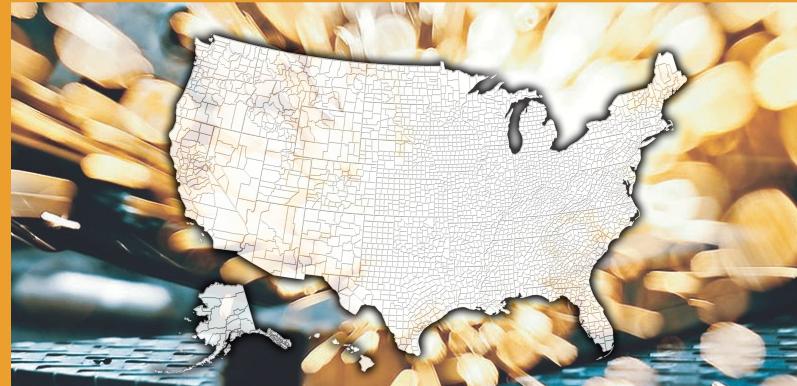


STRONG ECONOMIES, RESILIENT COUNTIES

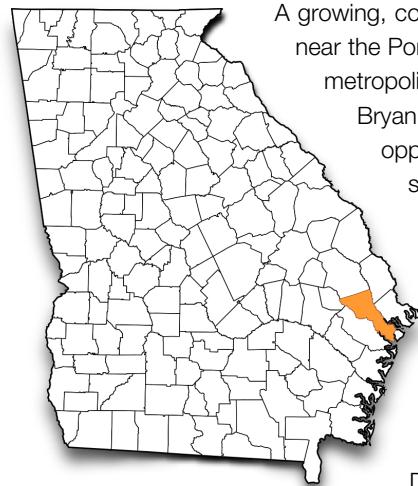
The Role of Counties in Economic Development



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BRYAN COUNTY, GEORGIA

Creating Economic Growth through Public-Private Partnerships



A growing, coastal county, Bryan County, Ga., benefits from its prime location on the Georgia coastline near the Port of Savannah, the fifth largest port in the country by value of trade. Part of the Savannah metropolitan area, the small county has strong commuting links to Chatham County, with some of Bryan County's residents working in the city of Savannah. In order to increase employment opportunities within Bryan County, the county has developed two industrial parks with a strong infrastructure component through public-private partnerships.

The Development Authority of Bryan County pursues economic development activities on behalf of the county. Its mission is to attract new business, promote foreign direct investment and encourage economic development. The county established the Development Authority in 2005 to unite two previously autonomous economic development boards in the Northern and Southern ends of the county. The Development Authority has a nine-member board, two staff members and regularly reports to the Bryan County Board of Commissioners. Bryan County funds the Development Authority with general fund dollars, about \$500,000 in 2014.

The Interstate Centre

The Development Authority of Bryan County pursued economic growth in the county by developing two industrial parks through public-private partnerships. Its first industrial park, the Interstate Centre, was built in 2006 and targets supply-chain logistics firms. The Interstate Centre spans more than 1,000 acres and is located near the intersection of two major roadways in the Northern area of Bryan County, approximately 18 miles from the Port of Savannah. The industrial park is a cost-effective alternative for firms seeking port access given the well-developed local interstate system, coupled with flexible incentive packages, like property tax abatements, job tax credits and a foreign trade zone designation. Bryan County owns the land where the Interstate Centre is built and some of the buildings within the park. The private real estate firm, TPA Group, owns a 600,000 square foot facility within the park, leases space to firms and may purchase more land from the county in the future. The Interstate Centre houses diverse industrial activities and includes operations for companies such as Daniel Defense, Blue Bell Creameries, Orafol Americas Inc, Oneida, DKW Logistics, Matson, Kenco and agricultural supply/direct distributors. As of June 2014, the companies located at the Interstate Centre employ almost 500 people.

- **Population, 2013: 33,157**
- **County Board size: 6**
- **County Administrator**

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Belfast Commerce Centre is the first recipient in the state of Georgia to receive CSX Select Site designation.

Belfast Commerce Centre

Using the same mechanism of public-private partnerships, the Development Authority of Bryan County built the Belfast Commerce Centre, a second industrial park at the Southern end of the county, only 16 miles from the Port of Savannah. Completed in 2012, the Belfast Commerce Centre is close to the interstate highway system and features a rail system that enables firms to transport materials directly from the park to the Port of Savannah. The rail provider, Genesee & Wyoming, offers short line rail service on the Riceboro Southern that serves the Belfast Commerce Centre. The Riceboro Southern line connects with the CSX rail service in nearby Savannah. In 2012, the

park became the first site in Georgia to receive CSX's Select Site designation, which certifies the site is ready for development. CSX provides rail, intermodal and rail-to-truck transload services to locations that can rapidly use the infrastructure for industrial development. Unlike the Interstate Centre, which has a mixture of public and private land ownership, the land in the Belfast Commerce Centre is owned entirely by a private company, TerraPointe Services, Inc. Companies who purchase property in the Belfast Commerce Centre from TerraPointe Services fund and build their own facilities. The Authority plays the role as a marketing partner for the park.

The Belfast Commerce Centre attracted its first major tenant, Caesarstone, in late 2013. The Israeli quartz countertop manufacturing company considered other locations across the country before selecting the Belfast Commerce Centre as its first manufacturing location in the United States. The Development Authority and Bryan County officials worked together throughout negotiations with the firm. For example, the county agreed to build a road to the Belfast Commerce Centre and waived the building permit fees for the firm in the industrial park. The Authority arranged an informal conversation between Caesarstone and Orafol Americas Inc., an Interstate Centre tenant, to discuss the benefits of operating in Bryan County. It is estimated that Caesarstone will create approximately 180 jobs in its first phase of development.

Bryan County is successfully fostering economic growth and creating jobs for county residents through public-private partnerships, using their advantageous location near the Port of Savannah. Through public-private partnerships for the industrial parks, Bryan County attracts new firms to the county and creates new jobs while sharing the financial risks involved with property and infrastructure ownership. The Port of Savannah, a key asset to the county economy, is expected to increase business in the coming years as the harbor is deepened to accommodate larger ships. By enacting policies that enable firms to quickly commence business operations, Bryan County fosters a business-friendly environment and expands industrial growth in the region.