



# GEORGIA'S RURAL CENTER

A BRANCH OF THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Rural Center Awards \$22,500 Grant to Support Ocilla-Irwin Industrial Development Authority Website**

**Ocilla, GA** - The Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation, a branch of the Georgia Department of Agriculture and known as Georgia's Rural Center, has approved a \$22,500 grant to the Ocilla-Irwin County Industrial Development Authority. This grant will fund the development of a website.

The Ocilla-Irwin Industrial Development Authority focuses on three core pillars: strengthening the workforce, expanding critical infrastructure, and creating new opportunities, and a strategic website will help advance and support each of these priorities.

As a rural community with agriculture as its leading industry, Irwin County is planning intentionally for the future to ensure long-term prosperity. With both present needs and the future in mind, Irwin County is expanding Industrial Park North to create 10 new industrial sites ready for development. While the industrial park development is in its early stages, the new website will serve as a platform to market available sites with the specific information industry decision-makers need, attract investment, and position Irwin County competitively. The website will feature videos, photos, site specifications, and resources for businesses and industries considering Irwin County.

In addition to economic development, the new website will also feature tourism information, inviting visitors to experience destination stops such as these two attractions:

- Hudson Pecan Company & The Store at Hudson Pecan: A 150-year legacy spanning more than 2,200 acres of pecan orchards.
- Paulk Vineyards & Tasting Room: Six generations of farmers operating the world's largest muscadine vineyard.

"With the new website, the Ocilla-Irwin Industrial Development Authority will be poised to confidently pursue tourism efforts," said Mallory Griffin, Director of the Ocilla-Irwin Industrial Development Authority. "The website will provide a good first impression of our area and deliver the information people need when planning a trip or looking for a stop along the way."



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The website will also serve as a centralized hub for workforce development, offering job postings and career opportunities from local businesses and industries. By connecting employers with talent, Irwin County can strengthen its workforce pipeline and support the needs of both new and existing industries. The new website, scheduled for launch late summer 2026, will be built for a smooth user experience as well as for internet visibility, with both traditional Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and AI search considered. Irwin County's focused growth initiative will use the website to highlight economic development opportunities including the industrial park and available buildings along with tourism messaging supporting local food, shopping, and destination locations.

"The funding support from the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation makes the new website possible," said Griffin. "I'm grateful to our legislators and their boots-on-the-ground commitment to ensuring rural Georgia thrives. Without an updated, user-friendly website, geared towards today's focus on SEO and AI search, our community is at a competitive disadvantage for tourism and economic development."

"We are proud to partner with the Ocilla-Irwin County Industrial Development Authority to provide funding for website design. The website will assist Ocilla and Irwin County in promoting the community's available industrial sites, existing industries, and attributes to attract additional investment to the region. The Rural Center is honored to provide grant funds for projects that will drive economic development opportunities to Georgia's rural communities, and we are confident that this website design and implementation in Irwin County will provide significant returns on the Rural Center's investment," said Charlie Fiveash, Executive Director of Georgia's Rural Center.

## **About Georgia's Rural Center:**

To date, Georgia's Rural Center projects have resulted in a total investment in rural Georgia of more than \$408 million, with \$3 million of center funds, which is a 132:1 return ratio against CRPI funds. Since its inception in 2018, the work of Georgia's Rural Center has touched all 159 of Georgia's metro, suburban, and rural communities through regional and statewide projects, and directly impacted 73 counties through projects needed in rural communities to help them prosper and thrive.



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Mallory Griffin Director, Ocilla-Irwin Industrial Development Authority and Georgia State Representative  
Angie O'Steen (District 169)



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Mallory Griffin Director, Ocilla-Irwin Industrial Development Authority and Georgia State Senator Carden Summers (District 13)