



## **Economic Development Year End Summary**

*Firms assisted by Chamber division increased 60% in one year*

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Council (EDC) reports 2017 year-end results of **29 new and expanding firms** adding nearly **900 new jobs and \$170 million in new capital investment to Gainesville-Hall County**. The results are a subtle increase in jobs and investment over 2016. The number of firms the EDC assisted grew by over 60% from 18 in 2016 to 29 in 2017.

Some of the job creation and investments announced in 2017 have already taken place, but for many companies, like Carroll Daniel Construction and Viking Range, their investment and job creation plans will take place in 2018. Additional business expansion decisions announced in 2017 included ProCare Rx, Mars Wrigley, Tower Sealants, Zebra Technologies and ZF Industries. And, several firms announced new headquarters and operational facilities, including Carroll Daniel, Mincey Marble and Elite Exhibits.

Not included in these statistics is the \$130 million capital investment at the new Lanier Technical College Campus on Highway 365, to be complete by fall 2018 and open for instruction in 2019. Kubota, Tatsumi and Performance Foodservice completed construction of facilities in 2017, but those capital investments were announced in the prior year and are also not included in the latest figures.

Healthcare Services in Gainesville-Hall County enhance quality of life and provide a positive economic impact. New medical office developments are underway in Gainesville, Oakwood, Flowery Branch and Braselton to improve regional access to healthcare. Northeast Georgia Medical Center recently celebrated a milestone for its new Graduate Medical Education Program set to begin in 2019. The new residency program will grow to more than 170 Graduate Medical Residents by 2023 with an anticipated \$66 million economic impact in Hall County.

Some of the area's greatest employment gains are in the Small Business sector. 99% of the 4,432 business establishments in Hall County are categorized as small, using the SBA's definition of fewer than 500 employees. 92.9% employ fewer than 50. Participation in the Chamber's monthly Small Business Seminars has grown 30% in 2017, and 25 small business owners earned the Greater Hall Chamber's "Certified Small Business Partner" designation. This was the first year the certificate program was offered to small business owners that attend at least six in the Small Business Seminar series during the calendar year.

Gainesville-Hall County's population continues to grow at almost 2% per year. Cresswinds on Lanier, Mundy Mill and Sterling on the Lake residential developments remain among the top selling in Georgia. New residential developments are underway to replenish a dwindling supply of available housing.

The year ahead will include a number of transportation improvements for Gainesville-Hall County including the completion of US 129 South of Gainesville, completion of a new Tumbling Creek Bridge, construction on the new Exit 14 interchange on I-985, continued work on bridge replacements and the much needed widening of Spout Springs Road. To discuss these and other transportation issues, the Greater Hall Chamber will host its Annual Transportation Forum on March 8 at the University of North Georgia-Gainesville.

2018 will be another big year of tourism events and attractions like the 21st Annual Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta, Atlanta Botanical Gardens Gainesville and Lanier Islands. Recent investments in the Lake Lanier Olympic Park are leading to additional events like the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships, September 13-16, 2018. Don Carter State Park is adding a 12.5-mile network of hiking and equestrian trails. Hall County is answering a growing need for a heritage welcome center in the restoration of the historic Healan's Head's Mill just off Highway 365 in Hall County.

Georgia has earned the #1 ranking for its business environment for an unprecedented fifth year in a row with Gainesville-Hall County named the top job producing Metropolitan Area in the state. The Georgia Department of Labor reports that Gainesville-Hall County added 3,355 jobs from October 2016 to October 2017, a 3.6% increase for the twelve month period. "Our Economic Development success is a result of teamwork and a spirit of dedication to the benefit of the community," said David Lee of Jackson EMC, Chamber Vice Chair of Economic Development. "The Chamber provides a forum for the business

community, educators and elected officials to work together on the issues that impact existing industries, small businesses, the healthcare community, retail and new business recruitment.”

With unemployment approaching a new 10-year low for the Gainesville-Hall County Metropolitan Area (3.6% as of November 2017), the Greater Hall Chamber, businesses and educators remain focused on Work-Based-Learning and apprenticeships for high-skilled career paths in demand by area businesses. The Chamber’s Workforce Development Task Force is a partnership with Lanier Technical College, Hall County Schools, Gainesville City Schools, Brenau University, the University of North Georgia and private businesses. The mission is to ensure businesses can acquire the talent and skills they need for sustainable growth and to replace highly skilled workers as they retire.

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**About the Gainesville-Hall County Economic Development Council**

The Gainesville-Hall County Economic Development Council is a public-private partnership of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, Hall County and the Cities of Gainesville, Flowery Branch, Lula and Oakwood. The Economic Development Council provides one-stop marketing and economic development services to support the community’s efforts in existing industry retention, new business recruitment, small business development and retail development. [www.greaterhallchamber.com](http://www.greaterhallchamber.com)

**About the Georgia Department of Economic Development**

The Georgia Department of Economic Development is the state’s sales and marketing arm, the lead agency for attracting new business investment, encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, aligning workforce education and training with in-demand jobs, locating new markets for Georgia products, attracting tourists to Georgia, and promoting the state as a destination for arts and location for film, music and digital entertainment projects. [www.georgia.org](http://www.georgia.org)