



GEORGIA TOURISM Quitman – Brooks County

Georgia Department of Economic Development



Quitman - Brooks Tourism Resource Team

Spring 2010



Bruce Green, director tourism product development, GDEcD

Leslie Breland, cultural tourism specialist, tourism product development, GDEcD

Barry Brown, heritage tourism specialist, tourism product development, GDEcD

Fay Tripp, director state tourism regional representatives, GDEcD

Jeff Stubbs, plantation trace regional tourism representative, GDEcD

Cindy Eidson, manager office of downtown development, GA DCA

Martha Reimann, community development coordinator, GA DCA

Carole Moore, grants coordinator, GA DNR/HPD

Eduard Navarro, architect, city planning, real estate consultant, Sum=, Inc.

Regional representation

Michael Jacobs, preservation planner, Southern GA Regional Commission

Brent Runyon, executive director, Thomasville Landmarks, Inc

Purpose

Tourism Product Development Resource Team Initiative

GOAL: Increase investment in and development of new tourism product and to add depth and breadth to Quitman's visitor experience. Increase Brooks County's tourism product development portfolio to create opportunity to introduce new audiences to Brooks County's amazing variety of sites and attractions.

STRATEGY: To assist community leaders and tourism partners in fostering new tourism product within the county through the delivery of technical assistance and identification of financial resources. To encourage the creation of new opportunities/markets for Brooks County tourism products through strategic partnerships, packaging and marketing.

Tourism Product Development takes on many forms. Community and collaborative product development initiatives are participatory in nature therefore, consensus building is crucial because many projects take a longer time to come to fruition. The department's product development office collaborates with communities, other state agencies and industry stakeholders to achieve product development goals.



Photo courtesy of Lydia Hubert

Tourism as Economic Development

The Power of Travel

How Travel Dollars Support America



Source: US Travel Association

Tourism as Economic Development

Tourism Product Development Resource Team

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries and is essential to a community's economic vitality, sustainability, and profitability. In Georgia, tourism is the state's second most important industry and heritage tourism is its fastest-growing segment.

Georgia is among the top 10 states in the country in heritage tourism visitation. More travelers than ever are walking the historic streets of Savannah . . . visiting the remnants of Native American culture . . . exploring antebellum plantations . . . learning about the Civil Rights Movement . . . and discovering agricultural history around the state.

The historic and cultural resources associated with people, events, or aspects of a community's past give that community its sense of identity and help tell its story. These resources are the most tangible reflections of a community's heritage. History can and should be used as a selling point for a community. The recognition of an area's historic resources can bring about neighborhood revitalization, increased and sustainable tourism, economic development through private investment, and citizenship building. When communities' travel-related entities partner with public or private organizations, the historic, cultural, and natural resources are more effectively promoted to meet the heritage traveler's desire for an integrated and enriching experience.



Product Development

Tourism Product Development Resource Team

Increasingly in rural Georgia tourism is often the preferred economic development strategy within a community, and it plays a significant role in most communities across the state.

Special interest tourism like nature based tourism and heritage tourism create opportunity for communities to identify, package and market their existing assets.

Communities throughout the state have substantial assets that need to be identified and incorporated into their overall economic development efforts. Increased tourism product can translate into local job creation and additional revenue in the form of property tax, bed tax and sales tax. The state ultimately benefits as well from additional revenues.

Limited resources means collaboration among various local groups and agencies is essential to enhancing and developing local tourism product. Additionally, when multiple state agencies work as Team Georgia collaboratively on tourism product development, Georgia wins and the visitor goes away with a unique experience.



Carroll County Georgia

Product Development

New tourism product comes in many forms. At right are two new attractions in Georgia both recipients of the Georgia Department of Economic Development Tourism Product Development Grant.

Marietta Pedicabs

Marietta Pedicabs offer on-demand taxi service around the vibrant Marietta Square and neighboring area. A safe, friendly and comfortable service, these three-wheeled pedal cabs offer charming old-town street vitality and a convenient, comfortable, zero-emission mode of transportation. Pedicabs add excitement to a night out for dinner and a show and offer convenience to something as everyday as a trip to the Marietta Square or the farmer's market. The pedicabs may also be scheduled for special events, such as weddings or corporate outings.



North Georgia Canopy Tours

Experience a heightened perspective on life at North Georgia Canopy Tours! Both Eco-Tours begin “low and slow,” but you’ll soon find yourself zipping at greater heights and speeds through the lush tree canopy. Enjoy a birds-eye view of the North Oconee River, ravines, ponds, pastures, and wildlife. Soar through the air attached to a steel cable—which will soon disappear from your consciousness. Two certified eco-trained guides lead up to eight participants on each Tour, which include ziplines, sky bridges, moderate hikes through a natural beautiful area, and a dual zip over the Hilltop Pond in front of the Tour Observation Deck.



Product Development

Communities can capitalize on their existing assets or create a new event to attract visitors.

Rutledge – Sunflower Farm Festival

In 2001 the eight acres of sunflowers at The Sunflower Farm were in full bloom on the 4th of July. As the annual antique tractor parade, led by Bobby West and comprised of neighbors, was going past the field, it was determined that others should be able to experience this spectacular sight - thus the Sunflower Festival was born. The Sunflower Festival has grown into a much anticipated community and regional event with over 6,000 in attendance. Heritage crafters and artists set up to demonstrate their hand-made items as home-grown music is played, delicious local and traditional 4th of July food is served. Kids participate in games and art projects or take a hay ride in a tractor-drawn wagon. Visitors can "cut their own" sunflower bouquets to take home with them. The 1811 McCowan-McRee house and the 1891 Freeman-Whittaker house are the center of the festival and tours of both houses and their heritage gardens are a must. The backdrop for the unique festival includes artisans and crafters under the canopy of the oak trees and 15 acres of glorious sunflowers.



Photo courtesy of madisonga.org/MorganCountyPhotos.htm

Product Development

Douglasville Penny McHenry Hydrangea Festival

Presented by Douglas County and Historic Douglasville, GA the festival honors Penny McHenry, founder of the American Hydrangea Society, who has been featured on TV Shows and too many magazines to mention. Her love for hydrangeas grew as a result of someone sending her a hydrangea when she lost her daughter. She propagated that hydrangea and the rest is history. This great honor was well deserved as Penny shared her love and knowledge of hydrangeas with so many. Penny passed away in the spring of 2006, and in honor and tribute to Penny, her family has given the Douglas County Tourism and History Commission permission to use her name in conjunction with the festival. Just the use of her name elevates the legitimacy of our festival to a higher level. The July 2006 issue of Southern Living Magazine pays tribute to Penny as well.



*Photo courtesy of
pennymchrydrangeafestival.com/Photos.html*

Team Recommendations

Historic Preservation
Cultural Tourism
Tourism Policy
Tourism Planning
Downtown Development
Marketing



Historic Preservation

Recommendations for Quitman/Brooks County Step 1—Continue to Identify, Recognize & Protect Quitman's Historic Resources through the Survey, National Register & Centennial Farm Programs

In the handbook--Under Step 1—Identify Your Assets & Resources--pages 21-22; Preserve & Protect Your Resources, page 25 Step 2-- Plan and Organize, page 16 and 42-43; Step 3--Foster a Preservation Ethic, page 25; (see also HPD's N.R. PowerPoint for slide/image ideas)

Survey

Identifying historic properties through surveys is an essential first step in a community's preservation efforts and facilitates wise decisions about preserving individual buildings and neighborhoods. The 1981 survey of Brooks County was updated in 2004 with a new survey, but included only the unincorporated portion of the county. We recommend that a new historic resources survey of the City of Quitman be undertaken.



Historic Preservation

Recommendations for Quitman/Brooks County National Register of Historic Places

Brooks County currently has six properties listed in the National Register, 5 individually and one large district. There are many more properties located in Brooks County that appear to be eligible for listing, such as the Liberty Baptist Church in the Grooverville community and many historic schools scattered throughout the county.

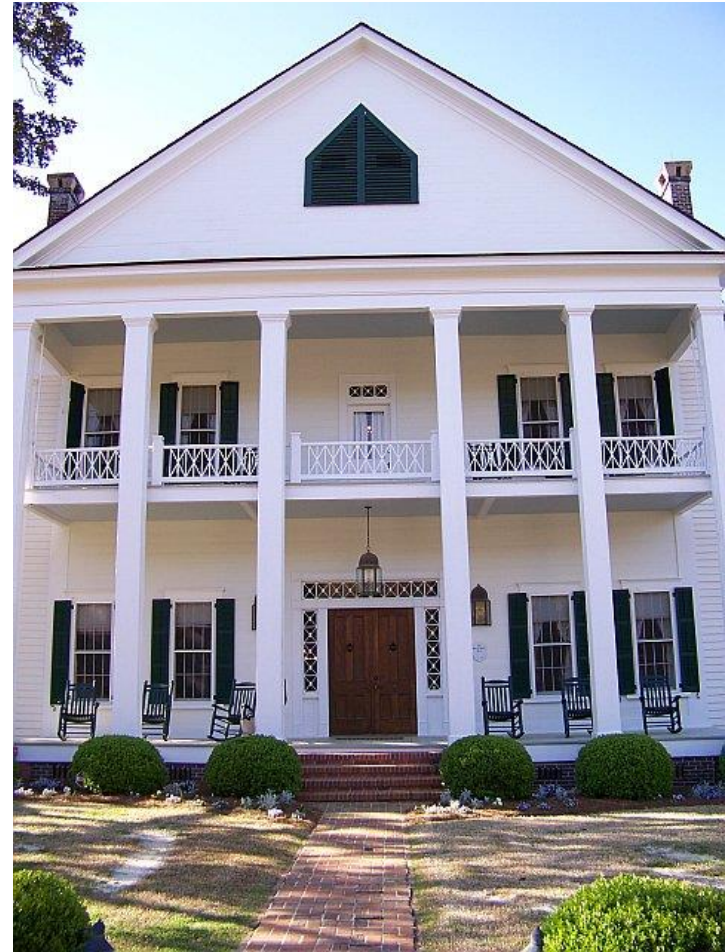
The National Register is our country's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation and is maintained by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Currently, more than 74,000 historic buildings, structures, sites, and objects in Georgia are listed in the National Register.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) nominates eligible properties in Georgia to the National Register so they can receive preservation benefits and incentives. Being listed in the National Register helps preserve historic properties. It provides formal recognition of a property's historical, architectural, or archaeological significance based on national standards used in every state. National Register designation identifies significant historic properties that can be taken into account in a broad range of preservation and development activities. It also ensures that these properties will be considered in the planning of state or federally assisted projects.



Properties listed in the National Register may qualify for specific preservation benefits and incentives, including:

- State and federal preservation grants for planning and rehabilitation (HPD grants & tax incentive program)
- Preservation easements to nonprofit organizations
- Local property tax abatements
- Fire and life safety code compliance alternatives
- Reviewing permits for surface mining

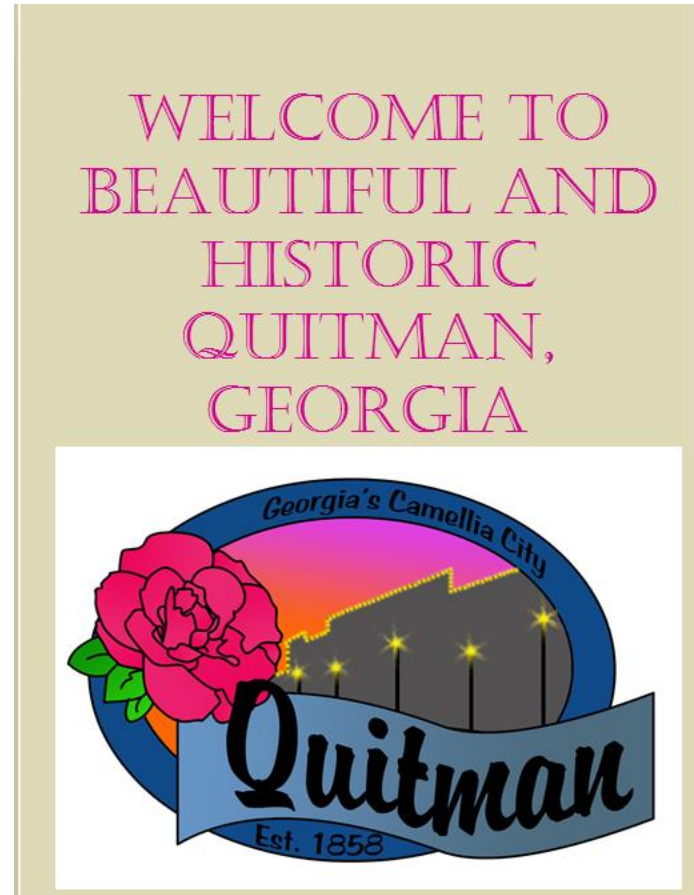


Historic Preservation

Recommendations for Quitman/Brooks County

Step 2- Become a Certified Local Government

To more fully protect Quitman/Brooks County's historic places for future generations, you have to take responsibility as a community and act locally. One of the best ways to do this is to become a federally designated Certified Local Government (or CLG). Adopting a local preservation ordinance, appointing a preservation commission, and designating local historic districts can help you protect the historic character of Quitman's buildings, neighborhoods and landmarks from inappropriate alterations, incompatible new construction, as well as outright demolition.



www.cityofquitmanga.com

Historic Preservation

Pass a historic preservation ordinance:

The state of Georgia has a model historic preservation ordinance that any city or county can adopt, based on the provisions in the Georgia Historic Preservation Act. An ordinance will protect historic properties and districts by requiring that any material change in appearance get permission from the Historic Preservation Commission.

The purpose and benefits of having a historic preservation ordinance are spelled out in the Georgia Historic Act with a model ordinance:

Because our heritage is valuable and its preservation is essential to our citizens' quality of life,

Because we want to invigorate our historic neighborhoods and downtown to draw tourists, attract and retain businesses, to educate property owners on the financial benefits of good rehabilitation, and to protect the investment we've made in our historic properties.



Historic Preservation

Appoint a historic preservation commission

Consisting of volunteers who have an interest and knowledge in historic preservation. In Georgia, historic preservation commissions are authorized to:

- Seek out state and federal funds for historic preservation
- Restore or preserve any historic properties acquired by the city or county
- Conduct educational programs on local historic properties
- Recommend to the local governing body specific places to be designated as historic properties or historic district
- Review property owner's changes to designated properties and approve or deny permission for those changes
- Encourage enforcement of existing protective codes

Recommendations for Quitman/Brooks County

Maintain a system for survey and inventory of historic properties ...

...that furthers the purpose of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Provide for adequate public participation in the local historic preservation program...

...including the process of recommending properties for nomination of the National Register of Historic Places. A CLG participates directly in the National Register of Historic Places program by reviewing local nominations prior to their consideration by the Georgia National Register Review Board.



Historic Preservation

Step 3--Use Available Preservation Tools—Grants & Tax Incentives

- Both National Register listing and Certified Local Government (CLG) designation can open the door for many preservation tools, including those provided through the Historic Preservation Division (HPD), such as **grants** and **preservation tax incentives** at the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- HPD staff would be available to conduct a tax incentives workshop for Quitman, which could also include a grants presentation. All HPD-administered grant and tax program applications can be accessed on the HPD website at www.gashpo.org.



Historic Preservation

Grants--Historic Preservation Division Historic Preservation Fund Grant Program

Historic Preservation Fund grants are federally funded grants designated specifically for Certified Local Governments. Although these are small, non bricks-and-mortar grants, they can have a significant impact on preservation, heritage tourism and economic development within your community.

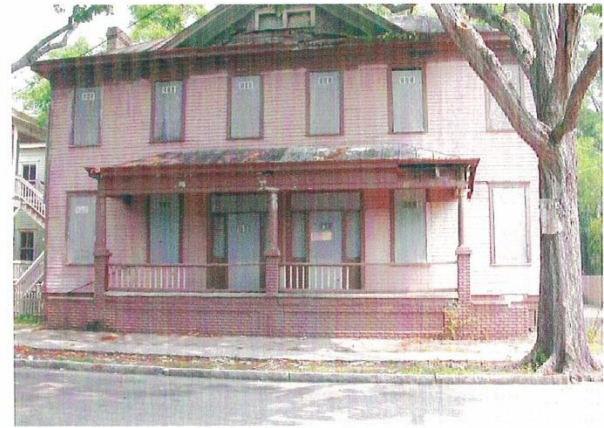
Typical projects include walking/driving tour brochures of historic districts; website development; National Register nominations; preservation plans or historic structure reports for individual historic properties such as the Brooks County Courthouse or the Historic Walker Street School; surveys or preservation plans for historic cemeteries such as Historic West End in Quitman; design guidelines for Quitman's residential and commercial districts; and training or educational workshops.



Historic Preservation

Georgia Heritage Grant Program

- Georgia Heritage Grants are state-funded and are HPD's only brick-and-mortar grants. Only local governments and non-profit groups are eligible to apply. The historic property benefiting from the grant award must be eligible for or already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Although grant awards are small, averaging about \$10,000 in the current economic climate, the funds can help with roof repair or replacement, window repair, foundation stabilization, or brick repair and repointing.
- Pre brick-and-mortar (called predevelopment) projects include preservation plans, construction drawings, feasibility studies, and historic structure reports. Possible projects in Quitman for both predevelopment and bricks-and-mortar could include the Historic Walker Street School, the historic Brooks County jail, or the cemetery. Currently this grant program is being funded only through the sale of the historic preservation license plate.



Historic Preservation

Federal and State Tax Incentives

- HPD administers federal and state tax incentive programs to help defray the cost of historic rehabilitation. Quitman has a wonderful array of historic commercial and residential buildings which would be eligible for these programs available for both income-producing and residential properties.
- The three programs are:
- Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit
- Georgia Preferential Property Tax Assessment
- Georgia State Income Tax Credit

Historic Preservation

Georgia Preferential Property Tax Assessment Program

Freezes the property tax assessment for over eight years at before the rehab rate. Property tax is still paid, but not increased.

The rehab must increase the Fair Market Value of the building by 100% if income-producing, and by 50% if a personal residence. Tax advantage is transferable to new owners and is available for both income producing and residential properties.



Photo courtesy of Jeff Stubbs

Historic Preservation

Georgia State Income Tax Credit

- 25% of the qualifying rehabilitation expenses can be taken as a credit off state income tax.
- The credit is capped at **\$100,000** for personal residential rehabilitation and **\$300,000** for income-producing commercial properties, including rental homes.
- This is a credit, not a deduction, \$=\$
- Must increase the adjusted basis of an income-producing building by 100%, or by 50% for a principal residence



Photo courtesy of Jeff Stubbs

Historic Preservation

Federal Income Tax Credit

- 20% of qualifying rehab expenses with no maximum cap, as a federal income tax credit
- Rehabilitation cost must exceed the adjusted basis of the property (the value of the building minus the land) by 100%
- The property must be income producing, not a personal residence. Residential rentals *do* qualify.



Georgia Centennial Farm Program

Because self-sustaining farms were the very basis upon which Georgia was founded, our farms have written much of Georgia's history and continue to be a major factor in our state's economic growth. Brooks County contains many historic farms.

The Georgia Centennial Farm Program was developed in 1992 to recognize these farms and farm families who have contributed to preserving Georgia's agricultural resources and to encourage the continued use of these farms for future generations. By honoring centennial farms, HPD's goal is to not only promote agricultural awareness but to gain a deeper understanding of our state's unique agricultural heritage. The Georgia Centennial Farm Program encourages Georgia's residents to save and recognize farms that have contributed to Georgia's agricultural heritage for 100 years or more. HPD encourages Brooks County residents to continue to nominate eligible farms for this program. Recognition is given to farmers through one of three distinguishing awards:



Georgia Centennial Farm Program

The **Centennial Heritage Farm Award** honors farms owned by members of the same family for 100 years or more and are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The **Centennial Farm Award** does not require continual family ownership, but farms must be at least 100 years old and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The **Centennial Family Farm Award** recognizes farms owned by members of the same family for 100 years or more that are *not* listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Historic Preservation

Brooks County Centennial Farms

1993 Centennial Family Farms

Bluepond Plantation, Quitman vicinity

1994 Centennial Farms

Eudora Plantation, Quitman vicinity

1994 Centennial Family Farms

John Rountree & Emma Jane Rountree Farm, Morven vicinity

1995 Centennial Family Farms

Mack J. Bowen Jr. Farm, Quitman vicinity

1996 Centennial Family Farms

Radford Farm, Quitman vicinity

1998 Centennial Family Farms

Lawson Farm, Morven vicinity

1999 Centennial Family Farms

Devane Farms, Barney vicinity

2000 Centennial Family Farms

James and Mary Jean Rizer Farm

2002 Centennial Family Farms

Harley Patrick Farm, Quitman

L H. Copeland Farm, Pavo

Piscola Creeks Farm, Quitman

2006 Centennial Family Farms

Ernest Moore Farm, Dixie vicinity

HERITAGE TOURISM

Quitman - the classic railroad town and southern county Seat

Approximately equidistance between Valdosta and Thomasville, the site for Quitman was chosen shortly after the creation of Brooks County in 1858. The act creating the town required that, as county seat, it be located within four miles of the center of the county. For this reason, Quitman, unlike many southern railroad towns, is not located directly on the line of the railroads intersection that was laid-out before the town's existence.

Surveyor Jeremiah Smith was contracted to survey and plat the town site and did so in a classic gridiron pattern and is geographically centered on a survey marker on the courthouse Square. Wilson surveyed the lines and determined the acreage of lots. Business lots were 40'x140' while residential lots were of varying size. The lots were auctioned to the highest bidder and construction of the town soon began and would continue through the early 20th century.

Quitman: the classic railroad town and southern county seat

Starting in 1974 Brooks County properties were placed on the National Register of Historic Places, culminating in the Quitman Historic District's inclusion in 1982. The Quitman Historic District contains the contiguous architecturally and historically significant residential, commercial, industrial and institutional properties within the city of Quitman. Significant properties include the commercial center on U.S. Highway 84 consisting of late 19th and early 20th century Italianate brick buildings, the courthouse, and contiguous residential sections consisting of a variety of types, styles and periods of homes. The Quitman Historic District Properties are located within a circular two-mile diameter city limit and are surrounded by more modern development.



Preserve and Protect Your Resources: Fostering a Preservation Ethic

Identify historic and archaeological resources:

- Courthouse
- Cemeteries (West End)
- National Register Historic District and individual National Register listings.
- African-American History
- Historic Trails (Coffee Road)
- Civil War Heritage
- Centennial Farms
- Churches



Historic Preservation

First Six months

- Protect Quitman's Historic Resources through utilization of the historic properties inventory;
- National Register – provide educational seminars on federal and state rehab tax credits and property tax abatements
- State and Federal dollars – apply for grant programs
- Local Historic District – seminars on advantages and opportunities of a local historic district
- Centennial Farm - continue nominations as eligibility arises

Second Six Months

- Adopt an historic preservation ordinance - work with HPD/DNR
- Appoint Preservation Commission

Third Six Months

- Apply for CLG grants
- Continue advocacy of historic preservation

Cultural Tourism

Continue to identify, recognize & protect Quitman and Brooks County's cultural resources

Refer to the Georgia Heritage Tourism Handbook on methodology for:

Protecting and restoring: historic homes & neighborhoods; landmark businesses & restaurants; schools & churches; and cemeteries & statues

Quitman qualities and cultural assets - Potential for consideration; packaging and marketing:

- Quitman's rich landscape background
- Camellias – history of Betty Sheffield
- Historic buildings
- Beautiful homes and gardens
- Plantations for hunting and fishing
- Horses/riding academies/walking horses
- Walk-able downtown with a town square feel
- Landscaped medians/streetscapes
- Old churches and cemeteries



Cultural Tourism

Quitman qualities and cultural assets to be considered – packaged and marketed:

Ethnic Community - Black; Hispanic

Beulah Baptist Church - Quilters Guild

Quitman Laundry – unused storefronts– could be art incubator

Quitman United Methodist Church

North Court Street – Neil Reid

Historic Walker Street School

Jail (1884)

Presbyterian Home & Retirement Community

West End Cemetery – African American section unmarked

Henry Gray Turner House (Nocturne) ca.1860 - gardens

Oglethorpe Trail

Morton Bray Plantation

Old Spanish Trail and Old Madison Hwy

“Hopes & Dreams” riding facility

Centennial Farms

Sea Pond Plantation ca.1848

Hickory Head Church & Cemetery

Hwy 221 – Scenic Hwy

Hickory Head Plantation 1840's Greek Revival, John Wynn



Cultural Tourism

The team suggests:

- Choose a theme for the communities' annual festivals and stay with it: It takes at least five years to build recognition.
Examples Quitman – Camellia Festival
Partner with the Azalea Festival – Valdosta & Rose Festival – Thomasville
“Jingle Bells” Festival – partner with Valdosta
Morven and Barney – Peach Festival
Dixie – “Flame Azalea” Festival
Pavo – The Peacock Festival
- Choose potential plantation sites and in town houses and gardens for an annual *Signature Tour of Homes*.
- Select a special garden for a fund raising garden party.
- Work with local farmers and producers to develop an Agritourism signature event.
- Work with local merchants to encourage the inclusion of appropriate merchandise in their stores such as camellia themed merchandise.
- Develop a city-wide image building signage program



Spirit of Brooks County

Tourism born of ***Admiration*** for a place and ***Curiosity*** for its People



Spirit of Brooks County

Cultural Tourism

CUISINE - PEOPLE

Two of Brooks County's greatest resources: Cuisine and People.

Brooks County retains the magic of a bygone era with all the necessary contemporary and vanguard accoutrements.



Imagine a county whose unspoiled magic has by chance survived the suburbanizing tendencies of the latter twentieth century. To some forgotten, to other's maybe never even there, Brooks County has thus quietly preserved not only the environments of a time gone by, but has brought to flower clear into the 21st Century, the sweet flavor, dynamism, and optimism for the future of a Southern ideal.

In its people lies the greatest treasure that Brooks County holds. For it is in its people that a distinct and rich flavor lives undiminished. This is what the world will travel far and wide to see, a Southern Grace.



Spirit of Brooks County

Cultural Tourism

Architecture

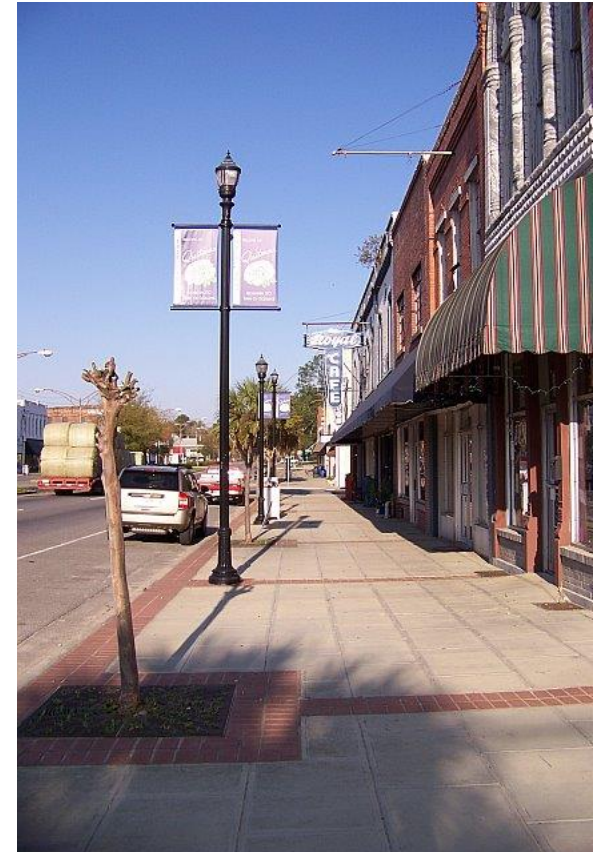
Buildings have the power not only to shelter but to represent a people. Building upon Quitman's and Brooks County's important stock of vernacular architecture, Brooks County must look to the future in how new buildings are designed and where they are placed. Innovative architecture can complement historic structures to add a generational signature and layer from the current time period. The maintenance of the quality of existing building stock coupled with conscious raising architectural city tours and publicity of singular buildings can differentiate Brooks County as a cultural destination.

City Planning & Urbanism

Streets, parks, plazas and other public gathering places, when thought of as extensions of one's own living room and designed and cared for in similar ways, allow for an added dimension to the city. Not only are residents emboldened to utilize these spaces, but the people activity that these uses generate adds attraction to the visitor. Almost like visiting an empty restaurant, if there aren't any people on the street, one is hard pressed to stop and stay a while. One must ensure that it is convenient to walk from store to store, pleasant to sit in a street cafe, and easily reach one's hotel from the evening outing or stroll.

Culture & Symbols

Culture embodies representation much further than fine art. The local cuisine, circadian rhythms of daily life, local music, festivals, folk stories, sayings, local accents, or miscellaneous peculiarities all form part of those things that might seem commonplace to residents and may fascinate outsiders.



Spirit of Brooks County

Cultural Tourism



Envision

...a Georgia county that unsuspectingly is at the cutting-edge of historic and ecological management and preservation; at the cutting-edge of arts and culture, including urbanism and architecture; at the cutting-edge of a differentiated way of looking at itself, its Southern lineage and position; at the cutting-edge of history. Brooks County can be such a county.

Brooks County presents the potential to not only follow the footsteps of traditional industry development, but to surpass them; learn from the mistakes of others and outrun them, to thereafter lead a renovated way of harnessing the built and natural environment, culture, and way of life.

Brooks County, once the Granary of the South and land of innovation, can be such a county again.

To begin, envision a tourism industry that is born, not of commonplace or trivial entertainment, but of admiration for a place and a curiosity for its people and its way of life. It is an “authentic” Brooks county tourism strategy and plan that will have the greatest sustained success and complement the lives of the citizens of Brooks County. To begin, Brooks County must simply prepare to open its doors and let the world know its there.



HISTORY - NATURE

Steeped in historic tradition, Quitman, the county seat of Brooks County, presents many a handsome building.

This Architecture is complemented by the most luxurious of natural landscapes; from wide open fields, to canopy covered roads of live oaks and Spanish Moss.

Spirit of Brooks County

Tourism Leadership



First Steps - 6 Months

Identify and Empower a Brooks County Tourism Leadership Team

To carry out the functions of creating and implementing a long range tourism economic development plan for Quitman – Brooks County, the first step is to create a **local tourism board**, (pursuant to OCGA 48-13-51 et seq) that will guide the industry development process through: creating initial reports and studies, retaining consultants, contacting and working with appropriate state agencies and overseeing the implementation of created plans. According to the 2008 US Travel Association report on tourism in Georgia, Brooks County currently generates \$8.25 million from tourism related expenditures.

Identify and Enumerate Underutilized Tourism Resources

Beginning with the report and strategy presented by the State's Tourism Development Resource Team, the next and most significant step involves the dissemination of the visual inventory or catalogue of existing historic resources including the buildings: when they were built, by whom and for whom and what original purpose. The inventory/catalogue, which already exists at the Quitman - Brooks County Museum and Cultural Center will serve as the base from which to develop walking tours, history tours, etc.

The first steps of urbanism and community planning are the analysis of existing conditions, visioning plans, and scale comparisons of buildings (relevant to their surrounding environment) to give Brooks County residents the necessary knowledge by which to make educated and sophisticated choices about the built environment growth of the county.

Create a County Wide Strategic Tourism Plan

The next step will be the formalization of a strategic plan. Having identified not only the physical resources of Brooks County but also its human resources, its people, the tourism board leadership will need to set formal projects and deadlines, starting with the tangible goals presented in the following sections.

Spirit of Brooks County

Tourism Leadership



Apprise and Empower

The final step in setting up for continued tourism industry management will be to apprise and empower the city's and county's leadership and citizens to undertake and carry out the plan. This can be achieved through the recurrent presentation of findings and a continuous physical presence of efforts in public places and community publications.

Goals - 12 to 18 Months

County Master Plan – Innovation

The Georgia Beautiful movement recommends the creation of a County and City Master Plan that looks beyond the status quo to provide a healthy and sustained discussion of boundaries. Boundaries are one of the primary tools available to both separate and connect and include the primary resource to fight sprawl and the subsequent damaging of Quitman's vibrant city center. A good master plan will allow for new and old architecture to coexist and go far beyond land use guides to give detailed visual mockups of streetscapes, urban furniture, materials, and transportation infrastructures. The conclusion of the master plan process would culminate in: 1) the adoption of an innovative "zoning" ordinance giving preference to procedural permitting based on volume and liberty of use, and 2) a breakdown of "bite-size" partial plans to implement the total plan.

City Urban Redevelopment Plan

The city should consider amending the current urban redevelopment plan with a heritage and cultural tourism component. DCA and GDEcD staff can assist.



LEADERSHIP - YOUTH

Building upon generational legacy, Quitman manifests an ability to retain its youth. Pictured above, Nickki Bradley (center) of Quitman's City Council speaks with Lauren Basford and Jack McCard, two leaders within the community.

Spirit of Brooks County

Tourism Planning

AGRICULTURE- NIGHTLIFE

Brooks County presents a widely diverse mix of ambiances and activities. From organic agricultural products to those mostly consumed during night outings, Brooks County has it all.

Thompson farms pictured to the right is the last bastion of one of Brooks County's great historical industries: Hog farming. Wiregrass Restaurant, Quitman.

Agritourism & Rural Conservation Plan

This component plan will supplement the master plan with the identification and marking of bicycle paths, hiking trails, and any other use plans of Brooks County's extensive natural resources including the protection and cataloguing of canopy roads as natural monuments and streetscapes. The conclusion of this partial plan is the buttressing of Agritourism through a planning of natural urbanism and connection routes.

Public - Private Infrastructural Investment Plans

By providing private investors with county initiated master development plans for infrastructure components, the tourism board will be able to fast-track these components. The tourism board can serve both as resource and active promoter in identifying interested parties and gain reputation as the go-to place to coordinate public and private resources in the creation of projects that are positive for Brooks County tourism. These development master plans can include pro-forma analysis, market studies, site locations, etc.



Spirit of Brooks County

Planning for Tourism

Public Buildings Plan

Complementing the county master plan and city urban redevelopment area plan, a public facilities plan will empower Brooks County to make sophisticated decisions about the location and architecture of public buildings. Building upon a history of elegant and centralized public buildings, such as the County Courthouse that anchors the central intersection of Brooks County, it is imperative that public buildings be located within walking distance if not at the center of population centers. This decision positively affects the ongoing cost of transportation and ensures the lively interaction of city infrastructure and its residents and inure to the benefit of maintaining a vibrant and thereby attractive city center. If in addition public buildings are innovative in architecture, they themselves easily become tourism attractions of their own right and markers of the county's identity and ongoing spirit. The conclusion of the public buildings plan is the fostering of a lively discussion about city architecture, its qualities, and its appropriation, as in the case of the courthouse, a representative symbol of the community.

GENERATIONS

Brooks County continues building upon the past with eyes fixed upon the future.

Cemeteries, churches, a jail house, a complex mix of buildings and use types evokes the memory of a proud and complete community that was self reliant; holding innovation at its heart while paying respect to its past.



Spirit of Brooks County

Planning for Tourism

Mapping and Connecting Tourism Sites and Routes

First Six Months

- Create a comprehensive tourism attraction and scenic corridor map for visitors indicating locations that are publically accessible.
- Identify, map out, connect and protect potential tourism product sites and scenic driving routes both within Quitman and Brooks County.
- Look at proximity, patterns and isolation levels of potential tourism sites to assess potential visitation and set priorities.
- Mark and label all tourism attractions on GIS base maps provided by DCA and return to DCA for GIS digitization.
- Identify and designate State Scenic Byways through GDOT's program.
- Schedule preliminary Scenic Byway site visit and driving tour. Invite both GDOT and Tourism Resource Team members.
- Review Corridor Management Plans done for other byways and determine who would produce one for Brooks Co.

Second Six Months

- Prepare Corridor Management Plan and submit for GDOT review.
- Submit Application to GDOT for review and admission to the program.

Third Six Months

- Develop a way finding signage system for visitors.
- Supplement state Scenic Byways with officially designated secondary network of branded Brooks - Quitman Heritage Driving Routes.
- Capture the "Heritage Dirt Road" concept. Work with local and regional reps to develop related tours and attractions.

Spirit of Brooks County

Planning for Tourism



Codify the Community's Vision for Tourism within Development Regulations and Ordinances

(See Cultural Heritage Tourism Form Based Code and other sample ordinances in Appendix.)

First Six Months

Review existing land development codes and ordinances to determine whether they will preserve and enhance the City and County's tourism product sites and corridors, and whether they have any features that impede or complicate implementation of tourism goals, especially in commercial and adaptive reuse areas.

Schedule a meeting involving local Preservation, Zoning and Community Development staff and relevant Tourism Team Members for an orientation on GDEcD's Cultural and Heritage Tourism District Ordinance. Include a discussion of how that might work in concert with other preservation and historic district tools.

Make sure city and county sign ordinances are adequate to support tourism product development. If not, impose a one year moratorium on off premise advertizing signage to allow code revisions.

Second Six Months.

Collect sample ordinances from other cities and counties that permit lofts and live-work units, sidewalk dining, licensed street musicians, and sidewalk vending permits for artists.

Investigate cottage zoning with multiple freestanding homes on shared lots, etc.

Estimate and determine funding source to pay for comprehensive codes update.
Issue an RFP for development code revisions.

Third Six Months

Agree on consultant work scope and fee and start on revisions. Determine who will review and direct the consultant's work. Select qualified firm.

Spirit of Brooks County

Planning for Tourism

Tourism-based Job Creation and Entrepreneur Support

First Six Months

Update the city's existing Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) plan to incorporate a specific tourism component and expand URA boundaries to include downtown Quitman and other potential Tourism Product Development Sites.

Contact DCA for information on this statutory tool.

Second Six Months

Make application to the State's Opportunity Zone Program to provide expanded job tax credits to new and expanding businesses in targeted tourism areas (*see resources section*).

Third Six Months:

Explore the idea of a local Enterprise Zone with community stakeholders.

Expand local access to microloans and business start up planning technical assistance.

Work with local and regional banks to expand access to business start up capital.

Spirit of Brooks County

Planning for Tourism



Agritourism: Build on the County's Rich Agricultural Heritage - Expanding Family Farm Revenue Sources

First Six months

Work with Farm Bureau and USDA to create an Agritourism advisory group made up of farmers and agribusiness owners to provide realistic input on the community's Agritourism opportunities and initiatives.
Take farmers and community development stakeholders on a field trip to McMinnville, Tennessee to study the economic impact and marketing strategies of a successful container nursery industry cluster.

Second Six Months

Designate, and begin to develop and market a *Horticultural Heritage Corridor* bringing Agritourism products to a centralized location and showcasing "green".

Components might include:

- An expanded tourist friendly farmers market site

- Accessible centralized showcase for more scattered or remote Agritourism attractions

- Specialty Nursery Businesses (Camellias, heritage produce, daylilies, native plants, wildlife habitat and birding plants and supplies)

- An FDA Approved Community Kitchen for small businesses wishing to package and market family recipe food items and local delicacies

- Demonstration Organic Greenhouses, a food co-op and free community garden plots (raised beds on vacant parking lot)

- Horticulture and floriculture-related training facilities expanded in partnership with Wiregrass Tech reorganization.

- Art market and outdoor performance space to showcase local musicians and artists...

Third Six Months:

Begin planning to create a Summer Ag Camp to educate urban youth and other tourists on farming and where their food comes from.

Downtown Development

Office of Downtown Development Department of Community Affairs Recommendations for Quitman - Brooks

Downtown Quitman

Refer to the Heritage Tourism Handbook-- page 9 shows the Economic Benefits of Heritage Tourism and how it promotes economic and civic vitality within your region. One of the most important resources for Quitman/Brooks County is your historic downtown.

Downtown development has proven to be an essential part of a community's overall economic development strategy. It can be argued that a healthy and vibrant city or town center is one of the most important elements of an effective economic development program. Even if people do not live in the city-proper, polls have shown that people identify with their nearest city or town and view it as their hometown. These same polls have shown overwhelmingly that people value a safe, vibrant and healthy downtown.



Downtown Development

Downtown Quitman

The downtown area of a city is often the largest employer in a city or it is almost always in the top three! The collection of retail, office, governmental and service workers located in downtown can be from the low hundreds in a small town to over a thousand in a larger city. And these jobs are by their very nature diversified, so that most downtowns remain a strong and flexible employment center.

Downtown is also critical in the development of classic and cultural tourism. Studies have shown that small towns and historic places are second only to beaches in terms of the most desirable places to visit, and a city's downtown and surrounding neighborhoods are the embodiment of the history and culture of a community.

Downtown is also a ready-made business incubator, particularly for small service-based businesses that need limited space at an affordable rate. And since 80% of all workers are employed in small businesses across America, downtowns continue to provide reasonable space for the emerging small businesses that form the backbone of the American economy.

Downtown Development

Finally, investing in downtown development has returned some significant dividends statewide. Since 1980, in the approximately 100 Georgia Better Hometown and Main Street Cities, 9,900 net new businesses and over 47,000 net new jobs have been created (in cities under 50,000 in population) for a total public and private sector investment of over \$2.6 Billion! That is reason enough for city leaders to continue to nurture the heart and soul of their city – its downtown.



Photo courtesy of Jeff Stubbs

STEP 1: Develop an Economic Strategy for Downtown Quitman

(page 41 of The Heritage Tourism Guide Book – Outline an Enhancement Strategy and Develop a Plan)

- Develop an economic development strategy by bringing together key members of the community, representing both the public and private sectors to discuss downtown revitalization. Ideas and information gathered should then become part of the economic element of your overall comprehensive revitalization plan for your downtown. Participants in the process should have knowledge of: (1) the essentials of downtown development, (2) the “players” that can assist and support a community’s strategy, (3) the tools that are available to assist with economic development projects (4) a managed downtown program and working board.
- The three essentials of development are leadership development, community development and economic development.
- The players may include bankers, educators, attorneys, existing business representatives, local, regional and statewide economic development professionals, regional development centers, state agencies and others.
- The tools include, but are not limited to, downtown development authorities, development authorities, financing programs, quality growth principles, incentives, hotel/motel taxes, city business improvement districts, tax increment financing, infrastructure, affordable workforce housing, education and workforce training programs, business retention initiatives, entrepreneurial development programs and publicly owned available land or buildings.
- Create a staffed Downtown Development Office with a working Board of Directors.

STEP 2: Create a Staffed Downtown Development Office

- Create the necessary public and private support to hire a downtown development manager with an adequate operating budget to facilitate and manage your downtown revitalization efforts. For cities under 5,000 in population, a part-time (20 hrs/wk) manager is adequate for the initial phases of the effort. For cities over 5,000 in population, a full-time manager is essential and recommended. Make certain that a public/private board or DDA oversees the downtown revitalization program and that your efforts are grounded in a comprehensive work plan and a managed approach.

The Manager's role:

- The Manager serves as the Coordinator, Facilitator, Motivator and even Instigator for the local Program.
- The Manager is responsible for day-to-day activities and manages program volunteers and staff.
- The Manager provides a communication link between the local agencies, businesses, government and citizens. Like a shopping center manager, the local Manager initiates and coordinates a wide range of projects, from supervising promotional activities to assembling market information. The Manager works with a volunteer board and four working committees composed of residents, business owners, property owners and city/county officials/staff.
- The local Manager's most important role is to serve as advocate for downtown.
- The local Manager's duties evolve as the program's goals and opportunities change, but the Manager's focus is always on downtown.
- The local Manager is very important - and should not take the place of volunteers in the organization.
- The Manager along with the local board of directors develops an action plan, based on the goals addressed during a community-wide meeting. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Office of Downtown Development Regional Contact can assist with setting up this community-wide meeting.

The Manager's role (continued)

- The Manager assists individual tenants and property owners with physical improvement projects (storefront rehabilitation's) by :
 - Personal consultation, involving the Department of Community Affairs' Office of Downtown Design Services.
 - Assisting in locating appropriate contractors and materials.
 - When possible, actually participate in construction supervision.
 - Providing advice on possible financial mechanisms.
- The Manager works closely with city, county, regional, state, federal, public and private officials and representatives.
- The Manager works with the regional entities including regional development centers and with community volunteers to develop or administer applications for federal and state grant programs, to participate in relevant state programs and to provide a contact point for receiving technical assistance for the local community.

The Manager's role (continued)

- The Manager becomes familiar with all persons and entities in or affecting the downtown area.
- The local Manager coordinates all project activities locally, and is also a part of a statewide network of professionals working to find ways to revitalize the Central Business Districts. Successful techniques, methodology and information are shared with other communities.
- The Manager serves as primary media contact for the program.
- The Manager provides advice and information on successful downtown management and encourages cooperation between downtown interests and local public officials.
- The Manager advises downtown merchants and assists in the coordination of joint promotional events such as seasonal festivals, sidewalk sales, etc., with the goal of improving the quality and excitement of events to attract people downtown: work closely with the local media to ensure maximum coverage of the events; encourage design excellence in all aspects of promotion in order to advance the image of a quality downtown.
- The Manager should collect monthly data relating to new businesses, jobs, volunteer hours, public/private investment and building rehabilitations.
- Remember that economic development is a process, not an event. You must work to ensure that your community has an understanding of the 4 areas essential to developing a sustainable economic development program for your downtown. Without a plan that has the buy-in of all of your citizens, players and partners, you cannot sustain a viable economic development initiative for your downtown.

STEP 3: Create a Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

By State statute, every city in Georgia has the authorization to create a downtown development authority by city council action. All that is required is a resolution from council to declare the need for the authority, appoint authority members and establish reasonable downtown development boundaries to activate the authority.

Downtown Quitman needs a lead organization to run the downtown efforts. Setting up a Downtown Development Authority can prove to be the best tool for managing your downtown's revitalizing efforts. The Downtown Development Authority's (DDA's) purpose is to revitalize and redevelop the downtown's central business district.

The DDA is a tool to develop and promote for the public good and general welfare trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities as well as promote the general welfare of this state by creating a climate favorable to the location of new industry, trade and commerce.

The Powers of a DDA are:

- Make & execute contracts and other agreements
- To purchase and own property
- Finance projects: by loan, grant, lease or otherwise and by using revenue bonds or other obligations of authority
- To borrow money
- Apply for/receive government monies
- Receive and use city tax monies
- Employ an Executive Director
- Exercise any power of public or private corporations under state law
- To Sue/be Sued

Please see the document "Steps for Creating a Downtown Development Authority" and "Updated DDA Law" for details regarding DDA's. Once the DDA is created, the board members must attend 8 hours of certified training either through GMA or through a Private Consultant – please contact the Office of Downtown Development for information (404) 679-3101.

Step 4: Use Available Downtown Tools – Financing Programs

(page 41 of The Heritage Tourism Guide Book – Develop Financing)

- Looking for ideas regarding funding for setting-up a downtown managed program, please review the document “GA Network Salary Benefits and Funding Results”.

Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF)

- The DDRLF is designed to assist non-entitlement cities and counties (<50K population) in implementing quality downtown development projects. Applicants and eligible sub-recipients must have a viable downtown development project and clearly identify the proposed uses of the loan proceeds. This program has a unique relationship with the Georgia Cities Foundation, a non-profit subsidiary of the Georgia Municipal Association that also provides low-interest loans to developers interested in investing in downtowns around the state. Loan amounts will not exceed \$250,000 per project.

Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan Fund Program

- Communities needing financial assistance in their efforts to revitalize and enhance their downtown areas can go through an application process which will determine if a city is eligible for funding to the extent funds are available. Loan amounts will not exceed \$250,000 per project. Interest rate is below market rate and generally repayment period should not exceed 15 years.

Low Interest Loan Pool

- The Low Interest Loan Pool is another financial incentive that is used to generate rehabilitation in the downtown area. A loan pool is used to make capital available to downtown property owners and business owners for projects such as façade improvements, building renovations and sign improvements. Loan pools have been used to stimulate the rehab of large scale building projects and help fund the relocation or start-up of certain types of businesses. The loan usually covers only a portion of the project total, which results in possible new customers for the lending institutions that participate. A loan pool helps the bank to satisfy the requirements of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) and it becomes a good public relations tool as well. Loan Pools may be structured in several ways and the size of the loan varies.

Transportation Enhancement Act Funds (TEA)

- The Transportation Enhancement Program known as TEA provides funding up to a \$1 million dollars with a 20% match from the applicant. ISTEA legislation identifies categories for funding: multi-use facilities; historic resources; transportation aesthetics; scenic preservation; transportation museums; safety & educational activities for pedestrians/cyclists and tourist and welcome center facilities specially included under “scenic or historic.”

Façade Rehabilitation Funds

- A façade rehabilitation program is another tool that the city and/or DDA can use to facilitate downtown revitalization. Façade improvement programs can be set-up in many different ways. Sources of “seed” money may include DDA funds (except funds from tax revenue), local banks or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money. Buildings being renovated should be within the designated downtown DDA or downtown managed program boundary area and must be used for exterior work and conform to the Secretary of Interior Standards and approved by the local design review board.

Business Improvement District (BID) (O.C.G.A. §36-43-1 et seq)

- The City Business Improvement Districts, often called BIDS, were designed for use in traditional downtown business districts. BIDS are special districts in which property owners agree to be taxed at a higher rate than the rest of the community in order to pay for expanded services that are not already being provided to the city as a whole. BIDS may be administered by local governments, DDAs and non-profits. BID funds must be used for: advertising, promotion, sanitation, security and business recruitment and retention.

Home Buyer Education

- Funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, DCA has contracted with local Consumer Credit Counseling Service and other non-profit counseling agencies to provide individual housing home buyer counseling services. Group classes on home buying and financial skills are also available. If a community's downtown development plan includes revitalization of adjacent residential neighborhoods, the Home Buyer education can be used to help potential home buyers make an informed decision.

Community Improvement District (CID) (Georgia Constitution Article IX, Section 7)

- Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) are special districts where property owners agree to a self imposed tax to be used for improving the district. CIDs are good way to leverage state and federal tax dollars for roads and other major infrastructure. As authorized under the GA Constitution, creation of a CID requires a local act of the General Assembly. The governing body of each CID is designated by the Legislature and may be a City, County, or administrative body that shall include representation of each county and city within the CID. In addition to a local act of the General Assembly, a CID requires a resolution of the applicable City and County consenting to the creation of the CID and written consent by a majority of the owners of real property within the CID and consent of the owners within the CID who constitute (represent) at least 75 % by value of all real property which will be subject to taxes, fees and assessments. Property used for residential, agricultural or forestry purposes may not be assessed. Assessments cannot exceed 2.5% of the assessed value of the real property, i.e. 25 mills. CIDs can be used for: street/road construction and maintenance; parks and recreation facilities; storm water and sewage collection and disposal systems; water development, storage, treatment, purification and distribution facilities; public transportation; terminal and dock facilities; and parking facilities; and "Such other services and facilities as may be provided for by general law."

Tax Allocations Districts / Urban Redevelopment Powers Act (O.C.G.A. §36-44-1 et seq)

- Tax Allocation Districts or TADS are a popular mechanism for revitalizing blighted or underutilized areas such as brownfields, declining commercial corridors and industrial sites. The process involves designating a Tax Allocation District, establishing its current tax base floor and then dedicating future taxes over and above that floor for a given period of time to pay the costs (often but not always through issuing bonds) of the infrastructure, buildings or other improvements needed to spur new, higher density development. TAD funds may be used for a wide range of development activities. Cities, counties and school systems may all decide independently whether to participate in a TAD. City or County participation in a TAD requires jurisdiction-wide referendum. TADs may be administered by local governments, DDAs, Housing Authorities or Redevelopment Agencies created under) O.C.G.A. §36-61-1 et seq. Uses include: renovate, construct, preserve, restore, expand or demolish buildings for business, commercial, industrial, government, education, public or private housing, social activity, government services; historic properties; green spaces; mass transit and pedestrian facilities; telecommunications infrastructure; and water and sewer lines, streets, sidewalks, parking facilities, public parks, building construction, building rehabilitation, housing and land assembly.

Bond Allocation Program

- Federal tax law allows for tax-exempt government bonds to be issued for certain types of non-governmental (i.e., “private”) activities. The advantage of this type of bond is that it provides lower interest financing for many kinds of projects. The amount of private-activity tax-exempt bonds available each year for all categories is limited. Allocating the use of these bonds is the responsibility of each state government. The bond allocation program could be used to develop downtown rental housing for low and moderate-income people or as a mixed income development with a percentage set aside for low and moderate-income people.

Downtown Design Services

- Office of Downtown Development’s Design Services office provides concept designs for facade and landscape projects to Main Street and Better Hometown communities. Example projects include downtown commercial buildings (especially historic buildings), parks, parking lots, sidewalks, and alleys. The typical product includes one or more drawings, computer illustrations, or site plans, along with written recommendations.

Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP)

- The Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) makes federal HOME funds available to local governments for housing activities designed to benefit low- and moderate-income persons. CHIP funds may also be used in conjunction with CDBG funds. For downtown development purposes, CHIP funds can be most effectively used to improve low and moderate-income housing in neighborhoods adjacent to the central business district.

Employment Incentive Program (E.I.P.)

- The Employment Incentive Program (E.I.P.) is a Community Development Block Grant funded grant program designed to support local government projects intended to facilitate and enhance job creation and/or retention, principally for persons of low and moderate income.

Georgia Dream Single Family Development Program (GDSFDP)

- The Georgia Dream Single Family Development Program is designed to expand affordable homeownership opportunities and to reinvest in distressed neighborhoods by providing gap financing to eligible applicants and/or first-time low-moderate income, first-time home buyers.

Georgia Dream Homeownership Program

- The Georgia Dream First Mortgage Loan provides low-interest rate mortgage loans for borrowers with moderate incomes and modest assets. Except for targeted rural counties and some urban census tracts, borrowers must be first-time home buyers. The Georgia Dream Homeownership Program loans are available from local participating lenders.

Housing Tax Credit Program

- The Housing Tax Credit Program provides a 10-year federal and state tax incentive to attract private investment for the development of affordable rental housing. The money raised by sale of the tax credits reduces the size of the mortgage needed for the development, making reduced rents feasible. Owners agree to keep the property in good condition and rent all or some of the units to low-income residents for at least 15 years. The Housing Tax Credit program can be especially helpful in downtown development when a community has a structure that lends itself to adaptive reuse or rehabilitation as rental housing (e.g., old hotels, schools, hospitals and mills) for low- to moderate-income people.

OneGeorgia Edge Fund Program

- Provides financial assistance to eligible applicants that are being considered as a relocation or expansion site and are competing with another state for location of a project.

OneGeorgia Equity Fund Program

- Grants and loans to finance activities that will assist in preparation for economic development.

Step 5: Investigate the Idea of Becoming a Certified Georgia Main Street Program

- The Main Street/Better Hometown programs are managed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and encourage comprehensive downtown management based upon the National Main Street Center's Four Point Approach™ to downtown revitalization. In 1980, Georgia was one of six pilot states to begin a statewide program of downtown economic development called Main Street. The Georgia Main Street Program is based on the simple but effective Main Street Four Point Approach™ developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Main Street is a comprehensive revitalization process that improves all aspects of a commercial district. It successfully integrates a practical management strategy with the physical improvement of buildings and public spaces, aggressive promotion and image building, and the economic development of the area. Essential to the successful Main Street is a professional downtown program manager to coordinate the downtown revitalization program.
- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Office of Downtown Development focuses on downtown revitalization and heritage preservation to help restore a "sense of place" in a community. Its flagship revitalization program, the Georgia Main Street/Better Hometown Program, is a self-help community development program designed to improve a downtown's quality of life. Each designated Georgia Main Street/Better Hometown city receives a broad array of technical assistance and resources from a group of public-private organizations committed to downtown development. These groups are committed to "The Four Point Approach" of the Main Street program designed to assist the local community in their efforts to build a stronger local economy through revitalization of the downtown area.

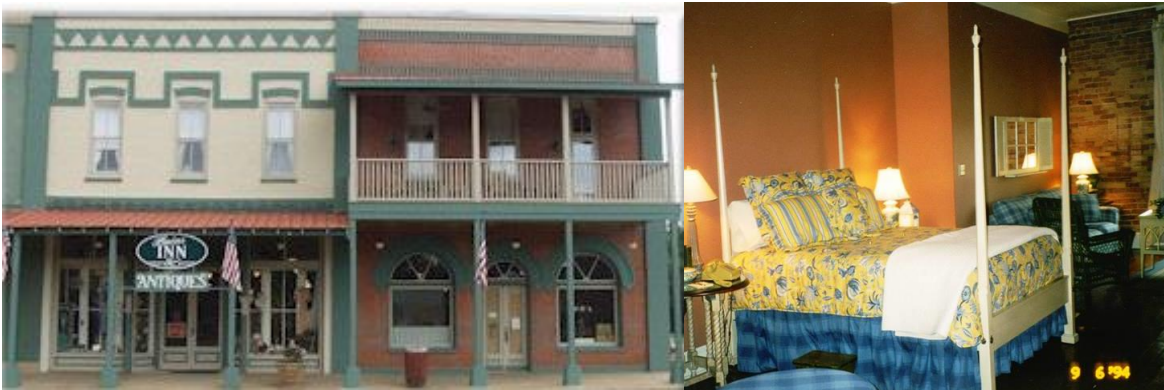
Georgia's Successful Downtown Redevelopment Model – The Four Point Main Street Approach™

- **Organization:** Builds consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a stake in the revitalization process. Provides a forum for many different groups and individuals to work together for the shared goal of a vital city center.
- **Promotion:** Showcases downtown as the center of activity through quality events and marketing, attracting people into the downtown area to shop, work and invest.
- **Design:** Encourages the rehabilitation of existing buildings in order to create an attractive pedestrian friendly downtown center while paying attention to all physical attributes in and around downtown. Educates property owners and local building and fire officials about proper restoration techniques. Financial incentives may be used to spark this activity.
- **Economic Restructuring:** Examines the existing business mix of downtown and works first to enhance the existing businesses through retention and expansion, then to expand that base through the recruitment of new businesses to strengthen the city's existing economic base.

Step 6: Investigate the possibility of a Downtown Boutique Hotel/Inn



*The James Madison Inn
Madison, Georgia*



*The Plains Inn
Plains, Georgia*

Step 6 cont'd - Investigate Upper Story Housing and Residential and Infill on Vacant Lots



2ND FLOOR LIVING SPACES

Before

After



Infill housing on historic neighborhood lots – Madison, Georgia

Quitman/Brooks County Tourism Marketing



Developing Your Tourism Plan...

YOUR MARKETING IS NOT ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS, IT'S ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMER.

It is the job of the community leaders to persuade potential tourists, residents, and outside businesses that your town is unique--or has a differential advantage.

To be successful, tourism must be locally driven. A tourism plan should create an incentive for, and maintain broad local involvement so that the end result accurately reflects your community's culture, heritage, values and goals.

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, an effective tourism plan should incorporate the following five principles:

- Find the Right Fit – Define Your Purpose
- Tell Your Own Story – Focus on Authenticity and Quality
- Preserve and Protect Your Resources – Foster a Preservation Ethic
- Make Tourism Sites Come Alive – Tell a Story
- Collaborate with Partners – Form Alliances

Quitman/Brooks County Tourism Marketing

Find the Right Fit: In marketing a town, the various features of the town itself become the product. Quitman has downtown shops, excellent dining possibilities, beautiful historic district, history, architecture, West End Cemetery and much more. The county has a significant potential for Agritourism and nature-based tourism.

Tell Your Own Story: You have several stories to tell:

- The history of the Betty Sheffield camellias
- The history of transportation
- The history of the plantations, etc.

Make Tourism Sites Come Alive: Tell a story

Make it fun! Make it entertaining: Make it interactive. Interpret using the edutainment technique.

Remember some place you vacationed and came back talking about?

Think “World of Coke”, Micro-Car Museum in Madison, Riverquarium in Albany, Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island, Tellus Museum in Cartersville, panning for gold in Dahlonega, Kangaroo Conservation Center.

Who else can interpret plantation life? Who else has as much equestrian adventure? Who else has the incredibly beautiful tree canopied road system? Who else can offer miles and miles of SAFE biking? Who else has the history of Betty Sheffield?

Collaborate with Partners – Form Alliances

Thomasville, Valdosta, Plantation Trace Travel Region, Georgia Tourism Division, Department of Community Affairs, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources and State Parks, US Department of Agriculture grants...the list goes on and on.

Quitman/Brooks County Tourism Marketing

Categories of Tourism

Nature based tourism – Includes environmental tourism, ecotourism, or nature tourism, which provides an opportunity to visit undisturbed natural areas, scenic vistas, and observe plants and wildlife. Also outdoor activities: road cycling, equestrian, birding.

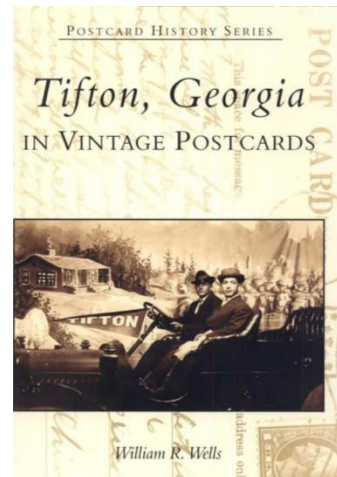
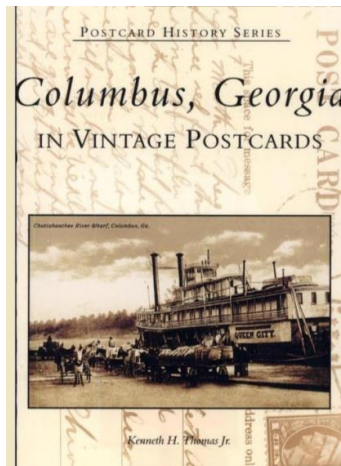
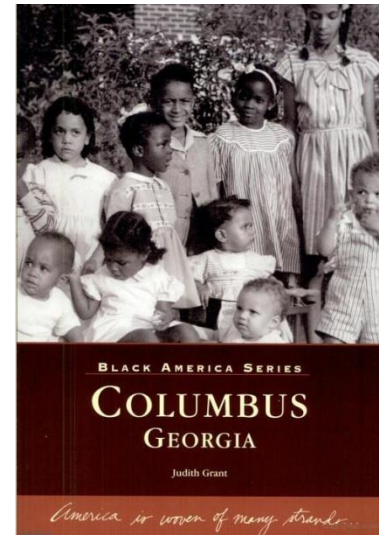
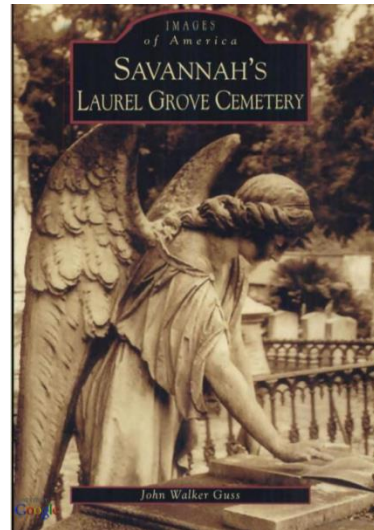
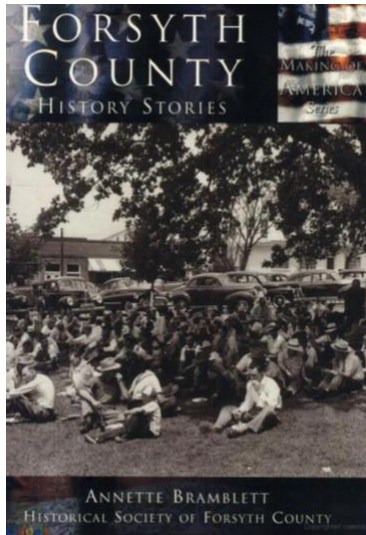
Agritourism – Tourism in which tourists visit farms or rural villages and experience farming at close hand.

Heritage Tourism – Is a personal encounter with traditions, history, and culture based upon the concept that each community has a story to tell.

Urban Tourism – Downtown tourism centered on shopping and nightlife.



Marketing Promotional Publications



Example - Arcadia Books

Branding & Taglines

Branding is *not* about a cool logo or color schemes. Your brand is what people experience in your community. It's about consistently meeting expectations. You can't do that with a logo. A logo merely reinforces the brand!

The first step of branding is to understand and agree on your community's core identity.

- Narrow your assets list with your partners and stakeholders in your assessment. Include as many community members as possible.
- Remember, your community's unique history and historic resources are tremendous assets.
- Pick just one. Once you have identified your top 4-6 assets, you will need to identify the most important, or key asset. This will be the "engine" that drives your community development strategy.

Quitman

Our Heritage, Our Hospitality, Our Hometown



Branding & Taglines

Consider your key asset and to find your focus consider these questions:

- What are we passionate about?
- What does our community excel at?
- What makes us unique?
- What can drive our economic engine?

What can drive our economic engine?

Once *you* know who you are, there are a number of ways to help the *public* know who you are.

1. Be who you are. Don't pretend. Work to make the community friendlier, safe, clean, interesting, creative, diverse, and historical— whatever qualities you have identified as important to your identity.
2. Express it in a memorable phrase. If you choose to create a slogan, make it meaningful. Make sure it truly communicates your unique essence. There's no point choosing a slogan that any other town could adopt.

Here are some slogans Georgia communities are using:

Rutledge – Small But Special

Madison – The Town Sherman Refused to Burn

Thomasville – The Rose City

Fitzgerald – History, Harmony, Heritage

Valdosta – Georgia's Adventure Destination

Albany – Where History and Nature Flow

Bainbridge – Small Town Atmosphere Big City Convenience.

Fort Gaines – A Historic Past, A Promising Future

Chickamauga – Historic Feel, Small Town Appeal

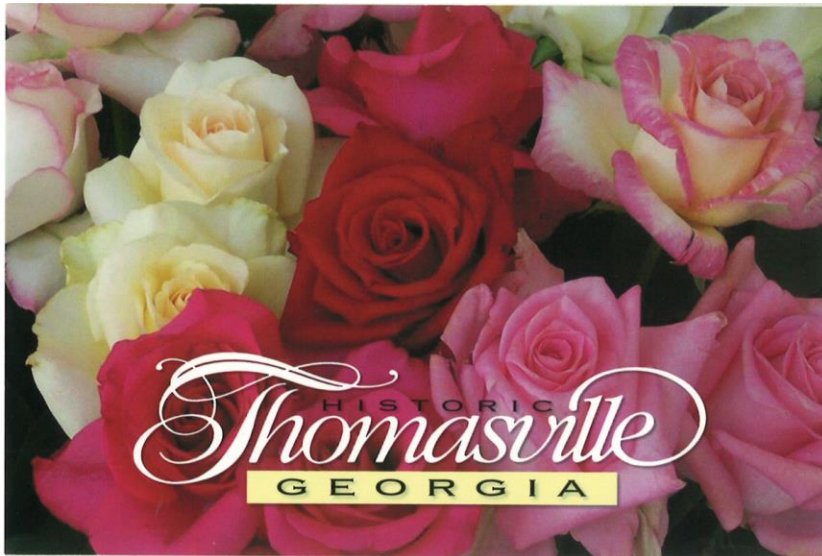
Cartersville – Culturally Cool

Dalton – Carpet Capital of the World

Lafayette – Queen City of the Highlands

Senoia – The Perfect Setting. For Life

Branding & Taglines



3. Create consistent signage, printed materials, and an online presence.

Your materials should have:

- A consistent message, and
- A consistent visual image.

Visuals may include a logo, colors, fonts, and other design elements. Don't choose the visuals randomly—make sure they communicate the same message you are giving verbally.

Get a good graphic designer to help.

GDEcD

Tourism Division

Plantation Trace Tourism Regional Representative – Jeff Stubbs

...and the tourist division team will be happy to work with your committee to develop the best:

- Brand
- Logo
- Website
- Collateral Material

Marketing Team suggestions

- Design a website with all of your tourism attractions and events. These days, if you don't have a website, you don't exist. (Okay, you exist, but you just don't seem as *real* to people.) Make sure your website represents your "brand" (who you are). Make it clean and easy to navigate.
- Design a "lure" brochure for the tourists which could include a historic walking/driving tour, Agritourism sites and downtown information; where to eat, shop, and stay.
- Establish one or two signature events and absolutely promise to continue for 3 to 5 years. It takes time!
- Send your information to every media outlet in the Southeast. (GDECD has the lists!) Use other websites and list your events on web calendars, local radio stations, especially public radio stations. When you list your event on a public radio station calendar, they will often mention your event over the air. Magazines have calendars that will list your events for free.
- Look for grant dollars to fund the projects.
- Build you local volunteer base to act as docents, escorts and to help write the stories you will be telling.
- Get signage on the major routes telling the tourists "Your Are Here" and "You Want to Go Here". Examples: Madison's downtown shopping and dining, Eatonton's Authors Driving Tour, Milledgeville's Museum District, Macon's signage to their Welcome Center. Get a location for tourist information and keep it open! Stock information on area attractions also.

GDEcD

Tourism Division

Hold a **photography contest** to build up a database of photography for all the collateral materials and for media requests.

- Entries will become the sole property of the contest coordinators and might be used in promotional literature or other promotional activities;
- Promote the contest at the least possible cost. Here are some suggestions:
- Newspapers - Such a contest is newsworthy to local residents. A well-written, concise press release sent to the newspaper's city editor has the best chance of getting printed as a news story;
- Radio/TV - Local stations are often willing to announce such items for no charge either as news or as a public service message. This is a great way to let people know about the contest;
- Posters - Handbill-sized posters can be printed for a nominal charge. Such posters should include contest details and can usually be posted in stores and other conspicuous spots around town.
- Schools - If you include a junior division in the contest, speak with local school officials about having the contest announced in the schools.
- Increase community awareness by using some of the best photos in a supplement to the town newspaper. Papers will sometimes run such a supplement free, in the community interest, but you will probably have to find advertisers to sponsor the insert.
- Develop a slide presentation from the photographs. Slide shows can be presented to service clubs and civic organizations to help rekindle interest in the community. If the program is well-received, you might, consider showing it in neighboring cities.



GDEcD Tourism Division

Informational Sites:

Consumer:

www.exploregeorgia.org

Tourism Partner:

www.georgia.org

Welcome! - A Manual to Enhance Community Signage and Visitor Experience

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/Communitysignagenew.pdf>

Promoting Tourism in Rural America – USDA publication

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/tourism.html>

The Tourism Resource Team



The Tourism Resource Team

- **Bruce Allen Green**

Bruce, the Tourism Product Development Director, GDEcD is a native of Valdosta, Georgia where he received a BS in Biology from Valdosta State College and did Masters work in Secondary Education. He has served as: Valdosta Heritage Foundation, President; City of Tifton, Main Street Manager; Georgia Main Street Association, Charter President; Catherine Tift Porter Properties, Property manager; Georgia Municipal Association, Manager of the Office of Downtown Development; Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Director of the Office of Rural Development, Research and Communications. Active in historic preservation and community development, he keeps abreast of trends in quality growth and environmentally sensitive development while maintaining interests in the arts, creative economies, architecturally significant affordable housing and gardening. Georgia Department of Economic Development 404-962-4092

bgreen@georgia.org

- **Leslie Breland**

Leslie is the Cultural & Tourism Product Development Manager with GDEcD where she works on various projects including the arts, cultural & heritage related tourism, the Creative Economies Initiative and Georgia Made Georgia Grown Products. Leslie has 20+ years of experience in tourism. Previously she was Director of Marketing at Stone Mountain Park for 5 years and Manager of Marketing and Public Relations at The World of Coca-Cola for 8 years, which she helped open in 1990. She was Director of Central Atlanta Marketing and National Sales Manager at the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau for 9 years. She holds an MBA degree in Marketing and Corporate Relations from Columbia University, New York and a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from New York University, New York.

Leslie has served on a number of Boards of Directors including The Alliance Theatre, The Atlanta Ballet, The Atlanta Botanical Garden, Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries, The APEX Museum, The Atlanta Preservation Society, Georgia Council for International Visitors. Leslie's passion is gardening. 404-962-4844

Lbreland@georgia.org

The Tourism Resource Team

■ Jeff Stubbs

Jeff is the Regional Tourism Representative for the Plantation Trace Travel Region, Georgia Department of Economic Development. Jeff is a graduate of Valdosta State University, with a degree in Business Administration and a graduate of South Eastern Tourism Society Marketing College as a Travel Marketing Professional. Jeff has been with the State for 7 years and prior to that he spent ten years in the hotel industry. His duties as a regional representative include assisting communities and regional tourism organizations in developing marketing plans, promoting existing attractions, helping in the development of new attractions, and assisting communities to “package” with their neighbors, making stronger marketing products. Additionally, he escorts media and travel writers and wholesale buyers of travel around the region to familiarize them with the many attractions in the area. On more than one occasion, Jeff has also provided story ideas to media and travel writers. Georgia Dept. of Economic Development
5584 Mill Store Road
Lake Park, GA 31636
229-559-8336
jstubbs@georgia.org

■ Fay Tripp

Fay is the Director of the Regional Tourism Representative Program in the tourism division at the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD). Fay oversees the nine regional tourism representatives located across the state. Fay joined the department in 1994. Prior to joining the department, Fay worked with convention & visitors bureaus, in hotel sales and in marketing for 30 years. Fay resides in Macon with her perfect husband. She enjoys traveling, gardening, fishing, and golf.
Georgia Department of Economic Development
PO Box 13404 (31208)
200 MLK, Jr. Drive (31201)
Macon, Ga.
478-752-3254
Cell: 678-640-4364
Ftripp@georgia.org

The Tourism Resource Team

- **Eduard Navarro**

Eduard is an innovative Urban Designer specializing in the intersection between Urban Design and Commerce. Having dedicated the last ten years to the study of the problems of sprawl in the State of Georgia, Eduard is extensively trained in Architecture, Policy, and Finance. Prior to studying in Paris at the Ecole de la Villette, Eduard attended GA Tech, where he perfected his English while first falling in love with the South. Receiving a Master's Degree in Architecture and a Master's Degree in Real Estate Development with a Concentration in Finance from Columbia University in New York. A native of Valencia, Spain, Eduard speaks five languages which he has used to tour extensively in Europe, North Africa, and North America cataloguing design solutions to think outside the box and tailor environments to people's lifestyles. Eduard is principal of Urbanitas Group, a collection of labels responding to the built environment including SUM Architecture, UP Planning & Urbanism, and the Georgia Beautiful Movement, a non-profit dedicated to Urbanism, Culture, and Foreign Affairs in Georgia and the South.

- **Barry L. Brown**

Barry is the Heritage Tourism Specialist with the Georgia Department of Economic Development. He received his Master's in Heritage Preservation and Bachelor of Arts in History from Georgia State University. Barry worked with the Georgia Civil War Commission for six years and was involved in projects such as the acquisition of the Resaca Battlefield in Gordon County, Cascade/ Lionel Hampton Park acquisition in Fulton County, and the Wallis House acquisition and preservation of the Johnston's River Line in Cobb County. Barry began work with the Georgia Department of Economic Development in 2006 and is the coauthor of the upcoming guidebook *Crossroads of Conflict: A Guide to Civil War Sites in Georgia*. He served on the Stone Mountain Georgia Historic Preservation Commission 2006-2009. Barry is currently completing a Georgia Civil War map for the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial. Georgia Department of Economic Development 404-962-4174 (c) 404-558-0537 Bbrown@georgia.org

The Tourism Resource Team

- **Martha Reimann**

Martha, the Community Development Consultant, DCA Office of Downtown Development, grew up on a cattle ranch in Oklahoma. She has lived in Georgia since moving here to pursue a Master of City Planning degree from Georgia Tech in 1987. Martha has worked for DCA since 1990, in a number of different roles, but currently works with the Georgia Main Street Program in the Office of Downtown Development. Martha's areas of expertise include comprehensive planning, impact fees, capital facilities planning and financing, consultant procurement, planning law, development and revitalization strategy and tools, brownfield remediation, sustainable development, land use and zoning, form-based development codes. She recently earned the National Development Council's Certified Economic Development Finance Professional designation. Martha has one daughter, an anthropologist.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs
404-317-6812 Work
martha.reimann@dca.ga.gov

- **Cindy Eidson**

Cindy is the Manager for the Training and Special Projects Group of the Office of Downtown Development with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Cindy received a Master's of City Planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a Bachelor of Housing and Community Economic Development---Family and Consumer Sciences from the University of Georgia and completed preservation studies in Historic Preservation from Georgia State University. Cindy is a former Manager for the Better Hometown/Main Street Program of the Department of Community Affairs' for 3 years; also serving as Better Hometown Program Coordinator for 4 years and as the Main Street Manager for both the City of Gainesville and Newnan Main Street Programs. With a total of 17 years of downtown planning experience Cindy also worked as a Preservation Planner Intern with the Georgia Mountain RDC and 6 years with the University of Georgia's Cooperative Extension Service.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs; (404) 679-3101; Fax: (404) 327-6867; E-mail:
cindy.eidson@dca.ga.gov

The Tourism Resource Team

- **Brent Runyon**

Brent, the Executive Director of Thomasville Landmarks, Inc., received his Master of Historic Preservation degree from the University of Georgia in 2005. While at UGA, he focused on community planning and affordable housing issues, and worked on several community-based design charrettes. After graduate school, he attended a summer service learning program in Ghana, West Africa, where he and five others created a heritage tourism plan to help boost the local economy. In his five years at Landmarks, Brent has led the organization through a \$300,000 endowment building campaign and overseen the rehabilitation of their headquarters, the 1833 Hardy Bryan House. His most recent initiatives include adding the Dewey City Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places and writing a demolition ordinance for the City of Thomasville.

Thomasville Landmarks, Inc.

P.O. Box 1285, 312 North Broad Street

Thomasville, Georgia 31799

v.229.226.6016 | f.229.226.6672

tli@rose.net

www.thomasvillelandmarks.org

- **Michael Jacobs**

Michael is the Preservation Planner/Senior Planner with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission since 1995. Previously, he worked with the Center For Low Country Studies, Tybee Island Lighthouse & Museum, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources at Wormsloe Plantation State Historic Site. In his current role Michael serves the counties of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner and Ware

Region 11. Southern Georgia Regional

Commission - <http://www.sgrc.us>

912-285-6067

mvjacobs@sgrc.us

The Tourism Resource Team

- **Carole Moore**

Carole, the Grants Coordinator with the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources received a B.A. in English and a M.A. in Heritage Preservation from Georgia State University. She first came to work at HPD in 1986 as the office's preservation education planner. Following a brief departure she returned to HPD fulltime in 2005 to serve as grants coordinator for the office's annual federal and state grant programs, as well as for Preserve America cemetery and community landmark grants and the heritage tourism cemetery grants. She has also been involved in special projects at HPD, including the development, promotion, and sales of the new historic preservation license plate, which directly benefit the Georgia Heritage Grant Program. Carole also maintains an interest in fields complementary to historic preservation: historic landscapes and gardens, family history and genealogy, and historic cemeteries
404-463-8434

carole.moore@dnr.state.ga.us

CONCLUSION

Quitman's heritage is one of the community's strongest assets. Within your culture and heritage lies your true authenticity. Brooks County contains a range of heritage sites from Native American to the westward point journeyed by the leader of the 13th English colony. With such natural, cultural and historical assets, Quitman has the potential to have a significant tourism economy. Quitman and Brooks County's success in attracting the heritage and cultural tourist depends upon recognizing and taking care of the collective historic resources and sites, and taking the initiative to work with local and regional partners to develop a comprehensive and integrated tourism strategy.

The Resource Team hopes the community will utilize this publication in starting, evaluating, or expanding your own heritage and cultural tourism program. There are many resources available to provide assistance to you in packaging and promoting your community. Many of these are listed in the heritage tourism handbook and are available at www.gashpo.org and www.georgia.org.

