotel and Conference Center, golf course improvements, harbor development, an outdoor concert venue, and a health spa. The resort, 35 minutes from Atlanta, employs 400 people and is included in a new Community Improvement District.
- Don Carter State Park opens in 2013 on Lake Lanier just north of the Lake Lanier Olympic Center. The first state park in Hall County will feature eight cabins, RV and camp sites, boat ramps, a beach area, trails and other park amenities on more than 1,000 acres on the shores of Lake Sidney Lanier.
- The Lake Lanier Olympic Center, home to the 1996 Atlanta Centennial Olympic Games, continues to host many national and international rowing and canoe/kayak events.
- The top ranked Atlanta Falcons National Football League team is headquartered in Flowery Branch.
- Road Atlanta, a 2.54-mile International Grand Prix course, attracts 320,000 visitors annually. Road Atlanta will host the 16th Petit Le Mans in fall 2013, drawing some 150,000 visitors from around the world.
- Smithgall Woodland Garden, a 190-acre preserve in the City of Gainesville and part of Atlanta Botanical Garden, has completed its \$20 million campaign to develop the garden with a visitor's center, children's garden, amphitheater and pavilions. Smithgall Woodland Garden is scheduled to open to the public in early 2014.
- Elachee Nature Science Center, located in the Chicopee Woods Park, consists of a 1,500-acre forest nature preserve with 13 miles of hiking trails. The preserve serves as a plant and animal sanctuary and an ideal outdoor classroom. Elachee houses an interactive museum that educates visitors of all ages.
- Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK) is a hands-on Children's Museum with more than 20 exhibits in 20,000-square-feet of the Featherbone Communiversity, located in Midtown Gainesville.



## POPULATION

- Gainesville-Hall County's population continued to grow at an estimated 3% from 2010 to 2012. The 2013 estimated population of Gainesville-Hall County is 188,197.
- In 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau identified the Gainesville-Hall County MSA as one of the top 50 fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States.

**Construction is underway for the new Northeast Georgia Medical Center Braselton, set to open in Spring 2015 in South Hall County. The new 100-bed hospital is the first built in Georgia in 20 years and will serve the growing South Hall population.**

## VISION 2030

- The Greater Hall Chamber VISION 2030 program was initiated in 2005 when over 1,000 Gainesville-Hall County citizens came together to describe the community they'd like to live, work and raise families in with a "common vision." The result is a blueprint for success for Gainesville-Hall County – a set of long-term goals now in place called the "Big Ideas."
- Big Ideas include: a Harbor Town development on Lake Lanier, additional greenspace and a community diversity program. Recently completed initiatives include a new senior leadership program, the Wisdom Project, a public art program in the community, and a VISION 2030 website – [www.vision2030.org](http://www.vision2030.org)

**The VISION 2030 Board of Directors has formed over a dozen work groups engaging more than 100 community volunteers to make the "Big Ideas" a reality.**

## HALLmark 2010-2015: The Next Generation

- The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce has secured major investments in its aggressive, five-year economic development plan for Gainesville-Hall County – HALLmark 2010-2015: The Next Generation. Over 155 business investors across the community are investing \$2.3 million in the program to ensure the economic viability of our region.
- The benefits of HALLmark include high quality jobs; a stable and growing tax base; the protection of existing investments; and an unparalleled quality of life. HALLmark five-year program goals seeks to create 1,700 new jobs with \$250 million in capital investment, \$60 million in new annual payroll, and the Gainesville MSA's unemployment rate below that of the state and nation. Economic Development and VISION 2030 are funded through HALLmark.



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