



Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Mike Beatty, Commissioner

For Immediate Release
Thursday, October 18, 2007

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Cleveland, Greenville and St. Marys Join The Ranks of Georgia's Main Street Program

Atlanta, GA - Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Mike Beatty recently announced the designation of Cleveland, Greenville and St. Marys as Georgia's newest Main Street City program participants.

"We welcome and congratulate Cleveland, Greenville and St. Marys on joining the ranks of Georgia's Main Street communities," said DCA Commissioner Beatty. "Achieving Main Street designation represents the culmination of hundreds of collective hours by many individuals and organizations in these communities."

St. Marys was designated as a "Classic" Main Street City. Cleveland and Greenville were designated as Better Hometown cities.

DCA's Office of Downtown Development (ODD) coordinates three population-based programs designed to support the growth and development of Georgia's downtowns. The Better Hometown program supports communities with populations of less than 5,000. The Georgia Main Street program supports communities with populations of 5,000-50,000. Introduced in May 2007, the Urban Main Street City program supports communities with populations greater than 50,000.

The Main Street program uses a comprehensive revitalization process originated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In 1980, Georgia became one of six pilot states to launch a statewide Main Street program of downtown economic development. Its comprehensive approach seeks to integrate a locally-driven management strategy with a focus on the physical improvement of buildings and public spaces, aggressive promotion and image building and economic development of the downtown area.

Cleveland Better Home Town Manager, Maria Jurado-Flynn was presented with the award at the recent Georgia Downtown Conference held in Columbus. Mrs. Flynn was hired as the Cleveland Better Home Town Manager in May of this year and in her first three months on the job, secured the "Better Home Town" designation from the State. Most recently she chaired the White County Sesquicentennial, the largest event White County has ever held. In addition to coordinating all special events on the square, Mrs. Flynn is working closely with the City and the downtown businesses to enhance the Cleveland Square through the addition of the new flower pots, benches, trash receptacles and the streetscaping of the sidewalks. "It's exciting to see the community coming together to beautify our downtown," said Jurado-Flynn. "I'm just proud to be given the opportunity to work with the City of Cleveland and the White County Board of County Commissioners who have joined together to make the Better Home Town program possible for Cleveland."

Stronger Downtowns Equal Economically Healthy Georgia Communities

"Georgia's downtowns often provide insight into a community's overall health. When communities step up to achieve Main Street designation, we know that the community is committed to growing and nurturing its local economy," added Beatty.

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“Simply stated, the proof is in the pudding. Since the program launch in 1980, Main Street program participants have continued to successfully leverage private and public investment into thousands of new jobs and businesses. It’s those efforts, individually and collectively, that keep Georgia strong and growing,” said Beatty.

Since Georgia’s programs were launched in 1980 and through 2006, the state and participating local governments have invested \$561.3 million in their downtowns. This public investment has been followed by \$1.2 billion in private investment. The combination of nearly \$1.75 billion has revitalized these communities and helped them add or create more than 37,600 net new jobs and 8,000 new businesses.

In June 2007, Commissioner Beatty recognized nearly 80 communities as 2007 Nationally Accredited Main Street Cities at a Georgia Municipal Association event. Earlier in the year, DCA also announced the designations of Pembroke as a Better Hometown; Villa Rica, Conyers and LaFayette as Main Street Cities; and Columbus as the state’s first Urban Main Street City.

Including the newly recognized cities, Georgia continues to operate one of the nation’s most successful Main Street programs. The state is home to more than 100 communities that have committed resources to this unique and comprehensive downtown revitalization effort.

About DCA’s Office of Downtown Development (ODD): DCA’s ODD focuses on economic development through downtown revitalization, historic preservation and restoring a sense of place. The ODD staff manages the nationally recognized Main Street and Better Hometown Program, provides specialized design assistance to communities involved in downtown projects, conducts year-round training sessions and provides a variety of resource materials. The department also offers resources to Georgia’s larger communities through its Urban Georgia Network and Urban Main Street Program. These programs assist larger, urban neighborhoods with historic core commercial districts by providing ongoing networking and information sharing opportunities.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for local governments. As outlined in its mission statement, DCA seeks opportunities that support "*partnering with communities to help create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses* " DCA operates a host of state and federal grant programs; serves as the state's lead agency in housing finance and development; promulgates building codes to be adopted by local governments; provides comprehensive planning, technical and research assistance to local governments; and serves as the lead agency for the state's solid waste reduction efforts. For more information about DCA, please visit www.dca.state.ga.us.

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