

The Columbia County Business Review

A publication of the Development Authority of Columbia County (DACC) Georgia

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Fall 2010

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENTS

Nutritional Resources, the Grovetown-based producer of dietary snacks, meals, and drinks which are marketed under the *Healthwise* label, is expanding its existing manufacturing/warehousing area by 25,000 sq. ft. According to company spokesperson Lew Jacobus, the increased demand for the firm's product line over the last few years – particularly in the West Coast market – has necessitated the space. The project architect is Jeff Parrack of **Definitive Designs Group**; the contractor for the project is **RDB Construction, Inc.** The expansion project is expected to create another 10 jobs with the company.

Nutritional Resources began operations in the mid 1990s; it currently employs 40 people. For additional information on the company, visit www.HealthWiseNRI.com.

Flint Equipment Company, a firm that supplies and services industrial, agricultural, and marine engines, has acquired the **Metrac** operation at the Horizon North Business Park, near Grovetown. Founded in Albany, Georgia in 1932, the firm now has more than 20 offices in four states, operating as a group of companies under the banner of Albany Tractor. The local operation, which also works with the nearby **John Deere** manufacturing facilities in the Horizon South Business Park, employs approximately 25 people. Additional information on the firm is available at www.AlbanyTractor.com

Office construction activity continues in the Evans Town Centre business park, with the new building for **Pediatric Partners of Augusta**. The 12,000 sq. ft. medical office facility represents the fifth new structure to be built in the Blanchard & Calhoun development in the last year. The facility is being constructed by local contracting firm **Allen-Batchelor Construction**; project financing is being provided by **First Bank of Georgia**. The new building is expected to be open by March 2011.

The Columbia County campus of **Georgia Military College (GMC)** is currently constructing a new 10,000 sq. ft. academic building near Davis Road in Martinez. GMC is a co-educational, fully accredited, liberal arts junior college that caters primarily to students who must balance employment and academics. According to campus administrator Bruce Wright, the new building will be used for classes by both GMC and the Augusta satellite of Gainesville-based **Brenau University**, which offers a variety of degree programs. Enrollment continues to increase at the local GMC campus; the academic population for both institutions on the Columbia County campus is expected to rise to 2,000 next year. For additional information on GMC, visit www.gmc.cc.ga.us.

COUNTY RECEIVES “AAA” BOND RATING

Earlier this fall, Columbia County was informed that one of the nation’s top bond rating agencies, **Fitch**, had raised the county’s general obligation bond rating to AAA, the highest possible category. Columbia County joins just three other counties in Georgia (the counties of Cobb, Forsyth, and Gwinnett) with the AAA rating. Bond ratings enable investors to assess the credit worthiness of government securities; the higher the rating, the more secure the investment. The county also maintains high general obligation bond ratings with **Standard & Poor’s** (AA+) and **Moody’s** (Aa1).

For additional information on the county’s recent rating of its water and sewerage revenue bonds (which are retired from revenues collected on such infrastructure projects) and its general obligation bonds (which are retired from tax collection), view the county’s newsletter, [Endless Opportunities](#), Volume 76, October 2010, via its website at www.ColumbiaCountyGA.gov.

SPOTLIGHT ON: Crawford Cabinets

Crawford Cabinets is a carpentry and cabinet manufacturing firm located in the Martinez area of Columbia County. Started more than 25 years ago by local entrepreneur Harold Crawford, the operation now employs more than 45 people.

In addition to its production facility in Martinez, housed in a 20,000 sq. ft. manufacturing building, the company utilizes its own cabinetry design staff and its own team of installers. In recent years, it has won numerous cabinet design awards from national firms such as KitchenAid and Wilson Art; the unique styles of Crawford Cabinets are frequently on display in area “Tour of Homes” shows.

The company also operates a design center in Aiken, serving the eastern South Carolina market. For more information on the company, visit www.CrawfordCabinets.com.

ICSC SOUTHEASTERN TRADE SHOW DRAWS RETAIL DEVELOPERS

The 2010 International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) Southeastern trade show and conference was recently held in Atlanta. The three-day event drew several thousand retailers and real estate developers for seminars, training sessions, and networking opportunities.

The DACC participated in the trade show portion of the event, manning a booth and distributing literature touting the strong demographics of the county, particularly as it relates to the total amount of disposable income held by county residents – one of the highest numbers in the state. To request a copy of demographic information on the county, contact the DACC at **1-877-807-3222**, or visit www.ChooseColumbiaCounty.com.

AVAILABLE INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

5,000 sq. ft. in Martinez Postal Park, near Bobby Jones Highway. **Building details:** Stucco finish, with one truck door in building rear; approximately 2,000 sq. ft. of office. **Contact** Davis Beman at 706-364-3901.

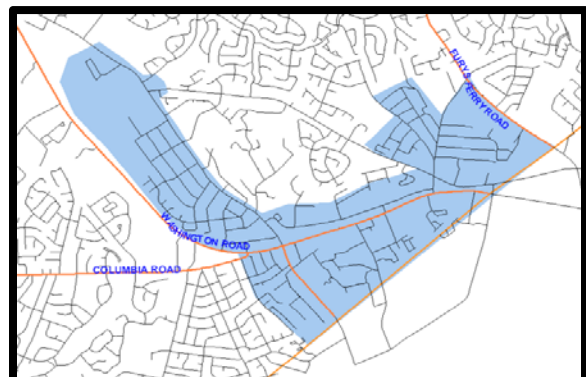
18,000 sq. ft. on Belair Frontage Road, near Interstate 20. **Building details:** Metal industrial building, with one roll-up loading door, exterior truck dock; 23' eave height. **Contact** Dennis Trotter at 706-736-0700.

CENTRAL MARTINEZ REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Working with the staff of the county's Development Services Division, the Development Authority of Columbia County (DACC) has undertaken a redevelopment study on the commercial area known as central Martinez (visible in the map below). Although not an incorporated jurisdiction, the Martinez area is considered a community within the county, one that maintains a distinct "sense of place" from other areas in the county. Some of its building stock, however, is dated, and risks falling into disrepair. The redevelopment study hopes to address these concerns, and keep the area economically viable.

One strategy likely to emerge from the initiative is the application for an Opportunity Zone designation for the area. The creation of such a zone would provide tax credits for businesses in the zone area.

To participate in the study, the public is invited to visit the DACC's website at www.ChooseColumbiaCounty.com.



FORT GORDON: Fact or Fiction?

On average, official military visitors to the base occupy 250 rooms per week in area hotels.

Fact or Fiction? Actually, military attaches and dignitaries visiting Fort Gordon *average 300 rooms per day* in local hotels, providing a direct economic impact of more than \$8 million a year to the area's lodging and hospitality sector. The fort maintains contracts with 26 of the metro area's hotels, to provide lodging for students and others on official military travel.

For more information on the local economic impact of Fort Gordon, visit the CSRA Alliance for Fort Gordon at www.FortGordonAlliance.com.

ABOUT COLUMBIA COUNTY

Columbia County is located in eastern Georgia, in a region known as the Central Savannah River area (CSRA). Bordered by the Savannah River and Clark Hill's Lake, one the southeast's largest freshwater bodies of water, the county has a population over 100,000 – and in a metro area of more than 500,000 (the Augusta (GA) – Aiken (SC) metropolitan statistical area).

With an economy based upon a diverse mixture of government, medical, military, professional, and light industrial sectors, it is the home to world-class firms such as **Quad/Graphics**, **Club Car**, and **John Deere**. The county also has one of the area's highest standards of living, a fact frequently noted in nationwide surveys by **Money** magazine and **U.S. News & World Report**. Visit the county's award-winning website at www.ColumbiaCountyGA.gov for more information about living and working in the county.

THE COLUMBIA COUNTY BUSINESS REVIEW is published quarterly by the Development Authority of Columbia County (DACC). Please address any comments or questions to Troy Post at 706-312-1371, or electronically via tpost@ColumbiaCountyGA.gov. And may the Force be with you.

A non-profit economic development agency, the Development Authority of Columbia County (DACC) provides technical assistance to businesses seeking financial assistance or site selection services. To learn more, visit www.ChooseColumbiaCounty.com.

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