

LOCATE SOUTH GEORGIA

2020

# ANNUAL REPORT

SOUTH GEORGIA:  
GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

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Left to right: Chris White (City of Thomasville), Gov. Brian Kemp, Shelley Zorn (Executive Director, Thomasville Thomas County Payroll Development Authority), and Andy Goodwin (City of Thomasville) at the February grand opening of Thomas County's WalMart food processing facility, a \$90M investment creating 400 jobs.

# THIS IS WHERE BUSINESS THRIVES

Andrea Schrujier has been the Executive Director of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority for almost ten years and was recently elected Chair of the Georgia Economic Developers Association. Schrujier previously served as the Senior Vice President of Economic Development in Albany-Dougherty County.



**ANDREA SCHRUIJER**  
*Executive Director*  
*Valdosta-Lowndes Development Authority*

As I look back at 2020, I can't help but be proud. Proud of my peers, proud of my state, and proud of the pliancy we all summoned in order to not only survive, but thrive. In a business environment that seemingly shifted daily, our Locate South Georgia member communities prevailed.

COVID-19 actually opened our eyes to a few important things. The pandemic certainly placed a spotlight on the importance of manufacturing, an industry historically attracted to the benefits and assets of our region and one that is continuing to see strong gains here.

We learned that there's a strong need for increased automation capabilities and that spec buildings continue to be a deciding factor in many of our industry recruitment efforts.

In addition, the constraints induced by COVID-19 created an even stronger case for a cohesive approach to regional economic development marketing and recruitment efforts - a key component of the Locate South Georgia mission.

Last year, 79% of Georgia Department Economic of Development projects were outside the metro-Atlanta area, and with a strong economy returning to South Georgia, I'd only expect that number to hold or even grow in 2021.

So, our message is simple and proven: this is where business thrives, and when our 19 counties work together, we have a bigger and better story to tell.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea".

**19** COUNTIES  
ON A MISSION:

TO MARKET AND BRAND SOUTH GEORGIA AS A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE LOCATION FOR BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRY, TO WORK TOWARD THE RECRUITMENT OF NEW JOBS AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT THROUGH THE REGION, AND TO EDUCATE AND FOSTER LEADERS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

# 2020 RESULTS

There is a direct correlation between job creation and economic growth. Collectively, Locate South Georgia member communities made a \$268M capital investment in our region via industry building and expansion efforts, equating to the creation of nearly 1,000 jobs last year.



## \$268 MILLION INVESTMENT

COMPANY	INDUSTRY	JOBS	INVESTMENT
RENEWABLE BIOMASS GROUP	MANUFACTURING	60	\$95,000,000
BASF	AGRICULTURAL SOLUTIONS	39	\$70,000,000
OUTDOOR NETWORKS	CALL CENTER	92	\$22,000,000
PAEROSOL GLOBAL PARTNERS	MANUFACTURING	140	\$17,000,000
A-1 ROOF TRUSSES	WOOD PRODUCTS	130	\$17,000,000
SILICON RANCH CORPORATION	SOLAR ENERGY	150	\$15,000,000
MANA NUTRITION	FOOD / BEVERAGE PROCESSING	10	\$11,500,000
THE SATSUMA CO.	FOOD / BEVERAGE PROCESSING	82	\$7,000,000
BATES PRECAST CONCRETE	PRODUCTION & SALES	10	\$5,000,000
MILLEX	MANUFACTURING	TBA	\$4,500,000
POLAR BEVERAGES	FOOD / BEVERAGE PROCESSING	10	\$2,500,000
SUNCREST STONE	BUILDING PRODUCTS	30	\$1,000,000
FIRE-DEX	MANUFACTURING	10	\$500,000

# HOT TOPIC

## RURAL BROADBAND EXPANSION



In July 2020, Windstream and Colquitt Electric Membership Corporation announced a joint effort to expand the coverage area of Windstream's fiber broadband service to members of the electric cooperative.

Governor **Brian Kemp** applauded the partnership:

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*"Windstream and Colquitt Electrical Membership Corporation are working together to make sure that our education and business communities never need to look beyond south Georgia to make sure that they have the technology resources they need."*

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areas over the next several years. As the network is expanded, Colquitt EMC members will have access to Windstream's premium Kinetic broadband service with internet speeds up to 1G.

"This Windstream-Colquitt EMC partnership is significant, as it demonstrates the importance of working collaboratively to close the gap and improve connectivity for millions of Georgians," said Commissioner **Christopher Nunn** of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. "Through this investment and many others like it, providers and communities seek to deliver an essential business and quality-of-life need that is key to long-term vitality of rural areas all across our state."

"Once state law allowed EMC's to engage in the broadband effort, Colquitt EMC recognized that a partnership is the best strategy," said **Danny Nichols**, general manager of Colquitt EMC. "Through our discussions, we have found a common goal, and we look forward to impacting our members and Windstream customers."



**8TH YEAR** NAMED #1 FOR BUSINESS BY SITE SELECTION MAGAZINE

**7TH YEAR** NAMED #1 FOR BUSINESS BY AREA DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

*"By combining resources, our two organizations will accelerate Kinetic broadband deployment to customers in many locations in Colquitt's service territory."*



J BERKSHIRE, PRESIDENT | WINDSTREAM OPERATIONS GEORGIA





# PANDEMIC SHIFTS

## MANUFACTURING MANEUVERS

Mitchell County manufacturer FireDex switched from making protective gear for firefighters to using the same ideas to protect front line healthcare workers and offering new ideas to help address the medical PPE shortage.

Wilkinson's, located in Azalea City Industrial Park in Lowndes County, began making and selling fabric masks.

## HEALTHCARE SUPPORT

Nearly all the region's colleges and universities were able to donate PPE to local hospitals and healthcare facilities.

Chaparral Boats in Lowndes County donated \$100,000 to The Caring Place in addition to donating hundreds of N95 masks to local medical facilities in South Georgia to help combat COVID-19.

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

Everfan in Thomas County found new and innovative ways to serve by shifting their playful superhero cape production to a similarly fun line of youth and adult masks.

All schools in the Technical College System of Georgia began offering ten online courses on a wide range of soft skills free of charge.



*"During the height of the pandemic, Chambers and Development Authorities became a beacon of information to businesses within their local communities, pushing out information related to healthcare needs, financial support and the measured reopening of our state's economy."*

TIFFANY HOLMES, REGIONAL DIRECTOR | GEORGIA CHAMBER

# INDUSTRY MEETS EDUCATION

## VSU Engineering Program Welcomed Arglass CEO to Meet Student Researchers

Valdosta State University celebrated National Engineers Week in February with student and faculty research presentations and guest speakers from local economic development organizations. **José de Diego Arozamena**, Industrial Engineer and founder/CEO of Arglass Yamamura, spoke to attendees about the construction of the new state-of-the-art Arglass bottle manufacturing plant in Valdosta.

VSU engineering technology majors presented their research projects on

Computer Aided Design (CAD) and the development of different bottles made from glass materials, as well as the residual stresses developed in glass materials during firing.

Students also interacted with **Mike Lane**, senior operations advisor for Arglass, **Patrick Collins**, city engineer of the City of Valdosta, and **Stan Crance**, director of Business Recruitment & Existing Industry, during Hojjatie's engineering courses during the week.

## WORK-BASED LEARNING

The Georgia Work-Based Learning Program assists businesses with building a highly trained, technologically sophisticated and career oriented young workforce. Work-Based Learning supplies talent via local high schools to create a talent pipeline.

IN ACADEMIC YEAR 19-20,  
WORK-BASED LEARNING  
STUDENTS IN **BEN HILL,  
BROOKS, COFFEE,  
COLQUITT, CRISP, GRADY  
AND LEE** COUNTIES  
CONTRIBUTED OVER  
**250,000 HOURS**  
TO OUR LOCAL BUSINESS  
AND INDUSTRY AND EARNED  
OVER **\$2.1 MILLION**  
IN WAGES.



**9** COLLEGE & CAREER ACADEMIES   **8** COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES   **4** TECHNICAL COLLEGES

# RURAL HEALTHCARE



The Phoebe Foundation received a \$125,000 donation from Pfizer for COVID-19 relief assistance and aid to citizens of Southwest Georgia.



Dougherty County received a \$100,000 grant from the American Public Health Association to be used to address health issues with physical activity and also focus on nutritional health challenges.



As part of the Georgia HEART Hospital Program, Ameris Bank donated \$2 million in financial support to 19 rural hospitals, 10 of which are in Locate South Georgia communities.

Georgia HEART awards Georgia income tax credits to individual and corporate taxpayers who contribute to qualified rural hospital organizations located in Georgia.

## IN THE LOCATE SOUTH GEORGIA COMMUNITY FOOTPRINT:

- 14** ELIGIBLE HOSPITALS
- \$17,450,000** IN CONTRIBUTIONS
- 37+** PROJECTS FUNDED





## INVESTING IN RURAL MEDICAL TRAINING

South Georgia Medical Center invested \$1 million dollars into Wiregrass Georgia Technical College's LPN to RN program. SGMC's Chief Executive Ronald Dean believes nurses to be the "lifeblood of their health delivery system." Wiregrass' new \$29.5 million Health Services building will start construction in 2021.

SGMC also announced new residency programs in internal and emergency medicine with the Mercer University School of Medicine.



## GROWING THE RURAL HEALTHCARE EDUCATION PIPELINE

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine's South Georgia campus in Moultrie began a Masters of Biological Science degree program with an initial cohort of 15 medical students in August 2020. In addition, the second cohort of D.O. students, totaling 59, also began their studies.



**CRMC +  
AMERIS +  
IVITA FINANCIAL**

*Colquitt Regional Medical Center becomes the first hospital to participate in a new joint program between Ameris Bank and iVita Financial for a new innovative healthcare payment option.*

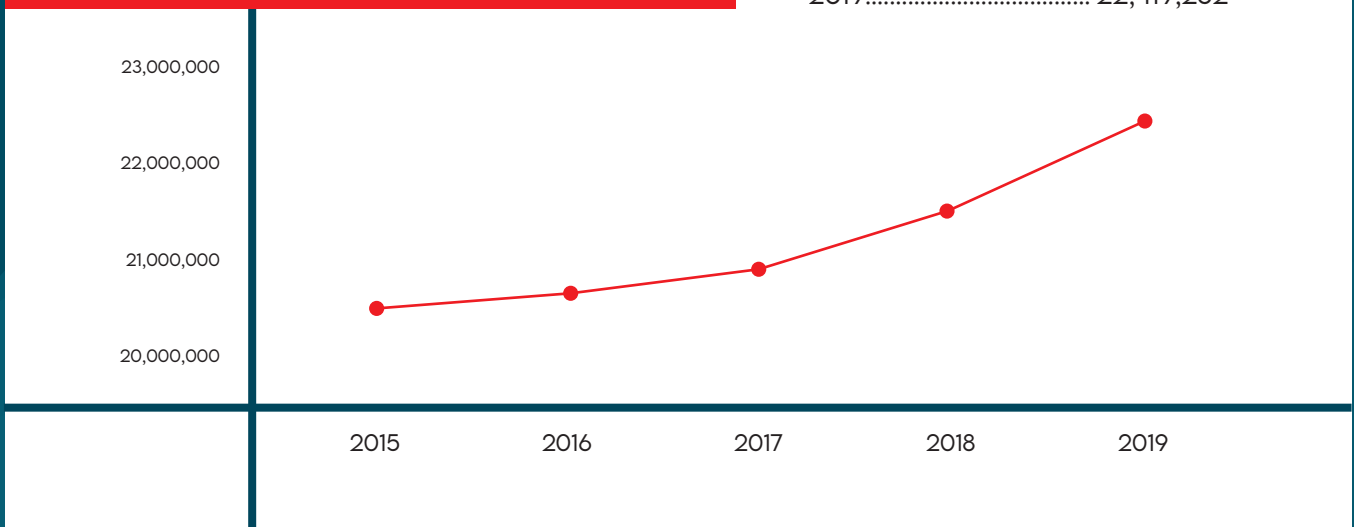
# ECONOMIES ON THE RISE



## GDP Regional Growth 5-Year Data

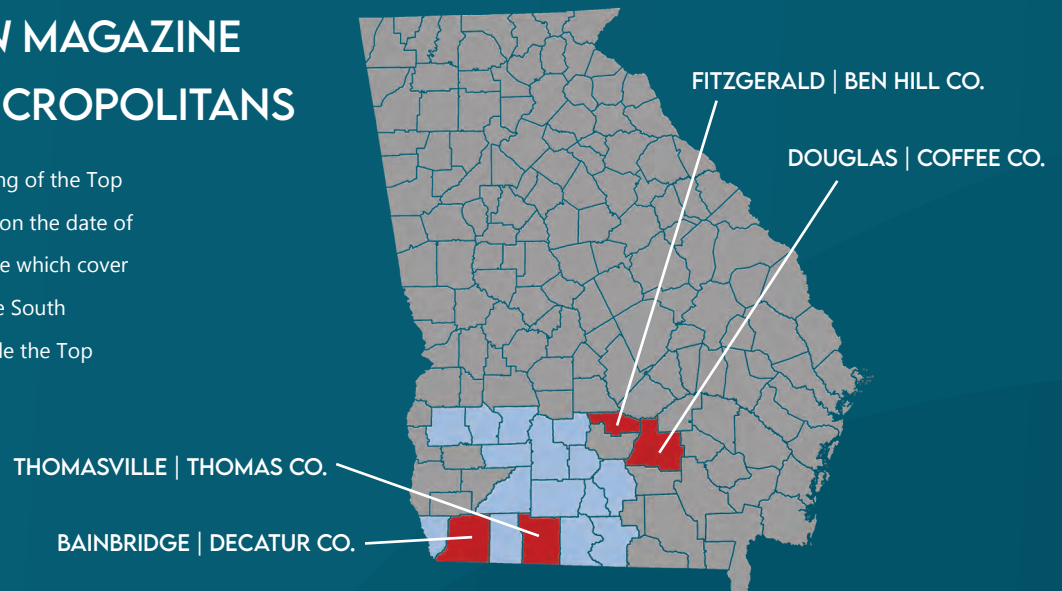
Source: FRED Economic Data  
Thousands of Chained 2012 U.S. Dollars  
19 counties of Locate South Georgia

2015.....	20,554,280
2016.....	20,601,563
2017.....	20,991,941
2018.....	21,546,487
2019.....	22,419,232



## SITE SELECTION MAGAZINE NAMES TOP MICROPOLITANS

Site Selection magazine's ranking of the Top Micropolitans of 2020 is based on the date of cities of 10,000 to 50,000 people which cover at least one county. Four Locate South Georgia member counties made the Top 100.





[LOCATESOUTHGEORGIA.COM/LEADERSHIP-DEVELOPMENT](http://LOCATESOUTHGEORGIA.COM/LEADERSHIP-DEVELOPMENT)

*We believe that leadership development is an “essential industry!”*



# SOUTH GEORGIALEADS

Guided by the belief that leadership is key to a region’s economic success, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia partnered to create South Georgia LEADS. The program is a collaborative effort by economic development professionals across the South Georgia region who understand the critical importance of investing in a new generation of leaders that can champion the region and its many assets; while working collectively towards creating effective solutions to address significant challenges related to workforce development, education, and economic growth throughout the region. South GeorgiaLEADS is a non-profit organization, led by an alumni Board of Directors.

## CLASS OF 2019-2020

FRANK BIRD IV  
KASEY BLACKBURN  
THRESSEA BOYD  
JULIAN BROWN  
TAYLOR BROWN  
KATHRYN BROWN  
MALANIE BURNETT  
CHRIS CHAMMOUN  
TORRANCE CHOATES  
STAN CRANCE  
LISA DYLINSKI  
WILLIAM EDWARDS  
A.L. FLEMING  
HILARY GIBBS  
AMANDA GLOVER  
MILTON HALL, JR.  
HOPE HARMON  
WENDY HARRISON  
REEDI HAWKINS  
TIFFANY HOLMES  
DAVID HUGHES  
COREY HULL  
COURTNEY KING  
ANSLEY LACY  
JOSH LOVETT  
JAMES MCCOY  
LAUREN MINOR  
PRESTON MOBLEY  
RAVEN PAYNE  
PATRICK PEARSON  
WILL PETERSON  
LINDY SAVELLE  
ANNE SHENTON  
PATSY SHIRLEY  
KAREN SINGLETARY  
ALLISON STEWART  
CATHY STOTT  
JOE SUMNER  
ANGELA WARD  
REBECCA WHITE  
BRIANNA WILSON



SOUTH GEORGIALEADS SUSTAINERS

ESTABLISHED **2014**

**5** COHORTS

**150+** GRADUATES

# COUNTY MEMBER DIRECTORY

COUNTY	MEMBER ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE
BEN HILL	FITZGERALD-BEN HILL COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	JASON DUNN
BERRIEN	BERRIEN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	LISA SMART
BROOKS	BROOKS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	STEPHANIE MATA
COFFEE	DOUGLAS-COFFEE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	JOHN HENRY
COLQUITT	MOULTRIE-COLQUITT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	BARBARA GROGAN
COOK	COOK COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION	LISA COLLINS
CRISP	CORDELE-CRISP COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL	GRANT BUCKLEY
DECATUR	DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF BAINBRIDGE & DECATUR COUNTY	RICK MCCASKILL
DOUGHERTY	ALBANY-DOUGHERTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION	JANA DYKE
GRADY	GRADY COUNTY JOINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	JULIAN BROWN
LEE	LEE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	LISA DAVIS
LOWNDES	VALDOSTA-LOWNDES COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	ANDREA SCHRUIJER
MITCHELL	MITCHELL COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	PAIGE GILCHRIST
RANDOLPH	RANDOLPH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	REBECCA WHITE
SEMINOLE	DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF SEMINOLE COUNTY & DONALSONVILLE	SARAH AVERY
TERRELL	TERRELL COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	SAVANNAH HUGHES
THOMAS	THOMASVILLE & THOMAS COUNTY PAYROLL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	SHELLEY ZORN
TIFT	TIFTON-TIFT COUNTY CHAMBER & DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	BRIAN MARLOWE
WORTH	WORTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	KAREN RACKLEY



## STAFF

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 LocateSouthGeorgia.com

## MAILING ADDRESS

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 Thomasville, GA 31799-1002





# REGIONAL & STATEWIDE MEMBERS

<p><b>AT&amp;T</b></p> <p><b>Gary Sanchez</b> Regional Director of External Affairs</p>	<p><b>ELECTRIC CITIES OF GEORGIA</b></p> <p><b>Daryl Ingram</b> Senior Vice President of External Affairs</p>
<p><b>GEORGIA EMC</b></p> <p><b>Pat Merritt</b> Vice President of Community &amp; Economic Development</p>	<p><b>GEORGIA POWER</b></p> <p><b>Scott Purvis</b> Community &amp; Economic Development Manager</p>
<p><b>VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY</b></p> <p><b>Darrell Moore</b> Center for Regional Impact, Executive Director</p>	<p><b>UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA</b></p> <p><b>Saralyn Stafford</b> Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Rural Development Manager</p>

## + PARTNERS

### GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Michelle Shaw**  
Dir. of Existing Industry & Regional Recruitment

**Tina Herring**  
Region 10 Project Manager

**Anna Hurt**  
Region 8 Project Manager

**Elizabeth McLean**  
Region 11 Project Manager

### GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

**Kelly Lane**  
Region 11 Representative

**Gina Webb**  
Region 10 Representative

### GEORGIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Chris Clark**  
President & CEO

**Tiffany Holmes**  
Regional Director, Tifton

*“At Georgia Power, we believe regionalism is a key component in a community’s overall economic development strategy, and this is why our partnership with Locate South Georgia is a valuable investment. Locate South Georgia’s collaborative model for economic development is one that we hope to see replicated in other regions across the state.”*



**SCOTT PURVIS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | GEORGIA POWER**

LocationGeorgia.com

SUPPORTING GREATNESS.  
DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES.



## Meaningful Connections

When communities work together, anything is possible. That's why we strive to create opportunities for all, connect people to good jobs, advance education and promote the responsible use of our technology.

AT&T is proud to be connected  
to Locate South Georgia.



@ATTpolicyGA

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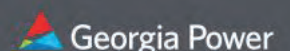
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**We show businesses why their future is brighter in Georgia.**

New jobs have a powerful effect. Every factory or tech firm that opens its doors makes surrounding communities that much stronger. That's why Georgia Power works hard to bring new businesses here, creating over 149,000 new jobs in the last 10 years alone. And showing people across our state more possibilities than ever before. **To see how we're generating opportunity, visit [georgiapower.com/growth](http://georgiapower.com/growth).**



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