



GREATER HALL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2012 Economic Development Report

Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia

Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville ranked #1 in Georgia for heart care for seven consecutive years according to HealthGrades® and is one of only six hospitals to rank #1 in all four cardiac categories for 2012.

Newgeography.com ranked Gainesville, Georgia 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.

For the second consecutive year, Northeast Georgia Health System was named one of “Metro Atlanta’s Top 100 Workplaces” for 2012 by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, placing as one of only 20 in the large company category.

Bloomberg Businessweek’s online edition ranked Gainesville 14th in its August 2011 “America’s Most Fun, Affordable Cities” report.

The Milken Institute ranked the Gainesville-Hall County MSA in the “Best Small Metro Areas” based on job and salary growth for the last three consecutive years.

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.

Relocate America named Gainesville-Hall County among its “Top 100 Places to Live” in 2009.

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.

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.

July 2012

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

- Construction will begin in 2013 on the new 700,000-square-foot New Holland Market Retail and Commercial Complex by Carolina Holdings 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 Exits 16 and 17 in Oakwood to the highly successful 500,000-square-foot Stonebridge Village Center on Spout Springs Road in Flowery Branch.
- Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar is under construction in the Beechwood Crossing Shopping Center on Highway 53 in Gainesville adjacent to the recently completed 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 recent Gainesville-Hall County retail locations include Michael's, Ulta, Kirkland's, Plato's Closet, The Children's Place, Aldi and Jo-Ann Fabrics & Crafts.
- Gainesville's Lakeshore Mall is under new ownership and management. Garrison Investment Group has retained Urban Retail to manage the mall and to develop a long term plan to reinvigorate the property.
- Big box retailers including Best Buy, Rooms-To-Go, Home Depot, Kohl's, Super Target, Office Max, Sam's Club, TJ Maxx, Marshalls, a second Super Walmart and Ross have recently opened locations in Gainesville, Oakwood and Flowery Branch.
- Highway 365 north is poised as a new retail and commercial corridor with access and infrastructure improvements.

POPULATION

- Gainesville-Hall County experienced 29% population growth from 2000-2010.
- 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. The 2012 estimated population of Gainesville-Hall County is 186,529.

Lake Lanier Islands Resort has been completely redeveloped with approximately \$70 million in capital and infrastructure improvements.

TOURISM

- Lake Lanier Islands Resort, a world-class 1,500-acre property, completed Lanier World and Phase II of its investment in the Legacy Lodge Hotel and Conference Center, golf course improvements, harbor development, outdoor concert venue, and a health spa. The resort hosts state and national meetings with its updated appeal and location just 35 minutes from Atlanta. Future development includes a second upscale lodge, an additional golf course and eco-friendly transportation. The resort now employs 400 people and is included in a new Community Improvement District that will upgrade the road system, landscaping and add new running trails on Lake Lanier Islands Parkway.
- 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, including the 2013 NCAA Division I-III Rowing Championships.
- The Atlanta Falcons, a 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 15th Petit Le Mans fall 2012 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, is nearing the completion of its \$10 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 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 is an ideal outdoor classroom. Elachee houses an interactive museum that excites and educates visitors of all ages.
- Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK) is a hands-on Children's Museum with many new exhibits in 20,000-square-feet of the Featherbone Communiversities, located in Midtown Gainesville.

BUSINESS

- In 2012, 24 new and expanded industries created 1,232 jobs, retained 742 existing jobs and generated \$164 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 and Lupold.
- Bitzer broke ground on a 95,000-square-foot in spring 2012 at Tanners Creek Business Park and will employ 120 people.
- Atlanta Biologicals broke ground in July 2012 in Tanners Creek Business Park for a new 36,000-square-foot life sciences facility that will employ 30 and serve as the company's North American headquarters, research and development and production for specialized cell culture products.
- ZF Wind Power has invested \$100 million in a 250,000-square-foot manufacturing facility and division headquarters in Gainesville Business Park, creating 215 new jobs. ZF Group was named "Georgia Manufacturer of the Year 2011" by Governor Nathan Deal.
- Skip Barber Racing School moved its headquarters to Hall County, joining the school's existing base location at Road Atlanta.
- 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.
- Pattillo Industrial Real Estate completed a 77,000-square-foot industrial speculative building in the newly opened, 175-acre Gainesville Business Park.
- Presco Properties completed a 27,500-square-foot speculative office/business-service building in Interstate Ridge Business Park at Exit 22, I-985 in Gainesville
- New and developing business/industrial parks in Hall County include Gainesville Business Park, North Gate Retail and Business Park, Procure Park, Gateway Industrial Centre, and Mountain View Business Park.
- Pattillo, Radial Property Group, Prologis and Majestic Realty have built speculative buildings in various industrial parks for expanding and new industry in Hall County.
- Hall County companies Alkermes, Theragenics 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. Twelve businesses have graduated from the MDC, and 13 more start-ups are in the incubator. The MDC provides affordable space, access to professional services and educational/technical assistance. Small businesses that got their start in the MDC have been responsible for the creation of more than 400 jobs since the MDC opened five years ago

In 2010-2012, 62 new and expanded industries created 2,650 jobs, retained 1,260 existing jobs and generated \$485 million in capital investment for Gainesville-Hall County.

HOUSING

- The average residential home purchase price in 2011 in Gainesville-Hall County was \$131,150.
- 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 added 114,000- square-feet in an expansion from 50 to 146 units. Lanier Village Estates in North Hall County has 340 residences with extended care. Cresswinds on Lanier is a 214-acre age-restricted development on the shores of Lake Lanier, and more than 200 homes have been developed and sold. The Village at Deaton Creek in South Hall, an age-restricted community in South Hall, is consistently ranked in the top two fastest growing residential developments in Metro Atlanta and Georgia with 818 new homes developed since 2008.

HEALTHCARE

- Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) in Gainesville has been ranked #1 in Georgia, and in the top 5% in the nation, for heart care seven years in a row according to HealthGrades® and is one of only six hospitals to rank #1 in all four cardiac categories for 2012.
- NGMC was named a 2010-11 Consumer Choice Award Winner by the National Research Corporation. The award identifies hospitals that healthcare consumers have chosen as having the highest quality and image in more than 300 markets throughout the United States.
- NGMC is moving forward with planning and development of a new 100 bed inpatient hospital on a 119-acre campus in South Hall County/Braselton at River Place, with an estimated opening date of spring 2015.
- Medical Plaza 1, on the campus of River Place in South Hall/Braselton, is a 100,000 square-foot medical office building, houses an urgent care center, imaging center, lab, physical and occupational therapy, and 23 physician offices representing 21 medical specialties. A second medical office building is planned for River Place to be located adjacent to the new hospital, Northeast Georgia Medical Center Braselton.
- In November 2010, NGMC was named one of the 10 Best Places to Work in Georgia by *Georgia Trend Magazine*.
- Northeast Georgia Health System (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.
- In 2011, NGMC played an instrumental role in the placement of metro Atlanta as one of America's Top 50 Cities for Hospital Care, according to HealthGrades®.
- NGMC was named a 100 Top Hospitals® National Winner in 2009 by Thomson Reuters. NGMC was also one of only 23 Hospitals to receive the Everest Award, which recognizes top performance during the previous five years.
- The Cancer Center at Northeast Georgia Medical Center is accredited with commendation by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer.
- 40 new physicians joined the staff at NGMC in 2011. More than 500 physicians, representing more than 50 specialties, are currently on staff at Northeast Georgia Medical Center. Northeast Georgia Medical Center is the seventh largest hospital in the state based on bed size, with 557 inpatient beds.
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center is home to the fourth-busiest Emergency Department in the state. NGMC's Women and Children's Center ranks eighth in the state in number of deliveries.
- Northeast Georgia Health System will invest more than \$200 million in the next five years on clinical technology including physiological monitoring capabilities, diagnostic imaging modalities, cardiac catheterization laboratories and electronic medical record technology.
- NGHS has been recognized as one of the Most Wired Hospitals and Health Systems of 2012, according to Hospitals & Health Network, which recognizes hospitals and health systems that are leveraging the adoption and use of health information technology (IT) to improve performance.
- 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*.
- 150,000 square feet of new medical space has been added in Gainesville and Hall County in the last year.

Northeast Georgia Medical Center is the first hospital in the world to receive two accreditations for heart and vascular services from the Accreditation for Cardiovascular Excellence.



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Lake Sidney Lanier, a 38,000 acre reservoir with 692 miles of shoreline, is a multi-purpose lake that provides for 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 \$240 million 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 opened in 2011 and provides a parallel access road to connect exits 12, 16 and 17 on I-985.
- Sewer planned for Highway 365 is under development with funding support from 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 hangers.

EDUCATION

- Three Gainesville-Hall County institutions – Brenau University, Gainesville State College and Lanier Technical College – are at record enrollment with a combined enrollment of more than 16,000 students. In 2013, Gainesville State College and North Georgia College and State University will consolidate to form the new University of North Georgia with a combined student enrollment of about 15,000.
- Brenau University, a 134-year-old private liberal arts university based in Gainesville generates close to 800 jobs in all industry sectors in the state and provides about \$92 million in economic impact. As a result of the 2012 long-term lease agreement with the city government, Brenau will repurpose the Georgia Mountains Center to house multiple professional health care professional master's degree and doctoral \$40 million a year in direct impact.
- Gainesville State College's new five-story 130,000-square-foot academic building on its 144-acre site in Oakwood houses the college's School of Humanities and Fine Arts and the School of Business, Education, Health and Wellness. The economic impact of Gainesville State College 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 Center of Innovation for Manufacturing Excellence with technologies in automation, controls and robotics and received the Gold-standard of accreditation in December 2011.
- North Georgia College & State University made 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 cosmetology, culinary arts and hospitality. The Oaks is Lanier Charter Career Academy's 24,000-square-foot culinary arts facility with a student-operated restaurant with hands-on learning.
- There are eleven private schools in Gainesville-Hall County, including Lakeview Academy, Riverside Military Academy and North Georgia Christian School.
- One of eleven 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 eight programs of choice in the Hall County School System, in addition to the International Baccalaureate program.
- In fall 2013, Elachee Nature Science Center will open a nature-based preschool for 3-5 year olds. This innovative preschool will be the first of this type in Georgia and the Southeast, where children will spend more than 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 Gainesville High School. Gainesville High school offers instruction in robotics and fields a competitive robotics team.

REDEVELOPMENT

- The Midtown Greenway is being constructed within former railroad right-of-way and is an integral part to connecting downtown Gainesville and Rock Creek Greenway to Gainesville State College and Elachee Nature Science Center.
- Midtown Gainesville is being redeveloped with the help of a TAD (Tax Allocation District) and an Opportunity Zone.
- The cities of Flowery Branch and Oakwood are redeveloping their downtown areas with approved Tax Allocation District designations. Both cities are planning for future growth around the developing Thurmon Tanner Parkway corridor.
- A pedestrian bridge connecting Gainesville's Downtown to Midtown will be completed in 2012 and connects downtown businesses with Midtown Gainesville developments including the construction of a 13-story hotel, a six-level parking garage and two nine-story office buildings.
- Brenau University and the City of Gainesville have a partnership to create a Center for Brenau's Graduate School programs in physical therapy and pharmaceutical technology in Downtown Gainesville. Brenau anticipates 700 graduate students will be enrolled at the center.
- A four-story parking deck in downtown Gainesville supports the growing downtown retail district.

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 solid and clear-sighted blueprint for success for Gainesville-Hall County – a set of long-term goals now in place called the "15 Big Ideas" or action steps of where we'd like to be in 2030.
- Big Ideas include: a Harbor Town development on Lake Lanier, additional greenspace, and a community diversity program. Recent initiatives include a new senior leadership program, the Wisdom Project, and a public art program in the community.
- The VISION 2030 Board recently launched a new website, vision2030.org, and the first The Wisdom Project session will begin in August 2012.

The VISION 2030 Board of Directors has formed over a dozen work groups engaging more than 100 community volunteers to make the "15 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 156 investors, including businesses 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 seek 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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