

GAINESVILLE-HALL COUNTY MARKET REPORT



NORTHEAST GEORGIA HEALTH SYSTEM

A rendering of the new Gainesville Northeast Georgia Medical Center tower, which, when built, will make the hospital the third largest in the state of Georgia.

Gainesville–Hall County invests in healthcare expansions

BY RANDY SOUTHERLAND | CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Last month, officials at Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) broke ground on a new, multi-story tower at Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC), its flagship hospital in Gainesville. The 927,000-square-foot tower will be located next to the existing North Patient Tower and will make the hospital the third largest in the state by bed size. It's scheduled for completion in early 2025.

The construction project is part of a trend toward expanding healthcare choices in Hall County and northeast Georgia, driven by the population growth occur-

ring in Hall and surrounding counties.

"It seems like even more people started moving to our region during the Covid-19 pandemic, as remote working has become more accepted across many industries, often coming from metro Atlanta or out of state," said Carol Burrell, CEO of NGHS, which is based in Gainesville. "All that growth means we have more people relying on us as their local health system and we need to grow to keep pace with that demand for our services."

NGHS is "focused on smart growth, though, being good stewards of our resources as a non-



Carol Burrell is president and CEO of Northeast Georgia Health System.

profit," said Burrell. "That means we're always assessing which services each community across our large service area needs most access to locally, what makes sense to have within a reasonable drive and what we can provide through technology like video visits and tele-consults."

The busy emergency department will move into larger quarters on the ground floor of the new tower, which will also house heart and vascular services provided by Georgia Heart Institute including diagnostic testing, cardiac catheters and open-heart surgery.

Other improvements to NGMC

Gainesville include a new rooftop helipad, an expanded stroke center, cranial surgery and inpatient care for neurology patients. There will also be more surgical rooms, an additional 150 new beds and other enhancements.

"In Gainesville, [the hospital expansion] is further strengthening the core of the entire health system," said Burrell.

In late 2023, Northeast Georgia Medical Center's existing Lumpkin County facility will move to a new campus along GA-400.

NGHS is also slated to open a new medical plaza in Buford in

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CAROL BURRELL, CEO, NGHS

GAINESVILLE-HALL COUNTY MARKET REPORT

GIVING BACK

Ivesters strengthen foundation of Hall County

BY MELANIE LASOFF LEVS
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When Doug Ivester, former chairman and CEO of The Coca-Cola Co., was growing up near downtown Gainesville, Ga., Atlanta felt as far away as Paris or Tokyo. But after graduating from The University of Georgia and staking a successful career in Atlanta, Ivester knew he could give back to that rural area that has since become a small cosmopolitan region of its own.

Ten years ago, he and his wife Kay launched the Melvin Douglas and Victoria Kay Ivester Foundation Inc. to fund projects specific to Gainesville and Hall County. Its legacy includes: a \$2.2 million gift to Hall County's Early College program; a \$200,000 annual donation for a yearly Teacher of the Year banquet for recipients from Gainesville and Hall County public schools, including \$10,000 each to the winners; millions to the Atlanta Botanical Garden Gainesville for multiple projects; UGA scholarships for Hall students; and the purchase of a price of property in downtown Gainesville's square to build the Gainesville Renaissance, which includes Brenau University's new Lynn J. Darby School of Psychology and Adolescent Counseling.

Ivester spoke to Atlanta Business Chronicle about how his foundation is working with leaders in his hometown to keep the area vital. The full Q&A is on the Chronicle website.



What was Gainesville-Hall County like when you were growing up?

Back in those days, the idea of going to Atlanta would be the equivalent of, let's say, going to Paris or Tokyo today. Today it's pretty cosmopolitan and a great community. It's probably 10-20 times larger than it was when I was growing up and it's still a small town.

What have been some of the most significant changes in the area?

It's essentially the basics we all know about. One is transportation. It's very easy to get to and move around anywhere in North Georgia today. The second is there have been significant improvements in the education system in Hall County and Gainesville. The secret to long-term success is centered in the education system. I continue to be impressed with everything they're doing up there. Gainesville has benefited from some great leadership. [Another factor] that's aided that community is the long-term development of the healthcare system. Northeast Georgia



CARROLL DANIEL CONSTRUCTION

Doug Ivester, center, and wife Kay at the groundbreaking of Gainesville Renaissance in downtown Gainesville. The couple's foundation is funding several projects for the county, their hometown where they met when they were five years old.

Health System expands all the way up to the North Carolina border and up I-85 and all the way over to GA-400. The state and city were also able to attract Kubota up there. There have been really strong investments over the years and they have paid off.

What role has your hometown played in your success?

I grew up with two parents who would sacrifice almost anything for me to get a decent education. When I was in high school, my dad became president of the PTA. If you're 16, the last thing you want is for your dad to be president of the PTA. But he [and my mother] were there all the time looking out for the school and for me. It was a stretch for a kid from North Hall High School to get into UGA. UGA was bigger than Gainesville when we went there. I think all that infrastructure that was up there, my family infrastructure and the public education system, gave me the tools to make my way through.

What led you to establish your foundation in 2012?

I did a lot of research about establishing a foundation. I did it to have an impact. After some consultation with a number of people I respect, we decided the best thing to do was to restrict the scope. By restricting the scope, you increase the effectiveness and the impact. In our case, we decided on geographic restriction. Ours is restricted to Hall County.

How does the foundation work? With several people I've known a long time, we put together a board. We have no

office, no website, none of the things people generally spend money on. The entire organization is focused on having an impact in the community. We do not accept requests. We go out and spend time with people and try to understand what they're doing and why they're doing it. Then we say, "We want to help you."

What are some projects the foundation has funded that mean the most to you?

One would be Early College. We started going to Early College, meeting students and faculty. Then we said, "We don't think your teachers are getting enough recognition." They had a Teacher of the Year award in Hall County but we couldn't find where there's a lot of benefit to the teacher. Then we went to the superintendent of the city of Gainesville school system. The idea was to bring attention to successful teaching, to the fact that teaching is a valued profession.

We are also working on something now with the [Atlanta] Botanical Garden Gainesville. There are basically four elements to what we [funded]: a spectacular amphitheater; a visitor center; a children's garden and parking. It sounds dull to sponsor a parking lot but we had to because it's a great place to visit, but if people can't park, they can't visit.

What are your goals for the new Gainesville Renaissance? What I wanted to accomplish is what the name says, a renaissance for downtown Gainesville. Someone

needed to jump-start downtown. So I thought the best thing to do would be to buy the south side of the square downtown. The first floor is commercial, the second floor has been leased by Brenau University for the Lynn J. Darby School of Psychology and Adolescent Counseling, and the third floor will be residences. We made arrangements to take over the lot next to the building and it will become Renaissance Park. The architecture and quality of the building raises the bar for everything around the square.

What advice do you have for developers interested in the area?

If you're interested in an area and focus on it, then you educate yourself on the needs, the capabilities and the long-term goals of a project. The Darby School at Brenau is an example. There's a huge shortage of adolescent counselors across the state of Georgia. We identified that, we talked about that a lot and went to Brenau. Then it's a matter of investing in it to make it a superior resource for the county.

What is the future of the foundation?

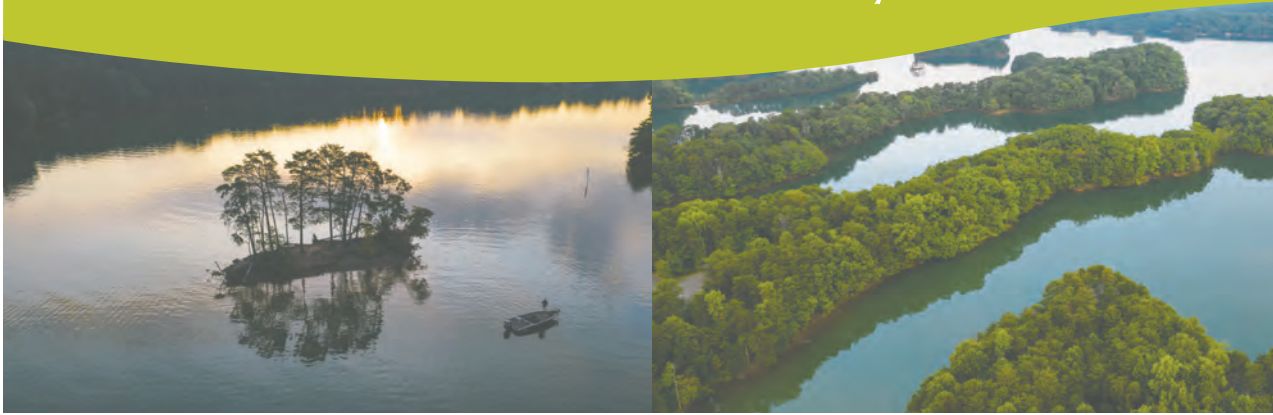
Year by year, we will expand the scope of what we're doing or we will reach out for a different project that complements the total body of work we're trying to accomplish. Think of us as a spoke in the wheel. The wheel is the Hall County chamber, industry, political and social and educational leadership up there. Hopefully we can be a strong spoke.

*Future Tower –
Northeast Georgia Medical Center Gainesville*



NGMC Gainesville is building a new tower, which will make the hospital the third-largest in the state when it opens in 2024/25.

Gainesville-Hall County, GA



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GAINESVILLE-HALL COUNTY MARKET REPORT

VIEWPOINT

Gainesville-Hall County invests in its future

Entities such as city and county governments, community, work together

Business, industry and healthcare leaders are making long-term investments in the growth of the Gainesville-Hall County metro area, which includes Hall County and the cities of Gainesville, Oakwood, Flowery Branch, Lula, Clermont, Gillsville, and portions of Buford and Braselton. These long-term investments require a commitment to develop a highly skilled workforce and to recruit new world-class talent.

Georgia has been the No. 1 state in the nation for business during the last eight years, and Gainesville-Hall County has remained in the Top Ten Small Metros in the nation for Site Selection magazine and the Milken Institute. Since 2015, 134 new and expanded businesses have announced more than 7,000 new jobs and \$1.7 billion in new



Phil Sutton is the 2021-2022 chair of the Greater Hall Chamber.

capital investment in Gainesville-Hall County. With his historically low unemployment in Georgia and the U.S., Gainesville-Hall County's new job growth is fueled by new residents and efforts to grow our future workforce.

The Gainesville-Hall County population is 215,000 with

annual growth projected at 1.5%, and it will exceed 250,000 residents in the next decade.

Preparing the next generation for the workplace is a collaborative effort between Lanier Technical College, the University of North Georgia, Brenau University, Hall County Schools and Gainesville City Schools. Each of these institutions has developed articulation agreements for coursework and



William Bagwell is the chair-elect of the Greater Hall Chamber.

credits to carry on to the next institution. Practical workplace experience is encouraged and available for high school and college students through Work-Based Learning, internships and co-op programs. "German-style" employer-sponsored apprenticeships, certifications and skills-based

boot camps have become routine in workforce development.

Additional housing also is coming. During 2021, the local governments of Gainesville-Hall County approved development plans for a record 2,229 new single-family homes, almost 50% more than the previous single-family permit record set in 2020. Currently, there are more than 2,500 new apartment units in development, includ-

ing 800 in downtown Gainesville. The adage "retail follows rooftops" is visible with new retail, attractions, restaurants and services in the downtowns of Gainesville, Flowery Branch, Oakwood and Lula.

The Greater Hall Chamber's Vision 2030 began in 2005 to seek community input to set goals for the future. Some of the big goals developed include supporting the region's healthcare center, public art, transportation, diversity, downtown development, green space, trails, walkable communities, tourism and the Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Many of the Vision 2030 big ideas have been realized, but there is still much more to achieve.

The local option sales taxes for special purpose infrastructure and education both recently passed a public referendum with 70% approval. These additional commitments to infrastructure and education represent support for many of the big ideas that will take Gainesville-Hall County to our Vision 2030 and beyond.

Lead where it counts.

Katherine "Kat" Torres, '21, is the first UNG graduate to earn the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship. She is one of only 45 in the nation to receive the fellowship this year. Earlier, the first-generation graduate studied abroad in Ireland and Australia, garnered the Newman Civic Fellowship, and won three other prestigious scholarships, including a Fulbright Student Award.

 **Learn more**
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GAINESVILLE-HALL COUNTY MARKET REPORT

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May. Another medical office in Jefferson will open in August. Next year, medical offices will be opening in Bethlehem while the Dawsonville medical plaza is undergoing expansion.

Braselton in Hall County is getting a new ambulatory surgery center and medical plaza in 2023, which will allow patients to stay in the area for complex surgical procedures without going to the hospital.

Braselton is also getting a one-stop destination for cancer care. Located on the campus of NGMC Braselton, the Braselton Cancer Center now boasts a dedicated entrance and parking, along with an expanded facility. While patients could previously visit both Longstreet Clinic's Medical Oncology and Hematology and Northeast Georgia Physicians Group's Radiation Oncology, they had to travel to multiple locations.

Longstreet Clinic has more than doubled its space, adding a larger waiting area and more exam rooms.

"The consistent theme across all of our current projects is giving people convenient, local access to the care they need most," said Burrell.

Georgia lags behind other states in



CARROLL DANIEL CONSTRUCTION

Brenau University's Lynn J. Darby School of Psychology and Adolescent Counseling recently moved to the Gainesville Renaissance, becoming part of the Brenau downtown Gainesville campus.

access to mental health care, but that may change thanks to the expansion of Brenau University's psychology school.

The Lynn J. Darby School of Psychology & Adolescent Counseling recently moved to the Gainesville Renaissance, becoming part of the Brenau downtown Gainesville campus. The new building was developed by

Gainesville native Doug Ivester, a Brenau trustee and a former CEO of The Coca-Cola Co. He and his wife Kay also funded the naming of the Darby School in honor of a longtime friend who also serves as a trustee of the couple's foundation (see page 30A).

Moving the psychology program downtown from Brenau's Gainesville

campus, where it was spread across several buildings, brings it all under one roof and into one school.

New programs planned at the Darby school include a dance/movement therapy certificate program, beginning January 2023, and a doctorate in clinical psychology, set to begin in fall 2023.

One of the goals of the expanded programs is to produce more clinical psychologists who can meet the state's growing need for mental health services.

"We're ranked near the bottom in terms of access to mental health care, across all states," said Julie Battle, chair of the Darby School.

"Of course with Covid, there's been increased need for health care, with everybody being isolated and people being stuck at home. We've seen increased rates of alcoholism, suicidality, increased rates of domestic violence, increased rates of child abuse."

The school also houses a clinic staffed by faculty-supervised graduate students. The increased space is expected to add capacity for about 10 additional patients a week. About 10% to 15% of the clinic's clients are Brenau students, faculty or staff, according to Battle, and the rest are from the local community.



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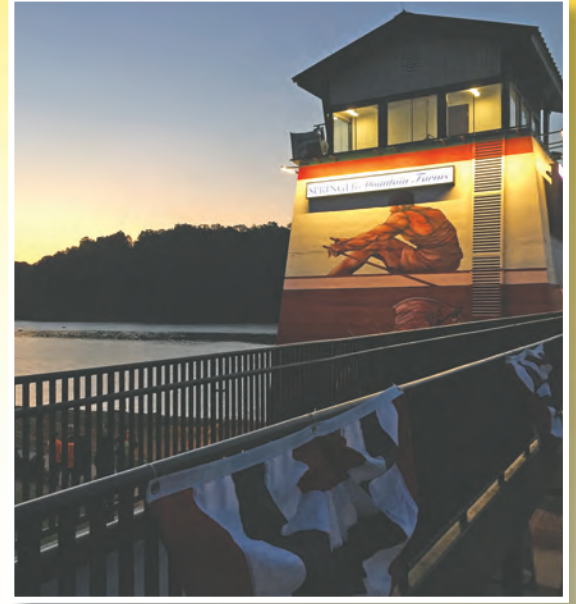
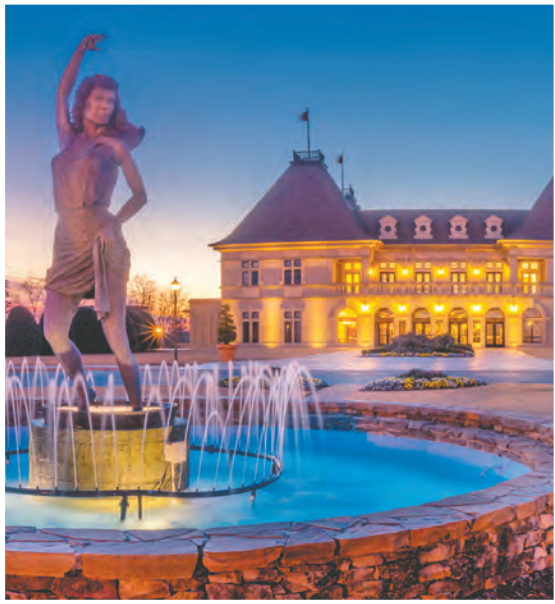


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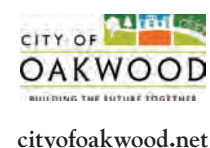
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GAINESVILLE-HALL COUNTY MARKET REPORT

Build it in Hall County and they will come

BY DOUG DELOACH
Contributing Writer

Build it and they will come – and attend live concerts; eat; book an event; stay in a hotel and generally help the local economy.

That's the plan in Gainesville-Hall County, where multiple arts, entertainment and hospitality projects and community site developments are underway.

"We have growing populations who want outdoor entertainment venues, as well as more varied entertainment options," said Tim Evans, vice president for economic development at the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce. "We're seeing both the private sector and nonprofits stepping up to meet that demand."

In 2015, the city devised a master plan "outlining what we wanted to make happen in terms of revitalization," said Gainesville City Manager Bryan Lackey. "A downtown hotel was part of it."

That hotel has come to fruition. The National is a \$75 million project by Capstone Property Group, which includes a 130-room Courtyard by Marriott hotel, convention center and outdoor plaza alongside a 157-unit apartment complex. Currently under construction, the Marriott Courtyard scheduled completion date is May 2023, according to Jeff Payne, Capstone chairman, who added that the plaza and parking deck will be completed at the same time.

The apartment tower is slated for completion in June 2023.

"The hotel will provide upscale accommodations within walking access to downtown restaurants and concert venues," Payne said, "while the apartment residents will have an ongoing positive impact on shops and restau-

CLOSER LOOK

GAINESVILLE-HALL COUNTY STATISTICS

- Estimated population: Hall County 203,136; Gainesville 48,878
- Growth rate: 1.38% in 2021; 18.39% since 2010
- 11th largest county in Georgia
- Median income (in 2020 dollars): Hall County \$63,651; Gainesville \$53,662

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce



CITY OF FLOWERY BRANCH

Flowery Branch visitors and residents are witnessing construction of a large wood pavilion, expected to be completed by August, for vendors at the Flowery Branch Farmers Market.

rants in the area."

Hotel guests may find themselves at a new concert venue. Last year, The Arts Council, a nonprofit charitable arts organization in Gainesville, completed construction of an outdoor pavilion and stage. The facility can seat 300 for meals and celebrations, and the adjacent grounds accommodate more than 2,000 attendees.

Also in Gainesville, in January, under provisions stipulated by the city's downtown tax allocation district, the City Council allocated about \$2.2 million in tax incentives to Colorado Springs-based B Entertainment for development of a leisure complex, which includes a 15,000-square-foot music and event venue called Boot Barn Hall, a 9,000-square-foot Bourbon Brothers Smokehouse & Tavern and an 8,000-square-foot outdoor patio. The complex is scheduled to open around Christmas.

At Lake Lanier Olympic Park



Tim Evans, vice president for economic development at Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

(LLOP), site of water events at the 1996 Olympic Games, the park plaza, beach and boat ramp attract some 300,000 visitors annually. Plans for the improved LLOP include construction of a new boathouse, additional parking and a pavilion. The boathouse will feature a ballroom and meeting space with catering capacity.

In August 2021, the LLOP Foundation launched a campaign to raise \$1.5 million to fund these and other capital improvements including courtesy docks, a one-mile-loop walking trail and public art. "We've raised almost half of our goal and we're trying to get all of these things done in time for hosting the NCAA Women's Rowing National Championships...in 2026," said Mimi Collins, chair of the LLOP Foundation.

In nearby Flowery Branch, Atlanta-based The Residential Group recently completed a two-story mixed-use develop-

ment with 13 apartments situated above 7,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space. The residential units are full, according to Renee Carden, downtown events and public information officer, and the company is now seeking retail tenants.

Flowery Branch also is the site of a large wood pavilion, expected to be completed by August, for vendors at the Flowery Branch Farmers Market. The pavilion will be equipped with electrical outlets and fans, and have room for around 32 vendors. After market hours, the pavilion will be an event venue.

Next on the city's agenda is developing Market Alley, as well as a half-acre pocket park with amphitheater seating on Church Street. "The idea is to create spaces where families can create memories," said Carden, "and that will attract new people to downtown."

"The hotel will provide upscale accommodations within walking access to downtown restaurants and concert venues, while the apartment residents will have an ongoing positive impact..."

JEFF PAYNE, chair of Capstone, on The National project