



GEORGIA'S RURAL CENTER

A BRANCH OF THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rural Center Welcomes New Rural Development Council Appointees

Tifton, GA -

The Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation, a branch of the Georgia Department of Agriculture and known as Georgia's Rural Center, has welcomed three new members to its Rural Development Council. Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones has appointed Chris Goodman, Daniel O'Steen, and John Gray Walker to serve on the Council. Together, they bring their experiences and leadership to support rural communities across Georgia.

"I'm proud and excited to welcome three fantastic new members to the Rural Center's Rural Development Council," **said Agriculture Commissioner Tyler J Harper**. "John Gray, Chris, and Danny bring a deep knowledge of and lived experience in Rural Georgia, and I look forward to our work together promoting and strengthening rural communities across the state."

"We are grateful to the Lieutenant Governor's office for appointing three civic-minded Georgians to the Rural Development Council. We are excited to welcome Danny, John Gray, and Chris to the council. Each appointee brings a wealth of experience to assist the Rural Center in meeting our mission of promoting and assisting communities in rural Georgia," **said Charlie Fiveash, Executive Director of Georgia's Rural Center**.

Chris Goodman is a lifelong Tift County farmer with 36 years of experience in production agriculture, farming approximately 1,600 acres of cotton, peanuts, corn, green beans, sod, grapefruit and tangerines. Deeply connected to Georgia's agricultural community, he has served on the Tifton Quality Peanuts board for 22 years, is involved in his local Farm Bureau, and works with UGA on agricultural research. His decades of farming experience and industry involvement give him a strong understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing rural Georgia.

Daniel O'Steen is a multi-generational farmer with deep roots in rural Georgia, producing peanuts, cotton, corn, and timber in Coffee County. A 1995 graduate of South Georgia State College with a degree in agriculture, he has served on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Corn Growers



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Association and as chairman of the Coffee County FSA Committee. O'Steen is a strong advocate for Georgia agriculture and rural communities at both the state and national levels.

John Gray Walker is a Perry attorney with more than two decades of legal experience and a long history of civic leadership in Middle Georgia. A graduate of the University of Georgia and Mercer University's Walter F. George School of Law, Walker is a partner with Walker, Hulbert, Gray & Moore, LLP, and previously founded Walker & Walker, LLP. His involvement with organizations including the Perry Area Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club of Perry, Houston County Library Board and Leadership Georgia reflects a strong commitment to serving his community and rural Georgia.

About Georgia's Rural Center:

Georgia's Rural Center was created in 2018 to build healthy, vibrant rural Georgia communities through collaborative partnerships that help Georgians address challenges of all types in every corner of the state. Since its inception, Georgia's Rural Center has invested over \$5 million in state funds into more than 90 projects that have entailed total investments of over \$400 million. 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 83 counties through projects needed in rural communities to help them prosper and thrive.