

## **Nine New Communities Join First Nine Rural Zones** *New tools available to help revitalize rural downtowns*

ATLANTA, GA (October 16, 2018) – During the 2017 legislative session, the General Assembly tasked the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Department of Economic Development with implementing and overseeing a Rural Zone designation program, which provides tax credits to individuals creating jobs and making qualifying investments within historic downtown areas. This year, the state has designated the communities of Avondale Estates, Greensboro, Hartwell, Hogansville, Jesup, Locust Grove, Monticello, Sylvester, and Waycross as Rural Zones. Portions of each community designated as a Rural Zone – primarily historic downtown areas – now allow for tax credits to eligible businesses that create jobs and investors that purchase or rehabilitate buildings within the designated Zone.

While no activities to earn credits can begin before January 1, communities may begin the process of developing their strategy, disseminating marketing material, and informing businesses and investors of the benefits available after the first of the year. Each Rural Zone designation lasts for a period of five years.

Rural Zones focus on job creation and private investment in designated areas. The program includes three tax credit incentives: a Job Tax Credit, Investment Credit, and Rehabilitation Credit. The basic criteria required for communities seeking the designation include: having a population less than 15,000, having a core downtown area with structures older than fifty years, demonstrating blight or disinvestment in the downtown area, having implemented a strategic plan for the downtown area, and completing market analysis indicating gaps within the local business makeup.

For more information, please visit: [www.dca.ga.gov](http://www.dca.ga.gov).

### **About the Georgia Department of Community Affairs**

*The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) partners with communities to create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses through community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, DCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions, and promote volunteerism. DCA also helps qualified low- and moderate-income Georgians buy homes, rent housing, and prevent foreclosure and homelessness. For more information, visit [www.dca.ga.gov](http://www.dca.ga.gov).*

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