2016
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COFFEE COUNTY, GA
Optima Chemical, a local industry that quietly operates one of the most important operations in Coffee County, continues to inject new investment in job growth for the community. The company provides specialty chemicals, toll and custom manufacturing to the pharmaceutical industry, nutritional products, flavors and fragrances, and electronics for the bioscience and specialty chemical markets. Optima has experienced continual growth over past several years. Optima made $5 million capital improvements in 2015 and has the same planned for 2016. Many jobs at Optima require high-skill labor and provide top wages.
Elixir Industries Extrusion Division becomes Elixir Extrusions

Elixir Industries Extrusion Division in Douglas has become Elixir Extrusions as a group of new investors, including several of the family members of the original owner Roland Sahm of California, acquire the plant. The Extrusion Division opened in Douglas in 1986. Business for the plant is booming, says Philip Smith, Plant Manager, who began working for the company in 2000 when the company had 75 employees. Currently they have 230 employees. The company will also purchase an existing 72,000 square foot industrial building in Southwest Industrial Park that they have been leasing for a year. Over the last year the company has created 70 new jobs in Douglas and invested over $750,000 in equipment upgrades.

Smith says one of the reasons the company is experiencing growth is because of the demand for their products in the LED lighting industry.

The Douglas plant continues to supply the metal framework for the Elixir Door & Metals plant on Pope Drive, now owned by JMAC, a company out of Columbus, Ohio. They also continue to produce aluminum extrusions for the Club Car Precedent golf vehicles, utility and four wheel-drive vehicles, medical equipment, the food industry, heavy machinery, electrical, transportation, building and construction, and the solar industry.

Spectrum expands to nearly 700,000 sq ft

After nearly four decades in Douglas, Spectrum Distribution increased its space by adding 125,000 square feet in 2015 and plans to add another 100,000 square feet in 2016. When completed, Spectrum occupy nearly 700,000 square feet. The expansion will make the facility the second largest industrial building in Douglas. Only Wal-Mart Distribution Center is larger at 1,000,000 square feet.
INDUSTRY IN COFFEE COUNTY

Local entrepreneurs bring Sunbelt Power Solutions to Douglas

Sunbelt Power Solutions, a new and exciting industry, is coming to Coffee County. JoAnne Lewis made the announcement Friday at the city’s annual outdoor expo in late August. Sunbelt Power Solutions will manufacture mobile solar units that will be shipped throughout the South.

Sunbelt Power Solutions is the brainchild of Dwayne Gillis, who has been working in solar panels for years and is working now to bring power to those who need it the most. He and his business partner, Bill Elliott, a retired banker, former long-time Douglas resident and leader of the company’s marketing, are working together to set up the company and begin production.

The mobile solar units are to be sold in states across the South, including Alabama, Georgia, and namely South Carolina, where a contract for solar power can bring the company 20 cents per kilowatt. There will be many clients for the company because of the financial benefits of solar power, but the most important clients, as Bill Elliot pointed out, will be farmers. Agriculture is the leading industry in the South, and under the current USDA farm bill farmers will receive 25 percent for investing in solar energy. The manufacturing plant will be bringing jobs to our area and much a much needed financial boost for the agriculture industry throughout the South.
INDUSTRY IN COFFEE COUNTY

Peanut Partners, LLC open new peanut buying point

Contractors have been busy in Douglas as several local entrepreneurs recently broke ground at Peanut Partners, LLC, a new peanut buying point located on the Sinkhole Road just inside the city limits.

The facility buys peanuts for members at Tifton Quality Peanuts, LLC as well as for outside farmers.

Peanut Partners received, weighed, cleaned, dried, inspected, graded and stored peanuts at the buying point, which features a 10,000-ton storage facility.

Clarkie Leverette, Phil Murray and Lyle Gaskins have 25 to 30 employees at the new facility. Most of those will be seasonal, but some will be year-round, full-time positions.

The investment included the purchase of 100 semi-trailers and 50 28-foot wagons.

Acquisition of the Sinkhole Road property, a 115 acre site, was made in early 2014 from the Douglas-Coffee County Economic Development Authority (EDA).

PalletOne to open new location in Douglas

PalletOne, the nation’s largest new pallet manufacturer, will open a new manufacturing plant in Douglas at the former location of Marine Manufacturing off Shirley Avenue.

Work began December with 15 employees. The Douglas facility will repair recycled pallets. “We are very excited to be doing business in Coffee County,” remarked Bo Reese, Southeast Region Manager. “We hope to grow and expand our business here.”
Premium Peanut makes $50 million investment for Coffee County

Premium Peanut, LLC, located just west of the city of Douglas on a 42 acre tract on Barrington Road between Sinkhole Road and Highway 32, has started shelling peanuts. Initial site work started last week. The plant entails close to $50 million in capital investment and employs approximately 100 people.

Organization of the company was started in November 2014 by seven peanut buying points, which will warehouse peanuts for the growers at harvest and supply them to the shelling plant during the year. The Board of Directors for Premium Peanut represents each of the seven buying points - Steve Dixon, Dixon Farm Supply; Gabe Evans, Irwinville Peanut and Grain Co; Ralph G Evans Sr., Douglas Peanut and Grain Co; Kent Fountain, Southeastern Gin; Gene Waldron, Deep South Peanut Co; Drew Walker, Jeff Davis Peanut and Grain; Scott Williams, Dixie Peanut Producers; Gary Evans, Premium Peanut, LLC.

The peanut is the official state crop for Georgia. Georgia is the number one producer of peanuts in the United States, producing 48 percent of the entire U.S. crop. About 70 counties in Georgia produce more nearly 2 billion pounds of peanut each year. The peanut industry contributes about 50,000 jobs in Georgia. In Georgia there are approximately 200 peanut related businesses. One more can be added to the list – Premium Peanut in Coffee County.
Coffee County’s newest hotel, the Marriott–Fairfield, is set to open in April. The $6 million, which will bring 25 jobs to the community, is the vision of Dr. Dushyant Patel and his wife Amita. Once again, they stepped up to provide new quality lodging for Coffee County. Ten years after investing in the Holiday Inn Express, they recognized the need for additional lodging opportunities locally. The Marriott-Fairfield is located on 441 South near the airport.
Bethany Hospice of Douglas
Dedicated to Helping You

When end of life care is needed, Bethany Hospice of Douglas is always there to assist in such difficult times. Studies have demonstrated that proper hospice care extends both the length and quality of a patient’s life. The goal of Bethany Hospice is to treat body, mind, and soul, and allow the patient to pass in peace. Bethany also remains with the family to assist them through the grieving process. A two-time winner of the prestigious Hospice Honors award, Bethany is focused on fostering a positive outcome for each patient and his or her family. Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurers cover hospice care. For more information, visit www.bethany-hospice.com. Provider number 092-154H.

What does Bethany Hospice provide?
- Coverage of medications related to your illness
- Medical equipment and supplies related to your illness
- Assistance with personal care and bathing
- Nurse, social work, chaplain and volunteer visits
- 24 hour on-call nurses
- Grief counseling and support
- Respite, continuous or inpatient care, when appropriate
- Locally owned

Serving this Community Since 2007

Bethany Hospice does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, ability to pay, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.

Water is Life

Wells / Pumps / Repairs
Douglas - (912) 384-3209
RESIDENTIAL • IRRIGATION • MUNICIPAL • COMMERCIAL
Georgia Trend recently named Coffee Regional Medical Center as one of the top 3 small hospitals in Georgia. We were ranked based on patient satisfaction and quality of care, among other factors. Our caregivers are an important part of this achievement because of the difference they make for our patients and their families.

For more information, visit us at coffeeregional.org or call (912) 384-1900.
The December issue of Georgia Trend magazine has named Coffee Regional Medical Center one of Georgia’s Top Small Hospitals 2015. The magazine’s list includes facilities throughout the state, divided into five separate categories. Coffee Regional was named a Top Hospital in the Small Hospital category.

The Information used to compile the ranking relied on publicly available information from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and is available online at [www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov). Data collected includes quality of care, patient satisfaction, mortality and readmissions statistics and data on hospital-acquired infections and conditions. To prepare the Top Hospital list, Georgia Trend worked with the researchers and healthcare professionals at the WellStar Health System in Marietta. The WellStar team accessed the CMS database and compiled the data mathematically; decisions on how to present the data were made by Georgia Trend.

This recognition comes on the heels of Coffee Regional Medical Center recently being designated by The Joint Commission as one of 1,224 hospitals in the United States earning the distinction of Top Performer on Key Quality measures. The Joint Commission recognition requires that hospitals attain and sustain excellence in accountability measures and performance. CRMC was recognized for exemplary performance in evidence-based clinical processes that were shown to improve care for certain conditions, including heart failure, pneumonia, surgical care and immunizations.

CRMC President/CEO, Vicki Lewis, stated, “We’re extremely proud of these acknowledgements which recognize the dedication and skill of our staff. I’d like to express my gratitude to our caregivers, medical staff, Board of Directors, and Auxiliary for working as a team to make this happen. All of us at Coffee Regional remain focused on our purpose: To Serve, To Heal, To Save.”

---

**Celebrating 29 Years of Excellence in Dentistry**

American Dental Association
Honorable Fellow of the Georgia Dental Association
Pierre Fauchard Academy
American College of Dentists
International College of Dentists
Academy of LDS Dentists

Preventive Dentistry • Crown/Bridge/Implants
Cosmetic Restorations • Removable Partial and Dentures

**Dr. Timothy Fussell**

EXCELLENCE IN DENTISTRY SINCE 1987

Conveniently located at
1390 West Gordon Street, Westover Place
Douglas • 912-384-5474
Credit Cards Accepted
Construction begins on new allied health, public safety building

Wiregrass Georgia Technical College
Douglas Campus

Wiregrass Georgia Technical College broke ground Tuesday, May 5, at what will be the new location for the school’s allied health and public safety programs on the Coffee County campus. The facility is scheduled to open for the Fall 2016 term. The building will also house the campus student center, library, and bookstore, and will serve over 700 students.
In 2015, the men’s and women’s swim teams once again finished among the top junior colleges in the nation. At the national meet in Buffalo, N.Y. in March, the women’s team finished fourth while the men came in fifth. In the spring, the college named Maudine Wright as the Alumna of the Year at the annual President’s Gala. Also, SGSC saw the completion of one on-campus project, the renovation of the Alumni House, which is where the college’s president lived for many years, and the beginning of another project – the much-needed Davis Hall renovation. The college capped the year by posting a one percent increase in enrollment growth. SGSC also began a B-term for the first time this fall, which affords students even more on-campus academic opportunities.
Longtime Douglas - Coffee County Chamber of Commerce President and Economic Development Authority Executive Director Joanne Lewis abruptly tendered her letter of resignation in October during a meeting of the Chamber executive board and EDA members. Andrea Taylor, who had worked under Lewis for five years in various capacities, was named Lewis’s successor.

In her letter of resignation, Lewis stated: “Since January 12, 2004, I have been employed as Executive Director for the Douglas-Coffee County Economic Development Authority (Authority) and also served as the President of the Douglas-Coffee County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber). Although the job requires wearing two hats and answering to two managing bodies, our focus has always been united through one main goal; that goal is growing jobs and business for the economic well-being of Douglas-Coffee County, Georgia.

I feel we have made great strides toward this goal. I wish I could take credit, but I cannot. I give all the credit to a strong group of local leaders and citizens that understand the importance of economic development.

Leadership did not happen overnight; it began in a strong way during the 1950s when a small group of young professionals joined in mind and spirit for the economic good of our community by forming what we now call the EDA. The result of their vision and determination continually reminds me of the important role that young leaders play in the planning and implementation process for economic development in any community; thus is the reason for this letter.

It is time for me to step down and give young professionals the opportunity to lead our community toward economic prosperity. After twelve wonderful years, I plan to retire February 1, 2016. This resignation is bound by my hopes that we will continue to applaud the past, embrace the future and do so with the same “can-do” spirit as those who have previously led the Authority and Chamber for nearly six decades as a united force to promote the economic well-being of Douglas-Coffee County, Georgia.”

Lewis will remain as an employee, working specific industrial and retail projects until February 1, 2016.

Taylor grew up in Coffee County, attending Ambrose Elementary School and Coffee High School before attending college at South Georgia College then Valdosta State University, achieving a degree in English and art. Taylor then attended The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa where she received a graduate teaching assistantship while completing her master’s degree in art history, graduating magna cum laude.

After finishing her degree, she stayed on as a full-time professor of art history, lecturing in the classroom and directing study abroad programs for students to Italy during the summers before moving home to Coffee County in 2008.

“I always knew that I would come back home to raise my children,” says Taylor. “That became a reality once I had my first child in 2008. I was raised around lots of family and my grandparents, Huey and Willie Grace Fussell, who were so influential on my life. In the same way, I wanted my children to be close grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.”

After returning to Coffee County, Taylor continued to work for The University of Alabama teaching online courses in art history, as well as working working as a staff writer for The Douglas Enterprise for two years before taking a job with the Chamber in 2010. Taylor says she hopes to continue the great tradition of leadership established in Douglas-Coffee County.

“Our county has been so blessed to have wonderful leaders who love the community and want to see it grow and prosper. We are the envy of many rural communities around our state because our leadership has always been progressive and forward-thinking.”

Andrea is the daughter of Carlton and Rose Dorminey of Ambrose and Mari Angela Fussell of Douglas. She is married to Lee Taylor and they have two children, Grayson and Whitley.
Chamber names new chairman, presents awards at annual event

The Chamber presented Brian McNeill with the Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

The Small Business of the Year Award went to the Medicine Cabinet.

Premium Peanut received the 2015 Industry of the Year Award.

At the 89th Annual Chamber of Commerce Event, which took place on Thursday, Jan. 28, 2016, the Chamber welcomed a new chairman, Stanley Lott, and presented its annual slate of local economic development awards.

Pictured are Jane McMillen of Colony Bank and Philip Smith of Elixir Extrusions, who served on the Chamber Board of Directors last year.

Here are the awards for the caterers: Best Presentation went to J&D, Best Food went to Marguerite McKinnon Catering, and People’s Choice went to Simply Southern -- Denise Paulk and Stephanie Spivey.

Incoming chairman Stanley Lott (blue shirt) and family are pictured with keynote speaker Joe Sports and his wife, Ronda.
Business is brewing in Douglas-Coffee County, Georgia.

In Douglas-Coffee County we believe leadership should be strong and progress smooth. Building on our past while investing in our future, our community leaders, businesses and citizens work together to benefit the bottom line and enrich our quality of life. With one vision and a lot of Coffee fans, we are making Douglas-Coffee one sweet place to live.

(912) 384-1873 • www.DouglasGA.org