



GEORGIA'S RURAL CENTER

A BRANCH OF THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2026

Rural Center Awards \$142,000 to Upgrade Critical Technology Infrastructure at Dodge County Hospital

Eastman, 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 \$142,000 grant to Dodge County Hospital. This grant will implement critical technology infrastructure upgrades to strengthen communication systems, enhance connectivity, and improve the delivery of patient care.

Dodge County Hospital is a 94-bed hospital located in Eastman, Georgia, proudly serving more than 19,000 residents of Dodge County and surrounding communities since 1963. As a not-for-profit healthcare provider, the hospital is committed to delivering high-quality, safe, and affordable care close to home. With more than 300 dedicated employees, Dodge County Hospital is the second largest employer in Dodge County and remains a vital healthcare and economic anchor for the community and the surrounding region.

The project will replace the hospital's 25-year-old phone system and upgrade Wi-Fi connectivity and network reliability, ensuring the hospital's digital infrastructure can support the growing demands of modern healthcare technology and the increasing use of wireless clinical equipment.

The grant will also support the addition of new mobile nursing carts, enabling nurses to provide more efficient bedside care and improve clinical workflows. These improvements will enable the hospital to implement emerging technologies, including the ability to interface vital sign monitoring devices directly with the electronic health records through an HL7 interface. This advancement will allow vital signs to automatically flow into the patient's medical record, improving accuracy, reducing documentation time, and allowing caregivers to focus more time on their patients.

"This grant from the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation represents a meaningful investment in the health and future of our community," said Michael Purvis, Chief Executive Officer of Dodge County Hospital. "We are incredibly grateful to the Rural Development Council and our state leaders for recognizing the importance of strengthening rural hospitals. Their support allows us to continue advancing technology, improving efficiency, and ensuring that the citizens of Dodge County and surrounding communities have access to high-quality healthcare close to home.



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This investment will help ensure that Dodge County Hospital remains strong, innovative, and well-positioned to meet the evolving healthcare needs of the community it has proudly served for more than 60 years.

“We are proud to partner with Dodge County Hospital on this Rural Center grant to upgrade the hospital’s telecommunications network. Scott Blount in our office was instrumental in interfacing with Mr. Purvis and the hospital staff to ensure this funding was executed. Investments like this one at Dodge County Hospital match the goals and mission of Georgia’s Rural Center to assist rural communities across the state,” 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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Dodge County Hospital staff members with the new equipment. The project includes the purchase of a Howard Medical Care E mobile workstation equipped with a 50-amp-hour battery, a lockable supply drawer, and a Honeywell barcode scanner to replace aging carts and provide updated technology. A PoE-manageable switch and a Wi-Fi 6 (4x4) access point will also be installed to support network upgrades and allow for the implementation of a new VoIP phone system with both wired and wireless phones.