

# River Valley Regional Commission

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Community Economic Development Strategy  
2017 Annual Update

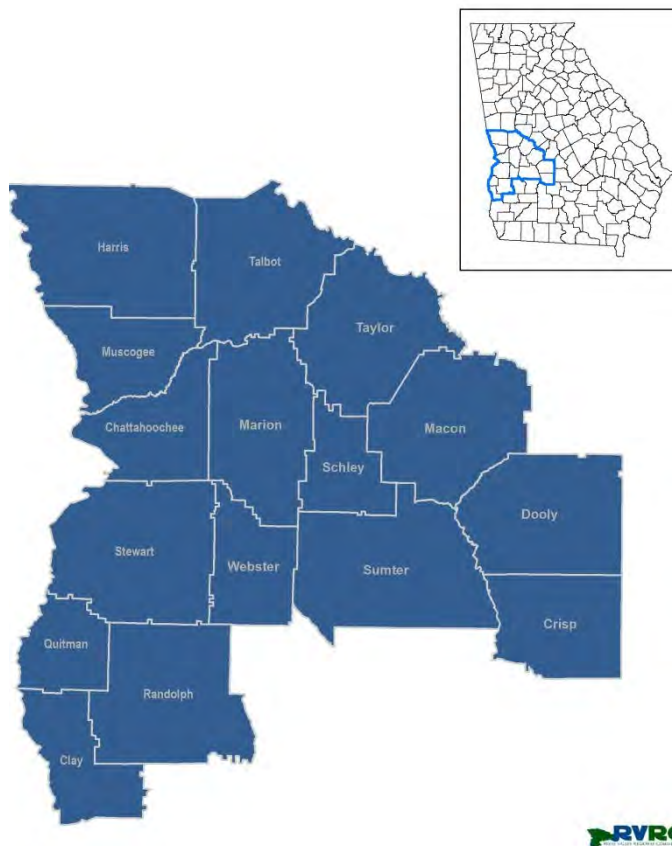
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# River Valley Regional Commission

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

### 2017 Update

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### Introduction

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The 2017 CDDS Annual Update will identify the work plan for the 2017 Goals, Objectives, and Strategy to complete as well as prepare for the new 5 year plan in 2018. Guiding this annual update is the CEDS Committee and regional partners, including local chambers of commerce and development authorities. This annual update confirms the robust work done for the 2016 annual plan that included the

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development of a mission, vision, and values statement as well as a thorough regional survey to ascertain priorities. The priorities remain the same for 2017.

The region is defined by a 'mid-major' city – Columbus. With 3 Fortune 1000 companies headquartered here and multiple large employers as well as Fort Benning, it is the employment center of the region. The region also has two 'rural centers' that serve as the economic, intellectual, and cultural hub for a number of rural communities. Both Americus and Cordele have hospitals, cultural resources, shopping, and University and Community College assets that make them regionally important. The rural nature of the region is represented by the other 16 counties and 35 cities throughout the rest of our work area. Their needs and opportunities are different and they continue to develop their capacity to address the economic challenges of their communities.

The region will continue to be defined by how Columbus, as well as Americus and Cordele and the rest of the rural areas of the region position themselves for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This annual update is designed to provide a common platform from which to discuss and prepare for a better economic future.

## CEDS Committee

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The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee has used its role in 2016 to advance Workforce Development initiatives, including working with the regional WIOA representatives as well as helping with educational initiatives like REACH Georgia. They have also prioritized help to the region to improve infrastructure through CDBG projects and working with local governments to identify funding for priority projects as identified through their Comprehensive Planning or Disaster Planning initiatives. They have also worked with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) to identify process and funding sources to address the remediation of brownfield properties.

The CEDS Committee oversaw the support and advancement of the goals and objectives as outlined in the previous year's plan through the implementation of many of the strategies identified as a part of this planning process. Particular successes over the last year have been in the development and support of

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our counties to be ready for the film industry, building local infrastructure through road, sewer, and water projects, and making sure data – particularly property data was freely available to the public to help with real estate transactions. More on the work of the CEDS Committee over the past year can be found in the meeting minutes. Minutes of the CEDS Committee meetings as well as a list of the committee members are attached as an appendix to this document.

The CEDS Committee also worked on ways to have more involvement in the CEDS process as well as ways to implement the new suggested guidelines.

As part of the SWOT process, the CEDS Committee identified a Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Values which have been adopted by the full RVRC Council.

- Mission Statement – The mission of the RVRC shall be to create, promote and foster the orderly growth and economic prosperity for our region.
- Vision Statement – A region where current and future generations succeed at home, at work, and in their communities
- Core Values:
  - Accountability
  - Collaboration
  - Community
  - Innovation
  - Diversity
  - Integrity
  - Good Stewardship

The goals identified by the CEDS Committee and adopted for this 2017 Annual Update are:

- The workforce of the River Valley Region will be ready to meet the needs of the current and future employers.
- Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and assist in the recruitment of new businesses in the region.
- The River Valley Region will have sufficient infrastructure to meet the needs of the citizens and private sector businesses for the next 20 years.
- The River Valley Region will continue to promote collaboration as an effective method to solve problems and help the region to grow.
- Improve and expand the existing affordable housing stock for the citizens of the River Valley Region.
- Promote and preserve the existing tourism assets in the region.

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- Promote agriculture development and retention as a significant part of the economy of the River Valley Region.
  - All industrial parks in the River Valley Region will meet the needs of the business community.

### Status of the Regional/Local Economy

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This region of the state is in west-central Georgia and had a population of 370,887 in the 2010 Census. The region includes all of Chattahoochee, Clay, Crisp, Dooly, Harris, Georgetown-Quitman, Randolph, Macon, Marion, Muscogee, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, and Webster counties. The region has seen a growth rate since the 2010 Census slower than other regions in the state. The major city in the region is Columbus, with smaller cities of Americus and Cordele being the only other areas of the region with significant infrastructure to support hospitals, technical colleges and universities. Overall, there are 16 counties in the region and 35 cities.

The City of Columbus has undergone a significant study to help guide its economic development. The Regional Prosperity Initiative was commissioned by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and completed by Market Street Consultants. It analyzed the local economic development strengths and weaknesses, and made targeted suggestions for improvement.

While the plan was written for the Greater Columbus area (which included for the purposes of this plan Talbot, Harris, Muscogee, Marion, and Chattahoochee Counties), there is much in the plan that has application throughout the region. The plan outlines in great detail the economic issues facing Columbus and the outlying region of high poverty rates, lower levels of educational attainment and the corresponding social issues and lack of opportunity those issues create for a community.

The areas of Americus and Cordele have also undergone significant thinking about their economic development in the last few years. The One Sumter Initiative in Americus has a five year goal to improve the economic development, marketing and workforce development in Sumter County. Likewise, the Crisp County Industrial Development Council undertook an extensive look at their economic development and local economic and real estate conditions as a part of a study to assist the Cordele

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Inland Port, a multi-million dollar transfer station effort to expand capacity at the Port of Savannah for shipping container traffic.

- More information about the Regional Prosperity Initiative can be found both in Chamber resources and at <http://regionalprosperityinitiative.org/>.
- Information about the One Sumter Plan for Americus can be found at <http://www.onesumter.org/>
- Information about the Cordele Inland Port and the economic development initiatives there can be found at <http://www.crispidc.com/home.html>

Top employers in the region include one of the US Army's largest training bases as well as two Fortune 1000 Companies. This is the largest concentration of Fortune 1000 Companies in Georgia outside of Atlanta, and one of the largest concentrations of large companies in the Southeastern United States. Together, Ft. Benning, AFLAC and TSYS employ nearly 50% of all workers in the metropolitan Columbus area. These are also three of the largest employers in the region.

Other major employers in the region include Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Synovus (and Columbus Bank and Trust), local hospitals in Columbus, Cuthbert, Americus and Cordele, the public school systems in each of the 16 counties in the region, and the local universities. These colleges and universities include Columbus State University, Georgia Southwestern State University, Darton College (all three a part of the University System of Georgia) as well as Andrew College, and private institutions in Columbus. There are also three Technical Colleges serving the area: Columbus Technical College, South Georgia Technical College in Americus and Albany Technical College serving the southern end of our region.

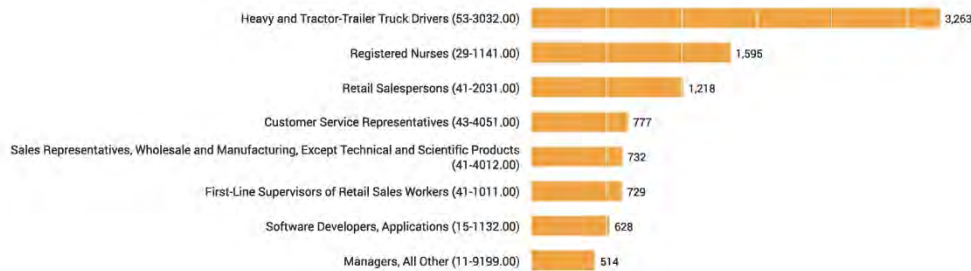
The number of advanced manufacturers in Columbus is also significant with KIA Suppliers, NCR and Pratt and Whitney in the local industrial sectors. Other major employers in the region include Norboard in Cordele as well as Eaton-Cooper Lighting and Habitat for Humanity in Americus. In the rural counties, the industry mix includes agricultural and other manufacturing sectors. Despite these strengths, there is a need to grow and diversify further the industries represented in the area.

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The following analysis of industrial sectors draws from data provided by Burning Glass (BGLI)— a private data provider that pulls information about job postings.

### *Top Occupations (BGLI)*

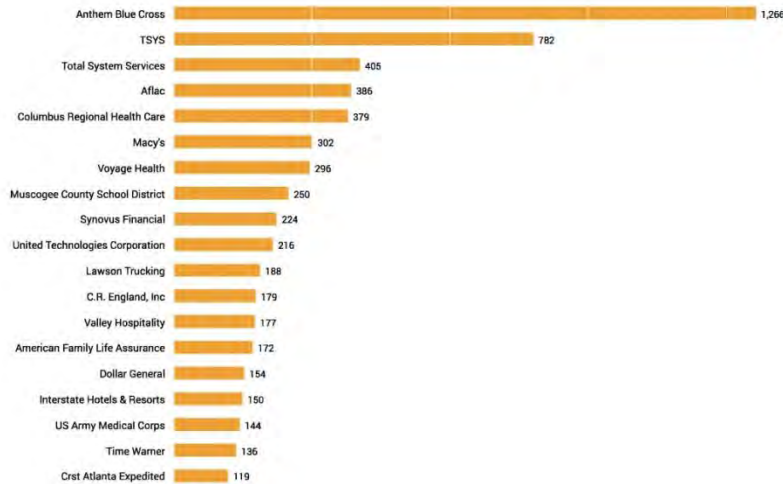
Top Occupations in demand by far for the region were for truck drivers (3,263) followed by Registered Nurses (1,595). Software Developers had a notable 628 positions available. Most of these positions are available in the Columbus market only. The top three occupations in demand that were listed were identical in both areas of the region, as well as within the region.



Source: BGLI

### *Top Employers*

The company with the largest recent demand for workers is Anthem Blue Cross (1,266). This is because Anthem Blue Cross recently opened a new call center facility in the Columbus Technology Park and are actively hiring for that facility. Other major employers in Columbus routinely have openings available and are searching for employees - TSYS (782), AFLAC (386) and Synovus (224). It is indicative of the size of the Columbus job market that most of the largest employers are located there. Those companies looking for employees outside of the Columbus market are trucking companies like C.R. England and Crst Atlanta. The other major employers looking for employees are service, retail and healthcare-related companies.



Source: BGLI

The Columbus area has become an important center of activity for IT and FinTech companies with several Fortune 1000 companies headquartered there. It is critical for the regional economy that these businesses have the employees they need to be successful. Building the digital skills of citizens in the region to prepare for a 21st century workforce needs are high priorities, as well as a targeted effort to ensure that the Fortune 1000 companies in the region are able to attract, and critically, to retain top engineering talent.

### Workforce in the region

The age of the working population in the region trends slightly older than the state average, as there are fewer future young entrants into the workforce and more who are 65+ and likely exiting the workforce than is true, on average, across the state. For those in their working prime, there are fewer middle age professionals in the region (which would account for fewer families).

#### Age of population 15+

	GDEcD	
	Region 8	Georgia
0-15	20.46%	21.40%
15 – 24	15.26%	14.30%
25 – 34	13.57%	13.80%
35 – 44	12.50%	14.40%
45 – 54	13.95%	14.40%



<b>55 – 64</b>	11.80%	11.00%
<b>65+</b>	12.45%	10.70%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, RVRC Analysis

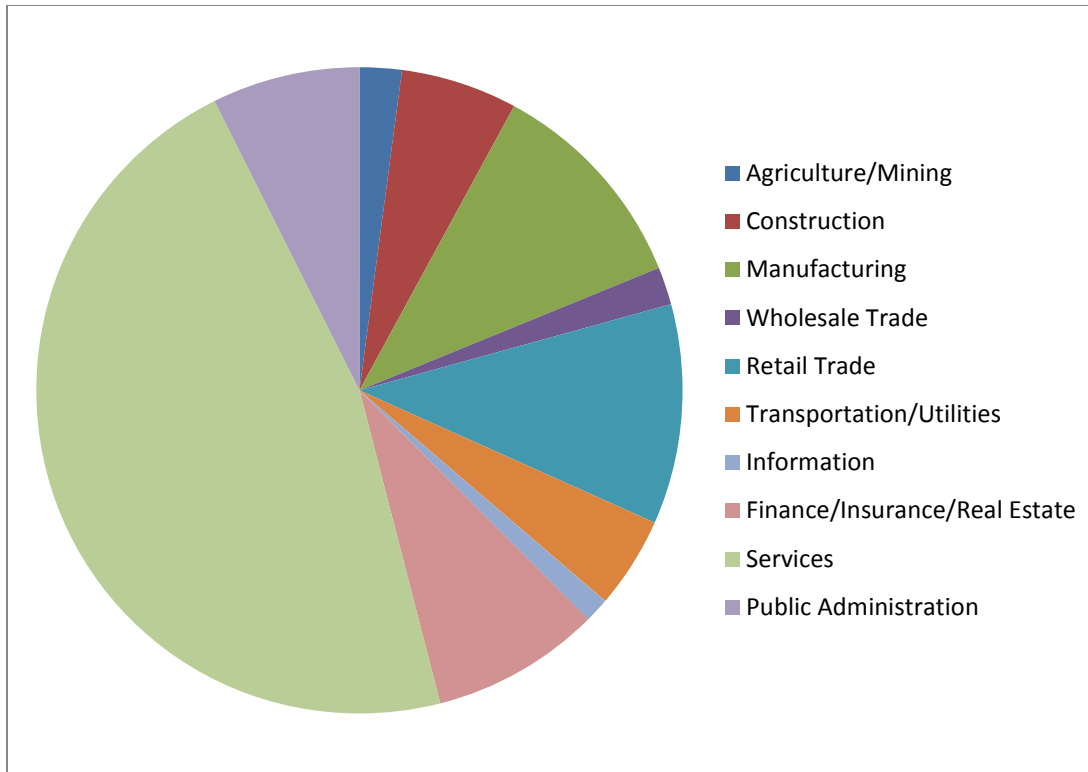
*Current labor force employment*

**ESRI Business Analyst – 2016 Employed Population 16+ by Industry**

	<b>GDEcD Region 8</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
Total	149,694	4,523,860
Agriculture/Mining	2.1%	1.1%
Construction	5.8%	6.4%
Manufacturing	10.9%	10.2%
Wholesale Trade	1.9%	2.6%
Retail Trade	11.0%	12.2%
Transportation/Utilities	4.6%	6.4%
Information	1.2%	2.0%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	8.5%	6.2%
Services	46.6%	47.8%
Public Administration	7.4%	5.0%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The area has higher than state average numbers of workers employed in Public Administration (7.4% as opposed to 5.0%) and Agriculture/Mining (2.1% as opposed to 1.1%). These increased percentages are influenced by the presence of Fort Benning and the increased federal payroll in the area and the rural nature of work in much of the region. There is also a higher than average representation in the area in Finance/Insurance/Real Estate (8.5% vs. 6.2%) due to the presence in Columbus of AFLAC, TSYS, and Synovus.



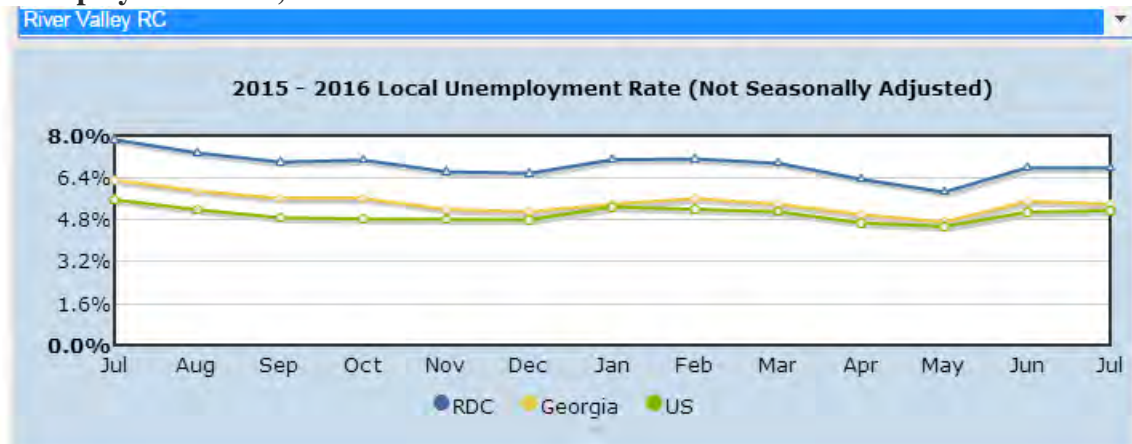
Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The numbers of businesses in all industries were expected to grow from 2013 to 2015, as indicated from the most recent data available from the Georgia Department of Labor. The number of those employed in Government, Information and Agriculture, during the same period, was expected to decline.

### *Unemployment data*

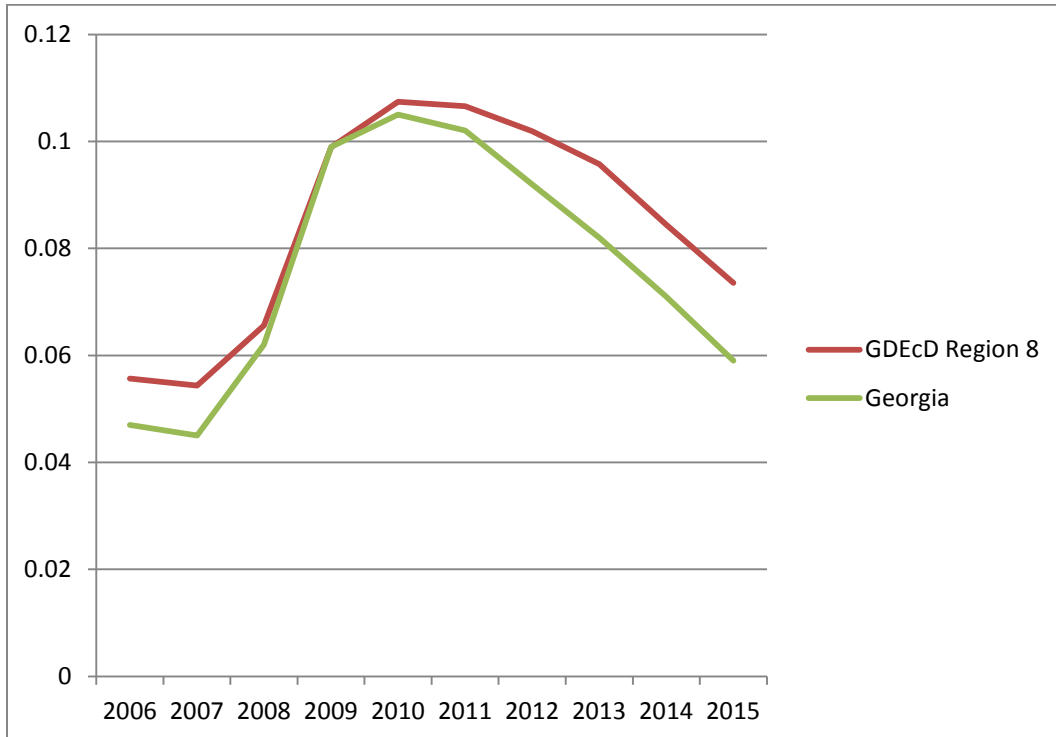
The Unemployment Rate in the region over the past 12 months has shown similar trends as the unemployment rates for the state of Georgia and the nation. But, while the trends are similar, the regional unemployment rate has been consistently higher, showing a higher rate between 0.8 and 1.5 %. The most recent unemployment rate as of the writing of this report (May, 2016) was 5.8% in the region, 5.0% in Georgia, and 4.5% in the US.

## Unemployment rates, rates over time



Source: GDOL

The 10 year unemployment rate shows that this region did not suffer the high peak of unemployment that the rest of the state did in the Great Recession of 2009, but the region also did not recover as quickly. In fact, the gap in the unemployment rate between the River Valley region and the rest of the state is greater in 2015 (7.3% in the region vs. 5.9% in Georgia) than it was in 2006 (5.1% vs. 4.7%)



Source: GDOL, RVRC Analysis

*Educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region*

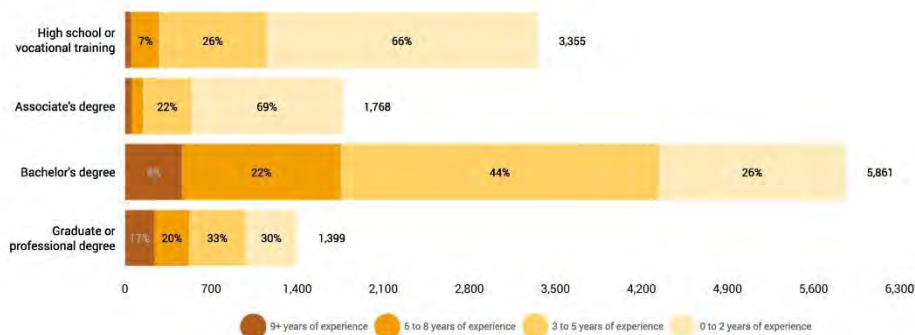
Within the region, the rate of adult residents without a high school diploma roughly matches the state average (14.3% as compared to 14.2%), but the percentages of residents in the region with a Bachelor’s Degree or higher professional degree are notably lower than state averages (21.3% as compared to 29.3%)

Educational attainment (ESRI)

	River Valley Region	Georgia
<b>Total</b>	251,816	6,724,494
Less than 9th Grade	6.0%	5.3%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	11.1%	8.9%
High School Graduate	25.6%	23.6%
GED/Alternative Credential	5.5%	4.8%
Some College, No Degree	23.6%	21.1%
Associate Degree	7.0%	7.0%
Bachelor's Degree	12.9%	18.3%
Graduate/Professional Degree	8.4%	11.0%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, RVRC Analysis

The percentage of jobs requiring at least a Bachelor’s Degree or a graduate degree in the region is nearly 60% of all advertised jobs. However, the percentage of individuals with a bachelor or higher degree is only 21.3% of the adult population. This suggests a significant gap between the employment needs in the region and the skills of many members of the workforce.



Source: BGLI

## At Risk Populations

Some of the highest at-risk populations are teens who are neither working or in school. Based on Annie E Casey Foundation Kids Count data, this numbered a relatively high 5,000 youth in Congressional District 2, which includes most of the region (as well as portions of Albany, GA). The only county not included in this analysis for the region is Harris County and parts of Muscogee County at the far northern boundary of the region which is in Georgia Congressional District 3.

### *Teens ages 16 to 19 not attending school and not working*

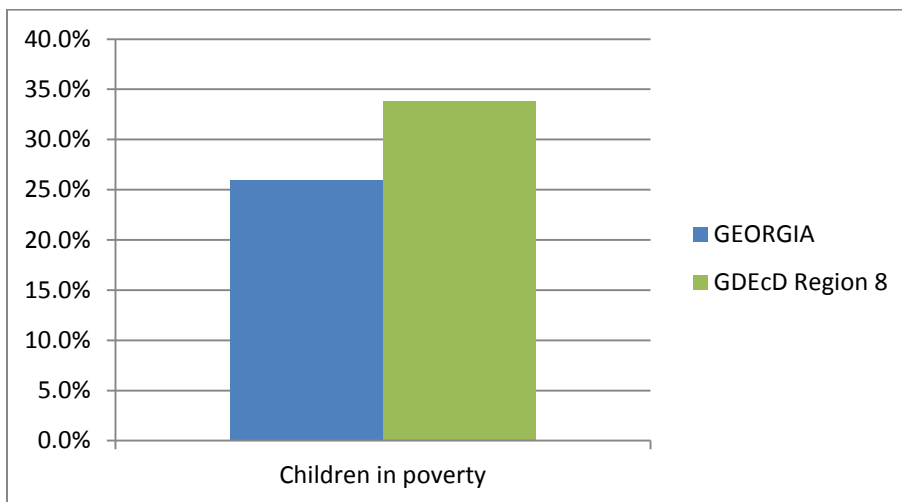
<b>Georgia, Congressional District 2</b>	Number	5,000
	Percent	11%

Source: Kids Count – Annie E Casey Foundation, Georgia Family Connections

Poverty rate

## Children living in Poverty

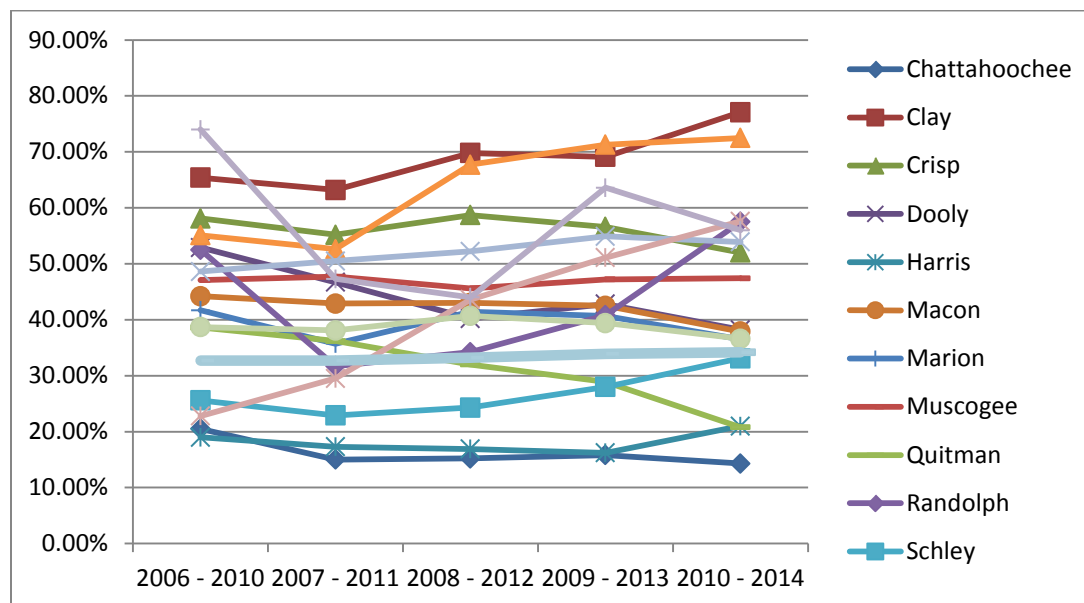
Another example of at-risk populations is the percentage of children living in poverty. According to 2014 data, the most recent available, the percentage in the River Valley Region is higher than State averages. Disaggregating the data by county shows that some counties have a higher percentage of their children living in poverty than others, indicating pockets of poverty. This is shown in the difference in county data in Single Parent families shown below.



Source: Kids Count – Annie E Casey Foundation, Georgia Family Connections, RVRC Analysis

## Children living in single-parent families

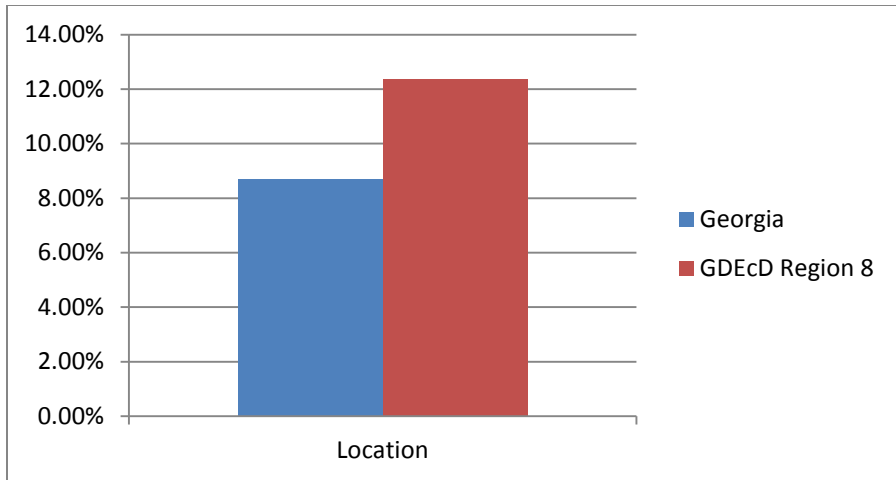
Clay and Macon Counties have the highest percentage of children living in single parent households. Often in single parent households, that parent juggles work, child care, and possibly training or schooling without a support network. Muscogee County’s percentage of children living in single-parent households is also consistently higher than the state average, but the percentages in Harris and Chattahoochee Counties are well below the state averages. This suggests that the number of at-risk children is unevenly distributed across the region.



Source: Kids Count – Annie E Casey Foundation, Georgia Family Connections

## Children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment

The percentage of children who are growing up in homes where no parent is working full time will take a toll on not only the family income but also the long-term prospects for success for both the children and the family. In 2014, the percentage of children in the region who have no household member working full time is a high 12.4% compared to the state average of 8.7 %.



Source: Kids Count – Annie E Casey Foundation, Georgia Family Connections, RVRC Analysis

The higher unemployment rates, lower percentage of college degrees, and higher levels of poverty show up in the lower median income (\$39,342 for the region) and per capita income (\$22,237) than state income (\$50,384 and \$26,467 respectively).

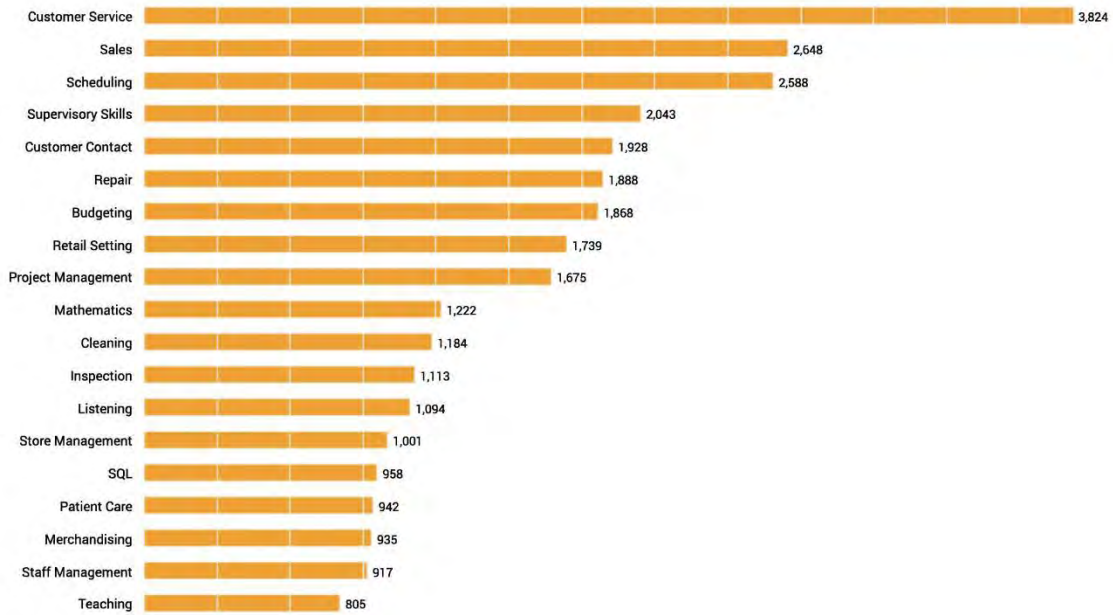
#### Median Household Income

	River Valley Region	Georgia
2016 Median Household Income	\$39,342	\$50,384
2016 Per Capita Income	\$22,237	\$26,467

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, RVRC Analysis

#### Top Skills

Top skills required by employers looking for work are focused on customer services (which matches state and local surveys of companies noting the importance of soft skills for employment). In fact, 2 of the top 5 skills employers are looking for in this area rely heavily on soft skills: Customer Service (3,824 job advertisements) and Customer Contact (1,928 job advertisements). Software skills, including mathematics, SQL, and Mainframe expertise are also notable.



Source: BGLI

### **Top Computer Program Skills Required**

Microsoft Excel

Microsoft PowerPoint

Microsoft Windows

JAVA

JavaScript

LINUX

SQL Server

.NET Programming

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

C++

jQuery

Scrum

Word Processing

Source: State WIOA Plan



Using information provided by the Georgia Department of Labor, the following information about the region is available in a comparison of 2013 to Quarter 1 of 2016:

	2013	2014	2015	2016	% change 2013-2016
<b>Weekly Wage</b>	\$736	\$731	\$770	\$785	6.66%
<b>Employment</b>	135,120	134,946	133,537	133,587	-1.13%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	9.5%	8.4%	7.4%	6.8%*	-28.42%
<b>Establishments</b>	7,899	7,450	7,956	8,209	3.92%

Source: GA DOL \* 2016 unemployment data is for July 2016 – the most recent month available for this report

The numbers of establishments, unemployment rate and weekly wages have all shown positive trends over the past three plus years in the River Valley region. The number of people employed, however, remains stagnant at best, with an overall negative trend and only very modest recovery over the past year. We remain hopeful that the number of people employed in the region will continue to improve over the next 12-24 months to rebound to at least 2013 numbers.

The technical colleges served by the region include Columbus Technical College, Southwest Georgia Technical College, Albany Technical College, Central Georgia Technical College, South Georgia Technical College and Southern Crescent Technical College. Georgia Department of Labor is a critical partner in these job training and career pathway programs. The programs with the most graduates in 2015 continue to be welding, auto mechanics, and criminal justice.

## SUGGESTED REGIONAL PRIORITIZED PROJECTS

The CEDS Committee identified the following projects as having a regional priority.

ACTIVITY	CATEGORY	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES & PARTNERS	COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	PROJECTED JOBS	PRIORITY
<b>Facilitate the development of programs within</b>	Planning	On-Going	RVRC Local BOE	\$30,000	Member Dues	50	1

<b>the local school systems that prepare students for the workforce utilizing the assets of the Technical Colleges, the university system, and others.</b>			WIOA Board Local Colleges & Universities REACH GA Local Technical Colleges		Local BOE WIOA Board Local Colleges & Universities, REACH GA,		
<b>Facilitate the continued development of the in-land port in Cordele as a way to stimulate economic growth.</b>	Planning	On-Going	RVRC  SWGA United DCA USDA	\$50,000	RVRC  SWGA United DCA USDA	200	2
<b>Using GPS technology, capture the various visible and underground components of the region's water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer infrastructure.</b>	Planning	On-Going	RVRC  Local Governments DCA USDA	\$60,000	Member Dues  Local Governments DCA USDA	10	3
<b>Identify and address telecommunications deficiencies in the region via the Digital Economy Plans.</b>	Planning	On-Going	RVRC  Local Governments	\$65,000	US Department of Commerce	50	4
<b>Provide information and support on alternative means of promoting tourism within the region including technology, tv/film (Camera Ready Designation) and development of packages.</b>	Planning	On-Going	RVRC  Local Governments GDEcD Local CVBs Chambers	\$30,000	Member Dues  USDA Local Funds	20	5
<b>Support the development of value added processing industries, farmer's markets and neighborhood groceries supplied by local farmers to provide fresh food</b>	Planning	On-Going	RVRC  GDAg GDEcD Local HD USDA	\$50,000	Local Dues  DCA USDA GDAg GDEcD	35	6

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in the region.							
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## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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The goals and objectives identified in this section are necessary to solve the economic problems and/or capitalize on the resources of the region. As part of a Regional SWOT Analysis, the top eight (8) goals were prioritized.

*Goal: The workforce of the River Valley Region will be ready to meet the needs of the current and future employers.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Encourage increase of high school graduation rate and the reduction of high school drop-out rates.

Strategy: Support efforts to significantly improve reading levels of all students by the third grade.

**OBJECTIVE:** Develop programs within the local school systems that prepare students for the workforce.

Strategy: Support and encourage partnerships between technical colleges and high schools in the region.

Strategy: Support vocational training in high schools.

Strategy: Encourage GED and continuing education efforts for the adult population of the River Valley Region by partnering with technical colleges and other agencies.

**OBJECTIVE:** Encourage every high school graduate to further their education with a technical college Certificate/Degree or an Associates/Bachelor's Degree from a 2-year or 4-year college or university.

Strategy: Promote the REACH GA program throughout the region.

Strategy: Provide information on dual enrollment to all high schools in the region.

*Goal: Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and assist in the recruitment of new businesses in the region.*

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OBJECTIVE: Encourage the use of local revolving loan funds to assist in the development and expansion of small businesses.

Strategy: Coordinate an annual Revolving Loan Fund Luncheon for bankers in the region to provide information on the program.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the use of the “Buy Local” and “Georgia Grown” programs.

Strategy: Provide information to interested businesses and individuals on the program.

OBJECTIVE: Support local and regional development authorities by providing technical assistance as requested and by providing information on tax credits, low interest loans and other incentives.

Strategy: Attend meetings as requested.

Strategy: Provide information on available training as well as new initiatives.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the development of a plan to market the region to former residents and encourage them to move back.

Strategy: Provide information to local chambers of commerce.

*Goal: The River Valley Region will have sufficient infrastructure to meet the needs of the citizens and private sector businesses for the next 20 years.*

OBJECTIVE: Encourage water and sewer system improvements to improve the capacity of the systems.

Strategy: Work with local governments to identify weaknesses and opportunities as well as funding options.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage broadband improvements throughout the region.

Strategy: Work with local governments and development authorities to identify funding opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage improvements to the E-911 systems in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the Regional Transit Authority.

Strategy: Assist local and regional transportation providers to coordinate trips and services in order to maximize service to the citizens of the region.

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OBJECTIVE: Support the study of high speed passenger rail in the Columbus MPO urban area to Atlanta.

OBJECTIVE: Support needed runway extension at the Columbus Metropolitan Airport.

Strategy: Provide information as requested to support the extension.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the improvement of all aspects of the transportation system to facilitate the flow of goods and people, enhance economic growth, connect people and jobs, and improve quality of life.

Strategy: Provide technical assistance to local governments in implementation of TIA funding.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the expansion of the Inland Port.

Strategy: Provide information on resources as requested.

*Goal: The River Valley Region will continue to promote collaboration as an effective method to solve problems and help the region to grow.*

OBJECTIVE: Support local and regional planning efforts through provision of information and attendance at meetings.

Strategy: Provide information as requested for local planning efforts.

OBJECTIVE: Pursue establishment of local and multi-jurisdictional programs and encourage community leaders to participate.

Strategy: Attend the Georgia Academy for Economic Development annually.

Strategy: Promote county or multi-jurisdictional leadership classes in the region.

OBJECTIVE: The River Valley Regional Commission will promote regional cooperation, coordination and communication.

Strategy: Prepare and distribute information on the region, regional activities, and RC resources.

Strategy: Host a monthly meeting with the RVRC Council and the CEDS Committee to discuss problems and opportunities.

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*Goal: Improve and expand the existing affordable housing stock for the citizens of the River Valley Region.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Encourage local governments to pursue all means available to eliminate substandard housing in the 16-county region including public and private sources.

Strategy: Provide information on available funding sources.

Strategy: Work with interested local governments to develop Urban Redevelopment Plans.

Strategy: Assist the efforts of communities which are implementing the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH).

**OBJECTIVE:** Encourage continued improvement of existing housing conditions through all available public and private means.

Strategy: Provide information on available funding sources.

**OBJECTIVE:** Encourage the development of infill housing in areas already served by public infrastructure.

Strategy: Work with developers and local businesses to identify infill opportunities.

**OBJECTIVE:** Encourage the removal of dilapidated housing and structures throughout the region.

Strategy: Assist in the development and implementation of Code Enforcement in all counties.

Strategy: Assist in the development of land banks.

*Goal: Promote and preserve the existing tourism assets in the region.*

**OBJECTIVE:** Encourage the preservation of historic buildings in the region.

Strategy: Educate local elected officials and the general public on the importance of historic resources and the benefits of preserving them.

Strategy: Provide information on Secretary of the Interior Standards to interested persons.

Strategy: Provide information on Historic Preservation Tax credits to developers and other interested persons.

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Strategy: Put information on funding for historic preservation projects on the RVRC website.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage cooperative marketing of existing tourism assets.

Strategy: Work with the regional travel associations to market the assets of the region.

OBJECTIVE: Support and encourage the development of new tourism assets in the region.

Strategy: Provide information and support to persons developing new assets.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the Georgia Grown Program.

Strategy: Provide information to interested persons.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the Highway 27 Association and its efforts to develop the corridor.

Strategy: Provide support in the form of minutes and meeting notices as well as coordination of meetings.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage local Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitor's Bureaus in their efforts to promote and develop tourism assets.

Strategy: Provide information on available programs and resources.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage and expand the existing cultural arts in the region.

Strategy: Provide information on available programs and resources.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage designation of Chattahoochee Trace Region as a National Heritage Corridor.

Strategy: Provide information and support as requested by the Historic Chattahoochee Commission.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the development and designation of Scenic By-Ways in the region.

Strategy: Provide information on the program and benefits as requested.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the use of State Parks and facilities throughout the region.

Strategy: Provide information on State Parks and facilities to interested persons.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the development of a marina in Georgetown-Quitman County.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage regional tourism efforts such as the Highway 27 Association, Andersonville Trail, etc.

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Strategy: Provide information and assistance as requested.

*Goal: Promote agriculture development and retention as a significant part of the economy of the River Valley Region.*

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the Georgia Grown Program.

Strategy: Provide information as requested.

*Goal: All industrial parks in the River Valley Region will meet the needs of the business community.*

OBJECTIVE: Encourage all Industrial Parks in the River Valley Regional Commission's 16-county region to be shovel-ready and all qualified Industrial Parks to be certified by Georgia Power.

Strategy: Provide information on the Georgia Power Certification program as requested.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage necessary infrastructure improvements to all Industrial Parks in the region.

Strategy: Provide information on funding resources upon request.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage access to railroads or rail spurs to a minimum of half of the Industrial Parks in the region where possible.

Strategy: Provide information on funding resources upon request.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage development of virtual speculative buildings in a minimum of two industrial parks in the region.

Strategy: Provide information on funding resources upon request.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage road improvements along Hwy. 280 and rail improvements for the Inland Port.

Strategy: Provide information on resources upon request.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the development of water reservoirs in the region.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage maintenance of all state owned rail line from Georgetown to Cordele.

Strategy: Work with local officials and GDOT to rehabilitate the lines.



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## CONCLUSIONS

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The River Valley Region continues to transform economically as Columbus moves from its history of textile and the rural areas move from a high reliance on agricultural labor. The region has undergone difficult times since the recession of 2009. Although the region did not fall as hard, there is increasing evidence that it has not recovered as quickly. One of the key expectations of the economic development system in West Central Georgia is to build more local and regional resiliency in our economy so that future recessions or downturn will not have such a long-term negative impact.

To be economically resilient, there are two long-term threats to the regional economy that need to be addressed: Fort Benning threats due to sequestration and improving the quality of the local workforce.

The looming threat to Ft. Benning and Warner Robbins Air Force Base caused by sequestration is one that cannot be ignored. Local communities must work with elected officials at all levels of government to solve budget issues without cutting the military.

The quality of the workforce is another serious issue facing this region. Both existing and future businesses cannot survive much less thrive without trained employees. This region has a bright future with many opportunities including the historic downtowns and tourism attractions as well as available land. The CEDS process will continue to bring together public and private sector partners to identify opportunities and solve problems within the region in order to create a healthy and prosperous community.

The good news is that initiatives being undertaken at the local level throughout the region are building local economic resiliency. These local initiatives and projects are tasks that collectively, will make for a more robust regional economy.

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## APPENDIX

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### CEDS Committee Members

#### Meeting Minutes

- August 26, 2015
- October 28, 2015
- November 18, 2015
- January 27, 2016
- February 24, 2016
- April 27, 2016
- August 24, 2016

### River Valley Regional Industry Mix (GDOL)

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## **CEDS Committee Members**

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Mike Speight, Crisp County, CEDS Chairman

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Columbus

Jo Childers, Department of Community Affairs

Patti Cullen, RVRC Executive Director

Patricia Goodman, Randolph County Chamber of Commerce

Candace Head, Georgia Department of Labor

Janet Joiner, Dooly County/City of Vienna

Chip Jones, Stewart County

Pam Jordan, Talbot County Chamber of Commerce

Edward Lee, Chattahoochee County

Jim Livingston, RVRC Staff

Richard McCorkle, Marion County School System

Tommy McKenzie, Macon County

Cecil McMickle, Marion County

Tom Queen, Taylor County

Carol Rutland, Muscogee County

Wally Summers, Sumter County/South Georgia Technical College

Sarah Walls, RVRC Staff

James "Bump" Welch, Marion County

Janice West, RVRC WIA



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# CEDS Committee Meeting Minutes August 26, 2015

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## Persons Attending

Edward Lee  
Mike Speight  
Jim Livingston  
Tom Queen  
Cecil McMickle  
Ricky McCorkle  
Bump Welch  
Wally Summers  
Candy Head

Carole Rutland  
Pam Jordan  
Janice West  
Patti Cullen  
Jo Childers  
Janet Joiner  
Patricia Goodman  
Tommy McKenzie  
Chip Jones

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Speight. The minutes of the last meeting were unanimously approved upon a motion from Patricia Goodman and a second by Carole Rutland.

Jim Livingston, new Director of Community and Economic Development, was introduced to the group. Jim has a wealth of experience in economic and community development.

The CEDS Update was reviewed. A motion to recommend approval by the RVRC Council was made by Wally Summers and seconded by Janet Joiner. The motion passed unanimously. A request was made to send the CEDS Update to the Council as soon as possible to allow adequate time to review it.

There will be a College and Career Academy meeting in Chattahoochee County on September 3 at 9:00 a.m. Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle will be there to present a \$10,000 check to the Chattahoochee County School system to begin the study of implementing a College and Career Academy. Other school districts in the region have been invited to attend the meeting. There will also be a Business and Education Summit at Jekyll Island November 5-6.

Other: It is important to do outreach to find out what else is being done in the region to support the goals and objectives of the CEDS.

IDEA: Field Trips by local schools to local industries. This could provide valuable information to students and teachers about the current state of manufacturing.

NOTE: Both Crisp County High School and Columbus High School have been recognized nationally for excellence.

There being no further business to come before the group, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted

Katie Howard

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# CEDS Committee Meeting Minutes October 28, 2015

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## ***Persons Attending***

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Edward Lee  
Mike Speight  
Jim Livingston  
Tom Queen  
Cecil McMickle

Ricky McCorkle  
Bump Welch  
Carole Rutland  
Jo Childers  
Janet Joiner

Patricia Goodman  
Chip Jones  
Sarah Wall  
Mariyana Kostov  
Pops Barns

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Speight at 9:30 AM.

Jim Livingston introduced Amber Staples who is interning in the Columbus RVRC office. Jim also introduced Mariyana Kostov – the RVRC GIS staff based in Americus.

Mariyana Kostov and Jim Livingston showed the CEDS Committee a map of the region outlining the counties that had property information available to the public behind a paywall and those that allowed free access to the public. This was raised to make sure the regional representatives knew that some parts of the region allowed free access to property information and others made the public pay for its use. The counties that allowed free access were under a contract with the mapping provider QPublic.

The committee discussed the benefits of using a free service for outside development, and also discussed the reasons a community would opt to require the users themselves pay for the service. The Chairman talked about the importance and opportunity to attract outside investment, and the need to make searching for property as easy as possible. The costs of counties hosting the service were not known, and Mariyana Kostov promised to bring more information on costs communities were paying to the next meeting.

Chairman Speight outlined the work being done to promote workforce development through the REACH program. RVRC staff, Chairman Speight, as well as REACH representatives will be meeting with the RESA board of county school superintendents in November. REACH representatives should be available to help with the fundraising, and no funds will need to be raised in the first year. Ricky McCorkle noted the challenges of raising funds for so many needs in a rural school district and donor fatigue the few businesses that are in the county have with funding all the school priorities, and agreed that it was a good program and opportunity for the region.

Jim Livingston showed a couple of maps of the state that outlined broadband and telecom service providers as well as fiber backbone networks in the state of Georgia. He let the committee know that over \$1.6 million of investment through Connect America Funds (CAF II) will be invested in the region by one of the largest telecom companies – Windstream. AT&T will also be investing large amounts from CAF II, but those exact figures were not available yet.

There being no further business to come before the group, the meeting was adjourned.

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Respectfully Submitted--

Jim Livingston

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# CEDS Committee Meeting Minutes November 18, 2015

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## ***Persons Attending***

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Edward Lee	Carole Rutland	
Mike Speight	Chip Jones	Mickey George (visitor)
Jim Livingston	Tommy McKenzie	Bruce Hill (visitor)
Tom Queen	Janet Joiner	Casey Moore (visitor)
Cecil McMickle	Patricia Goodman	Holly Winner (visitor)
Wally Summers	Chip Jones	
Bump Welch	Janice West - RVRC	

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Speight at 9:30 AM.

Bump Welch made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 28 meeting. Janet Joiner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jim Livingston introduced Holly Winner – the new Presidential Pathways tourism coordinator. Holly gave some background on herself and said she would be excited to meet with committee members and work in the region.

Mike Speight gave an update on the REACH program – Jim Livingston, Mike Speight and Sara Neely from REACH spoke to the RESA in Ellaville in November, explaining the program and making sure the school districts understood the benefits to applying. Application deadline is in January.

Jim Livingston also reported that the team learned that over 1,200 students in the region were enrolled in the community colleges through dual enrollment. There were 315 at South Georgia Tech and 915 at Columbus Tech. He also reported that Schley and Marion Counties were listed at above the average graduation rates for the state – both ranked 24<sup>th</sup> overall. The Georgia Milestones tests were also discussed by the superintendents at the RESA meeting, and all expressed an interest in improving their scores. Wally Summers gave an update on South Georgia Tech's driver education program – and announced that the opportunity was available to students.

Jim Livingston gave an update on the county costs for Q Public. The cost for both Harris County and Webster County was less than \$4,000. Mickey George and Bruce Hill both reported that the cost for Macon County was \$7,500. Patricia Goodman reported that the cost for Randolph County was \$6,500. There was some discussion on why the costs were so different, as well as the benefits of having the data online. Bruce Hill, as a real estate appraiser, spoke of the need and utility of being able to access ownership data and the need to easily access the information. He talked about the need for the easy access to the information, in order to get sufficient bids for banks to find appraisers and make potentially loans. Mickey George also spoke of the costs, and while recognizing its importance, how that expense is significant enough to deter the county from paying the expense. There was some discussion on how useful and necessary the service was, and whether it suppressed the county real estate market if it was behind a pay wall. Jim Livingston offered to review, get more information from real estate



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professionals, and report back. Mickey George also suggested that the RVRC may be able to address some of the cost issues through enterprise ESRI GIS services. Jim Livingston also promised to look into that possibility.

There being no further business to come before the group, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20.

Respectfully Submitted--

Jim Livingston

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# CEDS Committee Meeting Minutes January 27, 2016

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## **Persons Attending**

Edward Lee  
Mike Speight  
Jim Livingston  
Tom Queen  
Carole Rutland

Janet Joiner  
Pam Jordan  
Jo Childress  
Rickie McCorkle  
'Pops' Barnes

Patricia Goodman  
Candace Head  
Sarah Wall - RVRC  
Janice West - RVRC

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Speight at 9:30 AM.

Patricia Goodman made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 18 meeting. Janet Joiner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **New Business:**

Jim Livingston updated the committee on the work done to promote Highway 27 Association, including showing the project website that was recently introduced. He noted that it was a privately funded regional initiative with few resources was able to get a logo, website and written text that has led to media mentions in other magazines, including in early January in the Atlanta Journal Constitution. Jo Childress talked about the trails initiatives throughout Georgia and the support the state has for the Highway 38 and 41 projects based around agri-tourism. Jim Livingston also distributed a map and brochure of the Highway 41 corridor that traverses the eastern counties in the region. Janet Joiner talked about the Highway 41

Jim Livingston also passed around a brochure promoting Georgia Farm Markets, noting that there was an opportunity to identify and encourage more farm markets in the region. He also pointed out the 2016 CEDS Strategy point advocating for greater agricultural products from the region. Jo Childress suggested contact with Cindy Norton at the Georgia Department of Agriculture in their agri-tourism office.

Patricia Goodman talked about the Georgia Camera Ready meeting in Atlanta on February 22. Jim Livingston, Allison Slocum and Patricia Goodman are going to Atlanta together for the meeting, and there are two more seats available in the car up there. Jim Livingston encouraged others to join us for the meeting from throughout the region. Candace Head also mentioned the new development of the Georgia Film Academy that is being administered in part by Columbus State University and the Springer Theater in Columbus – first class for On-Set Film Production Certificate has just begun. He showed the website for the film academy and talked about the opportunities for the region that this would present. Jim asked for a list of names of people in each county who would be good contacts to develop a core group to push camera ready and film issues in the region. Names suggested were:

Randolph County – Patricia Goodman  
Stewart County – Chip Jones  
Talbot County – Pam Jordan

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Dooly County – Lalista Thompson

Macon County – Gerald Beckum

More names were to be researched by the committee to develop the list for each county.

**Old Business**

Jim Livingston gave an update on the QPublic issues. He did find from developers and real estate professionals that they were in need of the information and did tend to gravitate to the counties where the information was easier to access. Macon County will become a test case for a RVRC effort to use ESRI tools to put the ownership information online through both the RVRC website and the county website, serving as a work-around to the expenses of listing the information through QPublic.

Mike Speight gave an update on the REACH program – 6 of our 16 counties are now involved with REACH, including Quitman, Randolph, Sumter, Muscogee, Taylor and eventually Macon.

There being no further business to come before the group, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20.

Respectfully Submitted--

Jim Livingston

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# CEDS Committee Meeting Minutes February 24, 2016

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## ***Persons Attending***

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Edward Lee  
Mike Speight  
Jim Livingston  
Tom Queen  
Janet Joiner

Pam Jordan  
'Pops' Barnes  
Patricia Goodman  
Butch McMickle  
'Bump' Welch

Tommy McKenzie  
Wally Summers  
Theresa Garcia Robinson -  
GDEcD  
Janice West - RVRC

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Speight at 9:30 AM.

'Pops' Barnes made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 26 meeting. Janet Joiner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Theresa Garcia Robinson was introduced from the Georgia Department of Economic Development. She is the Region 8 representative.

### **New Business:**

Jim Livingston updated the committee on an effort to bring attention to brownfields in the region. The Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Natural Resources will both be at the next council meeting to discuss brownfields in April. The Georgia Brownfields Association had a meeting in Columbus to help begin the process of educating Real Estate professionals, attorneys, and developers about brownfields and benefits attained from actively addressing environmental issues on redevelopment sites. A brownfield is any property that does, or looks like it may have environmental damage. Janet Joiner spoke about the EPA Brownfields clean-up in Vienna that has remediated a 55,000 square foot school of all asbestos and lead paints to allow it to potentially be reused as a community center.

### **Old Business:**

There was some discussion about the farm trails in the region, and a need to get a better handle on the farms that would benefit from the Georgia Farm Bureau listings and Georgia Grown sites. The group talked about the difference between row crops which are prevalent in our region, and not inclined to switch their farming practices to the smaller scale market focused farms in the various state listings. Jim Livingston said that Jo Childress at DCA was very interested in the project and that he will be working to collect a comprehensive list of candidates from each county starting in April.

The Georgia Film Day on Monday, February 21 was very successful for the region. There were 15 representatives from the region at the Camera Ready seminar, and in the process to get to Atlanta for the day, we have found new Camera Ready point of contact in Schley, Sumter, Marion and Macon counties. There will be a follow up meeting in April to do a combination of training on the Camera Ready program as well as outlining goals to promote the region as a film destination. Pam Jordan and Patricia Goodman both talked about their experiences in Atlanta, noting the usefulness in both getting an understanding of what types of sites the film industry was looking for as well as using the day to review what they are doing in their counties to get the requisite photos up on the Camera Ready

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website. They mentioned that the photos should look good, but not necessarily be professional. The analogy used in Atlanta was that the sites should be photographed as if they are a Real Estate listing. Lots of photos, including interior photos make a difference.

There being no further business to come before the group, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20.

Respectfully Submitted--

Jim Livingston

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# CEDS Committee Meeting Minutes April 27, 2016

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## **Persons Attending**

Edward Lee – Chattahoochee County  
Mike Speight – Crisp County  
Tom Queen – Taylor County  
Janet Joiner – Dooly County  
Pam Jordan – Talbot County  
'Pops' Barnes – Muscogee County  
Patricia Goodman – Randolph County  
Carole Rutland – Muscogee County  
Jimmy Davis – Macon County  
Cecill 'Butch' McMickle – Marion County  
'Bump' Welch – Marion County

Tommy McKenzie – Macon County  
Richard McCorkle – Marion County  
Chip Jones – Stewart County

Barbara Alfano – US EPA  
Shannon Ridley Georgia EPD  
Ed Lee- HEARTS of Georgia  
Sarah Walls – RVRC  
Patti Cullen - RVRC  
Janice West - RVRC  
Jim Livingston - RVRC

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Speight at 9:30 AM.

Patricia Goodman made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 24 meeting. Pam Jordan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Barbara Alfano from the US EPA and Shannon Ridley from Georgia EPD were introduced by Jim Livingston as national and state experts on brownfield issues.

### **New Business:**

Barbara Alfano and Shannon Ridley talked about definitions of a brownfield and examples of successful brownfields grants and cases in our region. Barbara Alfano explained the federal definition of a brownfield as well as the practical definition. She said that a brownfield is in effect any property that looks as if it may be contaminated. This may prevent redevelopment of the property because of concerns about whether a phase 1 or Phase 2 environmental review would find expensive clean-up costs were necessary. In fact, through the process of EPA Brownfields Assessment grants, it was found that 30% of properties needed no cleanup work done whatsoever. She also reviewed two EPA Brownfield grants that were made in the region – one to the City of Columbus in 2002 and one to the City of Vienna in 2014.

Shannon Ridley talked about the State of Georgia programs that, while not grant programs, do allow the properties to be cleaned up. She talked about their brownfield program that, with an application fee, will allow the transfer of ownership, but not environmental liability if the property is cleaned up correctly. It can be a very valuable tool to help reduce liability for prospective new owners.

### **Old Business:**

Jim Livingston talked about a successful Camera Ready session to provide technical assistance to the region's Camera Ready representatives. They spent a day at the Columbus Makerspace in April uploading images and sites to the state database. The feedback from the state Camera Ready staff was that our images need to include better interior photos. The analogy used in Atlanta was that the sites

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should be photographed as if they are a Real Estate listing. Lots of photos, including interior photos make a difference.

Jim Livingston also updated the group on the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) project to identify trails in our region as a part of an overall effort to create the first map of trails statewide. He asked for assistance from each county to identify and build this list for our region.

There being no further business to come before the group, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20.

Respectfully Submitted--

Jim Livingston

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# CEDS Committee Meeting Minutes August 24, 2016

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## **Persons Attending**

Edward Lee – Chattahoochee County  
Mike Speight – Crisp County  
Janet Joiner – Dooly County  
Pam Jordan – Talbot County  
Tom Queen – Taylor County  
Patricia Goodman – Randolph County  
Carole Rutland – Muscogee County  
Jimmy Davis – Macon County  
Cecill ‘Butch’ McMickle – Marion County  
‘Bump’ Welch – Marion County

Tommy McKenzie – Macon County  
Chip Jones – Stewart County  
Candace Head - GDOL

Craig Dominey - GDEcD  
Sarah Walls – RVRC  
Patti Cullen - RVRC  
Janice West - RVRC  
Jim Livingston - RVRC

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Speight at 9:30 AM.

Patricia Goodman made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 27 meeting. Carol Rutland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **New Business:**

Jim Livingston talked about the CEDS annual report due at the end of September to EDA. This annual report will follow the previous efforts, with much of the format, and work items laid out already. Jim stated that he would circulate a draft of the report for the CEDS committee to review and approve before the full council would adopt the annual report at their September meeting.

### **Old Business:**

Craig Dominey from GDEcD talked about the Camera Ready program and film in Georgia in general, giving the committee some insights on the film business in the state. The committee took the time to ask several questions of Craig about the size of the industry and strengths and weaknesses to getting films in our region.

Jim Livingston updated the committee on the efforts to apply to US EPA for a Brownfield Assessment grant. Based on recommendations from environmental consultants who have been monitoring this with us, the recommendation was made to focus efforts on one part of the region. Based on the need and opportunities, the targeted area suggested was Sumter, Crisp, Dooly and Macon Counties. Jim and Lance Renfrow in the Columbus office will be meeting with a steering committee to identify potential sites and find potential partners in these counties to submit a grant. EPA will likely release their grant criteria in late September.




Jim Livingston also updated the group on the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) project to identify trails in our region as a part of an overall effort to create the first map of trails statewide. The GARC had met and are beginning to compile the trails, but the GIS issues to have each RC communicate with each other are significant and will take some time.

Jim also mentioned that there were several local governments that have been identified by DCA as not being compliant with Qualified Local Government status for one of several reasons (financial and otherwise). He advised everyone to check the DCA list to make sure the local governments they represent knew they were flagged and could be working to come into compliance.


There being no further business to come before the group, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20.

Respectfully Submitted--

Jim Livingston



**River Valley**  
**Regional Commission**



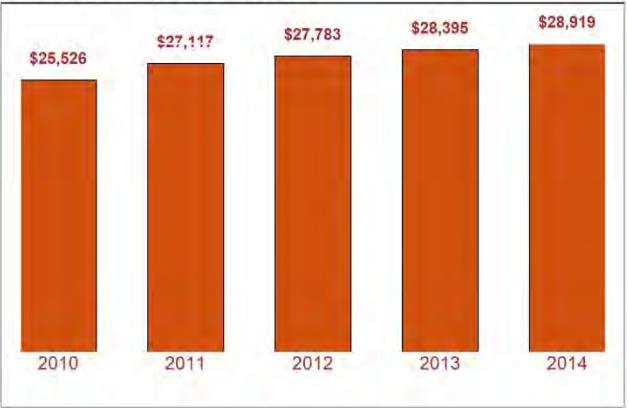
Updated: Sep 2016

**Super Sector Industries**

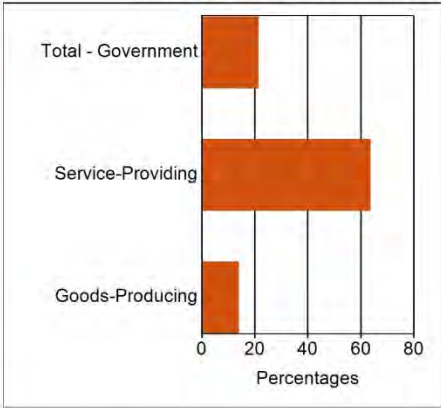
	Establishments			Employment			Weekly Wage		
	2015	2016	% Change	2015	2016	% Change	2015	2016	% Change
Construction	566	577	1.9%	4,048	4,680	15.6%	746	761	2.0%
Education and Health Services	936	957	2.2%	18,147	18,525	2.1%	794	789	-0.6%
Financial Activities	833	828	-0.6%	12,726	12,525	-1.6%	1,410	1,487	5.5%
Information	92	95	3.3%	1,425	1,366	-4.1%	779	743	-4.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	761	772	1.4%	15,626	14,424	-7.7%	279	294	5.4%
Manufacturing	257	269	4.7%	12,624	12,510	-0.9%	952	947	-0.5%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	196	205	4.6%	2,212	2,004	-9.4%	659	681	3.3%
Other Services	663	670	1.1%	3,365	3,214	-4.5%	605	553	-8.6%
Professional and Business Services	1,022	1,048	2.5%	12,561	13,141	4.6%	1,010	1,000	-1.0%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	1,813	1,836	1.3%	21,611	21,749	0.6%	591	604	2.2%
Unclassified	252	390	54.8%	228	393	72.4%	829	640	-22.8%
Government	565	562	-0.5%	28,965	29,059	0.3%	718	734	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,956</b>	<b>8,209</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>133,537</b>	<b>133,587</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

Note: All figures are 1st Quarter of 2015 and 2016.

**River Valley RC Per Capita Income**  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



**Industry Mix 2016**  
Source: See Industry Mix data on Page 2.



**MARK BUTLER - COMMISSIONER, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
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Workforce Statistics & Economic Research; E-mail: [Workforce\\_Info@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:Workforce_Info@gdol.ga.gov) Phone: (404) 232-3875

## Industry Mix - 1st Quarter of 2016

	Number OF Firms	Employment		WEEKLY WAGE
		NUMBER	PERCENT	
<b>Goods-Producing</b>	<b>1,051</b>	<b>19,194</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>874</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	192	1,778	1.3	630
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	13	226	0.2	1,082
Construction	577	4,680	3.5	761
Manufacturing	269	12,510	9.4	947
Apparel	3	*	*	*
Beverage and Tobacco Product	2	*	*	*
Chemical	19	573	0.4	976
Computer and Electronic Product	3	298	0.2	701
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component	6	1,390	1.0	1,855
Fabricated Metal Product	40	581	0.4	725
Food	31	3,497	2.6	684
Furniture and Related Product	21	459	0.3	507
Machinery	13	875	0.7	988
Miscellaneous	14	151	0.1	507
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	18	200	0.1	794
Paper	2	*	*	*
Plastics and Rubber Products	8	208	0.2	686
Primary Metal	4	*	*	*
Printing and Related Support Activities	29	327	0.2	927
Textile Mills	6	527	0.4	625
Textile Product Mills	7	33	0.0	516
Transportation Equipment	20	1,407	1.1	1,278
Wood Product	23	874	0.7	730
<b>Service-Providing</b>	<b>6,206</b>	<b>84,943</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>783</b>
Utilities	23	485	0.4	1,711
Wholesale Trade	303	3,785	2.8	868
Retail Trade	1,297	15,014	11.2	457
Transportation and Warehousing	213	2,465	1.8	876
Information	95	1,366	1.0	743
Finance and Insurance	475	10,705	8.0	1,621
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	353	1,820	1.4	697
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	565	5,464	4.1	942
Management of Companies and Enterprises	71	1,515	1.1	3,278
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	412	6,162	4.6	491
Educational Services	64	904	0.7	562
Health Care and Social Assistance	893	17,621	13.2	801
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	75	935	0.7	400
Accommodation and Food Services	697	13,489	10.1	286
Other Services (except Public Administration)	670	3,214	2.4	553
<b>Unclassified - Industry not assigned</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>640</b>
<b>Total - Private Sector</b>	<b>7,647</b>	<b>104,531</b>	<b>78.2</b>	<b>799</b>
<b>Total - Government</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>29,057</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>734</b>
Federal Government	156	7,113	5.3	1,064
State Government	190	5,689	4.3	665
Local Government	216	16,255	12.2	613
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>8,209</b>	<b>133,587</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>785</b>

Note: \* Denotes confidential data relating to individual employers and cannot be released. These data use the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) categories. Average weekly wage is derived by dividing gross payroll dollars paid to all employees - both hourly and salaried - by the average number of employees who had earnings; average earnings are then divided by the number of weeks in a reporting period to obtain weekly figures. Figures in other columns may not sum accurately due to rounding. All figures are 1st Quarter of 2016.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. These data represent jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance laws.

## Labor Force Activity

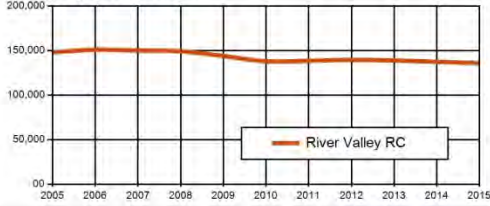
### ANNUAL AVERAGES

	Labor Force			Employed			Unemployed			Rate		
	2014	2015	% Change	2014	2015	% Change	2014	2015	% Change	2014	2015	% Change
Chattahoochee	2,234	2,199	-1.6%	2,013	2,006	-0.3%	221	193	-12.7%	9.9%	8.8%	-11.1%
Clay	915	869	-5.0%	812	771	-5.0%	103	98	-4.9%	11.3%	11.3%	0.0%
Crisp	9,460	9,314	-1.5%	8,622	8,673	0.6%	838	641	-23.5%	8.9%	6.9%	-22.5%
Dooly	4,640	4,785	3.1%	4,192	4,426	5.6%	448	359	-19.9%	9.7%	7.5%	-22.7%
Harris	15,727	15,480	-1.6%	14,790	14,672	-0.8%	937	808	-13.8%	6.0%	5.2%	-13.3%
Macon	4,734	4,689	-1.0%	4,182	4,271	2.1%	552	418	-24.3%	11.7%	8.9%	-23.9%
Marion	3,456	3,454	-0.1%	3,192	3,172	-0.6%	264	282	6.8%	7.6%	8.2%	7.9%
Muscogee	80,825	79,038	-2.2%	74,045	73,211	-1.1%	6,780	5,827	-14.1%	8.4%	7.4%	-11.9%
Quitman	891	833	-6.5%	817	777	-4.9%	74	56	-24.3%	8.3%	6.7%	-19.3%
Randolph	2,720	2,439	-10.3%	2,457	2,220	-9.6%	263	219	-16.7%	9.7%	9.0%	-7.2%
Schley	2,175	2,094	-3.7%	2,010	1,956	-2.7%	165	138	-16.4%	7.6%	6.6%	-13.2%
Stewart	2,189	2,120	-3.2%	2,025	1,979	-2.3%	164	141	-14.0%	7.5%	6.7%	-10.7%
Sumter	13,438	12,924	-3.8%	12,167	11,864	-2.5%	1,271	1,060	-16.6%	9.5%	8.2%	-13.7%
Talbot	2,805	2,708	-3.5%	2,586	2,503	-3.2%	219	205	-6.4%	7.8%	7.6%	-2.6%
Taylor	2,847	2,741	-3.7%	2,556	2,486	-2.7%	291	255	-12.4%	10.2%	9.3%	-8.8%
Webster	1,015	984	-3.1%	928	896	-3.4%	87	88	1.1%	8.6%	8.9%	3.5%
<b>River Valley RC</b>	<b>150,071</b>	<b>146,671</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>	<b>137,394</b>	<b>135,883</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>	<b>12,677</b>	<b>10,788</b>	<b>-14.9%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>-11.9%</b>
Georgia	4,756,708	4,770,873	0.3%	4,414,343	4,490,931	1.7%	342,365	279,942	-18.2%	7.2%	5.9%	-18.1%
United States	155,922,000	157,129,917	0.8%	146,305,000	148,833,417	1.7%	9,617,000	8,296,333	-13.7%	6.2%	5.3%	-14.5%

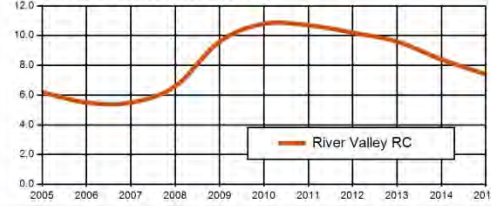
Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

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

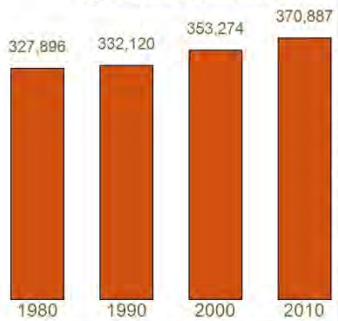
Employment Trends



Unemployment Rate Trends



Population Estimates



### Population

	2010 Census	2015 Rank	2015 Estimate	% Change 2000-2015	2025 Projected*	% Change 2010-2025
Muscogee	189,885	23	200,579	5.6	220,355	16.0
City of Columbus	189,885					
<b>River Valley RC</b>	<b>370,887</b>		<b>376,386</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>398,600</b>	<b>7.5</b>
Georgia	9,687,653		10,214,860	5.4	11,538,707	19.1
United States	308,745,538		321,418,820	4.1	349,439,199	13.2

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, \*Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.



## Top Employers - 2015\*

### TEN LARGEST EMPLOYERS

River Valley RC  
 American Family Life Assurance Co  
 Columbus State University  
 Logan's Roadhouse, Inc.  
 St Francis Hospital, Inc.  
 Synovus Financial Corp  
 The Medical Center, Inc.  
 TSYS Campus  
 Tyson Farms, Inc.  
 Walmart  
 Wellpoint, Inc.

\*Note: Represents employment covered by unemployment insurance excluding all government agencies except correctional institutions, state and local hospitals, state colleges and universities. Data shown for the Third Quarter of 2015. Employers are listed alphabetically by area, not by the number of employees.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

### SIZE CLASS

Employees	Establishments	Employment
0 - 4	4,491	6,229
5 - 9	1,394	9,326
10 - 19	1,033	13,915
20 - 49	703	21,308
50 - 99	297	20,413
100 - 249	146	21,493
250 - 499	34	11,136
500 - 999	14	10,003
1000 - and over employees	10	19,472
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,122</b>	<b>133,295</b>

Note: Data shown for the Third Quarter of 2015.

## Education of the Labor Force

### River Valley RC

#### PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

	PERCENT					
	OF TOTAL	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	6.2%	2.4%	3.0%	2.2%	5.7%	18.4%
Some High School	14.0%	20.0%	13.0%	10.8%	11.7%	17.7%
High School Grad/GED	33.5%	37.6%	29.3%	34.4%	34.8%	30.5%
Some College	23.0%	30.8%	27.5%	23.6%	21.2%	14.4%
College Grad 2 Yr	6.4%	2.9%	7.3%	9.4%	7.0%	4.3%
College Grad 4 Yr	10.7%	5.9%	14.4%	12.7%	11.3%	7.8%
Post Graduate Studies	6.2%	0.3%	5.4%	6.8%	8.5%	7.0%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Totals are based on the portion of the labor force between ages 18 - 65+. The "Some College" category represents workers with less than two years of college and no degree.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2010 Decennial Census.

## High School Graduates - 2015

	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	PRIVATE SCHOOLS*	TOTAL
Chattahoochee	87	—	87
Clay	0	—	0
Crisp	231	—	231
Dooly	64	—	64
Harris	367	—	367
Macon	103	—	103
Marion	97	—	97
Muscogee	2,041	—	2,041
Quitman	14	—	14
Randolph	69	—	69
Schley	88	—	88
Stewart	27	—	27
Sumter	255	—	255
Talbot	28	—	28
Taylor	90	—	90
Webster	34	—	34
River Valley RC	3,595	—	3,595



Note: Public schools include city as well as county schools systems.

\* Private schools data is not available for 2015 from Georgia Independent School Association.

Source: The Governor's Office of Student Achievement of Georgia.

## Colleges and Universities

### River Valley RC

#### Muscogee

Georgia Military College-Columbus Campus

Beacon University

Troy University

Embry-Riddle - Columbus Center

Columbus State University

Columbus Technical College

Georgia Military College-Ft Benning

Miller-Motte Technical College-Columbus

University of Phoenix-Columbus Georgia C

University of Phoenix-Columbus Georgia Campus

[beacon.edu](http://beacon.edu)

[benning.troy.edu](http://benning.troy.edu)

<http://fusion.erau.edu/efc/www/centerinfo.cfm?code=fb8>

[www.columbusstate.edu](http://www.columbusstate.edu)

[www.columbus-tech.edu/](http://www.columbus-tech.edu/)

[www.gmccolga.us](http://www.gmccolga.us)

[www.miller-motte.edu](http://www.miller-motte.edu)

[www.phoenix.edu](http://www.phoenix.edu)

[www.phoenix.edu](http://www.phoenix.edu)

#### Sumter

Georgia Southwestern State University

South Georgia Technical College

[gsu.edu/main/](http://gsu.edu/main/)

[www.southga-tech.edu](http://www.southga-tech.edu)

#### Crisp

Darlington College-Cordele Center

<http://www.darlington.edu>

#### Randolph

Andrew College

[www.andrewcollege.edu](http://www.andrewcollege.edu)

Note: The colleges and univ. sites listed include public and private institutions. This list is updated periodically as information becomes available.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

## Technical College Graduates - 2015\*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2013	2014	2015	2013-2014	2014-2015
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping <sup>o</sup>	71	62	107	-12.7	72.6
Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General <sup>o</sup>	27	26	45	-3.7	73.1
Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist <sup>o</sup>	6	7	23	16.7	228.6
Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft Maintenance Technology/Technician <sup>o</sup>	36	50	41	38.9	-18.0
Allied Health and Medical Assisting Services, Other <sup>o</sup>	192	100	51	-47.9	-49.0
Appliance Installation and Repair Technology/Technician <sup>o</sup>	25	12	13	-52.0	8.3
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician <sup>o</sup>	10	64	47	540.0	-26.6
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician <sup>o</sup>	256	227	469	-11.3	106.6
Biology/Biological Sciences, General	4	4	10	0.0	150.0
Business Administration and Management, General <sup>o</sup>	35	32	89	-8.6	178.1
Cabinetmaking and Millwork <sup>o</sup>	16	22	30	37.5	36.4
CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician <sup>o</sup>	7	2	3	-71.4	50.0
Carpentry/Carpenter <sup>o</sup>	53	67	105	26.4	56.7
Child Care Provider/Assistant <sup>o</sup>	146	109	185	-25.3	69.7
Computer Installation and Repair Technology/Technician <sup>o</sup>	50	54	70	8.0	29.6
Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General <sup>o</sup>	80	74	93	-7.5	25.7
Criminal Justice/Police Science <sup>o</sup>	21	14	18	-33.3	28.6
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies <sup>o</sup>	180	238	429	32.2	80.3
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	16	15	27	-6.3	80.0
Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation <sup>o</sup>	49	15	10	-69.4	-33.3
Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications, General <sup>o</sup>	32	23	36	-28.1	56.5
Data Processing and Data Processing Technology/Technician <sup>o</sup>	76	92	134	21.1	45.7
Dental Assisting/Assistant	8	7	12	-12.5	71.4
Dental Hygiene/Hygienist	14	12	15	-14.3	25.0
Diagnostic Medical Sonography/Sonographer and Ultrasound Technician	12	9	11	-25.0	22.2
Drafting and Design Technology/Technician, General <sup>o</sup>	33	22	40	-33.3	81.8
Early Childhood Education and Teaching <sup>o</sup>	63	67	111	6.3	65.7
Electrical/Electronics Equipment Installation and Repair, General <sup>o</sup>	20	14	27	-30.0	92.9
Electrician <sup>o</sup>	40	28	49	-30.0	75.0
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic) <sup>o</sup>	16	9	8	-43.8	-11.1
Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant <sup>o</sup>	84	124	259	47.6	108.9
General Office Occupations and Clerical Services <sup>o</sup>	23	15	29	-34.8	93.3
Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General <sup>o</sup>	74	89	172	20.3	93.3
Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology <sup>o</sup>	116	158	142	36.2	-10.1
Heavy Equipment Maintenance Technology/Technician <sup>o</sup>	29	23	46	-20.7	100.0
Human Resources Management/Personnel Administration, General	2	6	13	200.0	116.7



## Technical College Graduates - 2015\*

PROGRAMS	TOTAL GRADUATES			PERCENT CHANGE	
	2013	2014	2015	2013-2014	2014-2015
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology <sup>a</sup>	49	41	65	-16.3	58.5
Legal Assistant/Paralegal <sup>a</sup>	7	12	21	71.4	75.0
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other	5	5	17	0.0	240.0
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	51	66	108	29.4	63.6
Lineworker <sup>a</sup>	20	43	83	115.0	93.0
Machine Shop Technology/Assistant <sup>a</sup>	25	20	52	-20.0	160.0
Marketing/Marketing Management, General	12	9	12	-25.0	33.3
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians, Other	3	3	3	0.0	0.0
Mechanical Drafting and Mechanical Drafting CAD/CADD <sup>a</sup>	4	1	3	-75.0	200.0
Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder <sup>a</sup>	14	19	40	35.7	110.5
Medical Insurance Specialist/Medical Biller <sup>a</sup>	10	3	18	-70.0	500.0
Medical Office Assistant/Specialist <sup>a</sup>	34	34	56	0.0	64.7
Medical Reception/Receptionist <sup>a</sup>	29	21	25	-27.6	19.0
Medical/Clinical Assistant	43	41	40	-4.7	-2.4
Nail Technician/Specialist and Manicurist <sup>a</sup>	7	8	6	14.3	-25.0
Network and System Administration/Administrator <sup>a</sup>	49	64	116	30.6	81.3
Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide <sup>a</sup>	50	90	262	80.0	191.1
Parks, Recreation and Leisure Studies	7	8	12	14.3	50.0
Pharmacy Technician/Assistant	18	16	20	-11.1	25.0
Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist <sup>a</sup>	25	27	59	8.0	118.5
Physical Fitness Technician <sup>a</sup>	4	4	4	0.0	0.0
Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	13	13	27	0.0	107.7
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	44	36	86	-18.2	138.9
Respiratory Care Therapy/Therapist	12	15	12	25.0	-20.0
Retailing and Retail Operations <sup>a</sup>	4	5	12	25.0	140.0
Solar Energy Technology/Technician <sup>a</sup>	7	4	5	-42.9	25.0
Surgical Technology/Technologist <sup>a</sup>	30	20	30	-33.3	50.0
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor <sup>a</sup>	11	29	84	163.6	189.7
Welding Technology/Welder <sup>a</sup>	273	347	481	27.1	38.6

Definition: All graduates except those listed as technical certificates<sup>(a)</sup> are diploma and degree graduates. Diploma and degree programs are one to two years in length. Technical certificates are less than a year in length. Duplication may occur due to graduates with multiple awards.

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

\*Data shown represents Annual 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Note: Please visit TCSG website for any college configuration changes.



## Active Applicants - Georgia Department of Labor

	TOTAL	Mgr.	Bus. and Finance	Comp. and Math	Arch. and Eng.	Life and Soc. Svcs.	Comm. and Svcs.	Legal	Ed. and Training	Arts and Design	Health Prac.	Health Support
Chattahoochee	28	7	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	0	13	1
Clay	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
Crisp	154	21	36	3	33	1	4	0	3	6	36	11
Dooly	43	11	14	1	8	0	0	1	0	0	7	1
Harris	369	25	38	38	30	0	0	0	65	2	145	26
Macon	85	5	6	0	0	0	5	0	46	3	9	11
Marion	118	26	1	28	1	0	0	2	0	2	50	8
Muscogee	1,882	168	276	220	148	15	51	46	257	122	328	251
Quitman	7	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Randolph	11	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Schley	39	3	2	0	20	0	0	0	0	9	4	1
Stewart	74	0	12	0	0	0	2	0	46	0	0	14
Sumter	406	53	83	14	1	6	2	0	37	27	58	125
Talbot	16	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	1
Taylor	68	2	16	0	4	0	6	0	0	0	25	15
Webster	14	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Subtotal Area	3,320	339	493	304	248	25	71	49	463	171	681	476

## Active Applicants - Georgia Department of Labor (cont.)

	TOTAL	Protect Svcs.	Food Prep.	Ground Cleaning	Personal Care	Sales	Office Support	Farm. and Forestry	Construction	Installation/Main.	Prod.	Trans. and Moving
Chattahoochee	470	18	54	3	2	27	130	1	21	27	83	104
Clay	97	4	5	3	0	9	18	8	2	7	27	14
Crisp	1,483	34	43	49	22	279	376	12	17	39	341	271
Dooly	766	4	22	7	33	18	177	2	14	63	108	318
Harris	1,516	20	66	29	55	170	224	5	70	262	363	252
Macon	572	8	13	2	21	57	132	0	24	97	142	76
Marion	1,204	40	41	26	48	123	427	0	91	114	128	166
Muscogee	9,267	256	388	115	280	632	1,934	43	515	1,318	2,076	1,710
Quitman	44	2	5	19	0	4	4	0	0	2	1	7
Randolph	462	6	2	17	7	19	101	6	11	11	127	155
Schley	343	8	12	0	4	25	156	8	14	13	78	25
Stewart	394	13	11	3	22	28	61	0	23	4	113	116
Sumter	3,010	89	90	60	90	240	544	64	117	82	848	786
Talbot	463	0	29	9	4	33	138	0	4	8	147	91
Taylor	344	21	16	1	4	31	24	1	22	7	54	163
Webster	285	0	6	19	1	20	25	21	0	25	44	124
Subtotal Area	20,720	523	803	362	593	1,715	4,471	171	945	2,079	4,680	4,378

Note: For current applicant data available for a specific occupation, contact the nearest Georgia Department of Labor Career Center.  
 Source: Georgia Department of Labor (active applicants as of August 2016).

## Georgia Department of Labor Location(s)

### Career Center(s)

120 W Church Street  
Americus GA 31709-0748

**Phone:** (229) 931 - 2520

**Fax:** (229) 931 - 2433

700 Veterans Parkway  
Columbus GA 31902-0390

**Phone:** (706) 649 - 7423

**Fax:** (706) 649 - 1049

For copies of Area Labor Profiles, please visit our website at: <http://dol.georgia.gov> or contact Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Georgia Department of Labor, 148 Andrew Young International Blvd N.E., Atlanta, GA, 30303-1751. Phone: 404-232-3875; Fax: 404-232-3888 or Email us at [workforce\\_info@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:workforce_info@gdol.ga.gov)

