

Jan. 3 that Renewal by Andersen, the full-service window replacement division of Andersen Corp., will open its first manufacturing facility in Georgia at The Cubes at Locust Grove.

“Anderson windows is bringing a new advanced manufacturing facility to Henry County, along with 900 new jobs and \$420 million in new investment,” Fenn says. “Now that’s the largest investment in Henry County.”

These two economic development wins are proof the county’s strategy of leveraging its supply chain network, as well as that of the region, is working, Fenn says. In addition to attracting manufacturing jobs that need to be close to a supply chain hub, NewCold’s new automated facility, which is expected to be operational next year, will bring jobs not just in logistics, but mechatronics and robotics, as well.

“Historically, we’ve been a supply chain hub and those jobs only pay up to a certain level,” he says. “That’s why we’ve been very focused on the manufacturing sector.



CONTRIBUTED

Clean Energy: Rendering of FREYR Battery’s next-generation Giga America battery plant

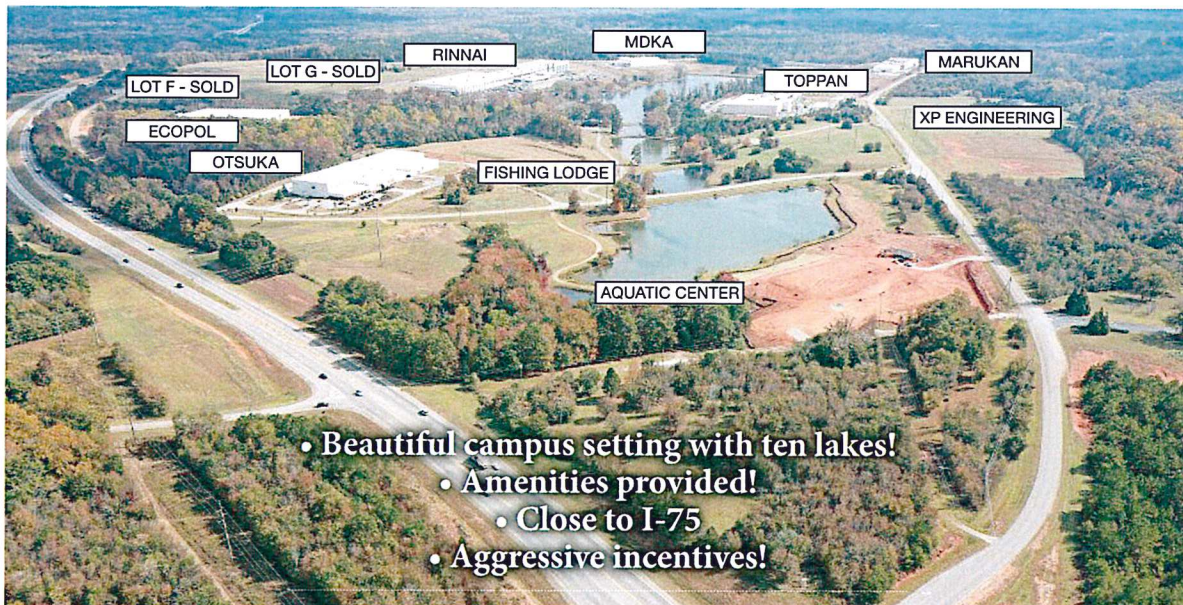
In manufacturing there are more engineering jobs, more R and D jobs, that require a higher skill set and higher wages come in with these jobs.”

Additional announcements last year included Ryder System Inc. building a new \$52 million distribution center in Locust Grove that will create 270 jobs and Bowery Farms investing \$40 million in a vertical farm, also in Locust Grove, that will create 100 new jobs, according to Fenn.

“We’re building a very diverse portfolio of business and industries,” he says. “I feel very strongly we could be the next hub for data centers and the technology industry. We have the infrastructure with fiber and power, we’ve got land, we’ve got water, and

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more than \$2.5 billion in new investment were announced and will be realized over the next few years, she says.

“Collectively, over 5,000 jobs have been created in the previous three years,” Jacobs says.

In November, FREYR Battery, a Nor-

wegian developer of clean, next-generation battery cell production capacity, announced the purchase of a site in Coweta County for its planned Giga America battery plant. The new flagship manufacturing plant will be located at the Bridgeport Industrial Park, and it benefits from state incentives that extend through 2029, when the build-out is expected to be complete.

“FREYR’s investment of \$2.57 billion, along with 723 new jobs paying 127% of the county’s average wage, is exactly the kind of project we want to attract,” she says.

According to Jacobs, globally, investments in clean energy were \$1.1 trillion in 2022. The Coweta County Development Authority captured much of those investments.

“The development authority continues to attract interest in advanced manufacturing and bio and life sciences,” she says. “Location of companies in Coweta County on the forefront of technology bring incredible job opportunities for Cowetans.”

Jacobs says numerous other industrial facilities located or came online in 2022, including:

- Dollar General’s 1.2 million-square-foot distribution center
- Kellogg’s 1 million-square-foot distribution center
- Cassioli’s 25,000-square-foot North American headquarters (the Italian company produces automated industrial material handling solutions)
- Massanna Construction’s 28,000-square-foot headquarters.

Green Valley

Over in Spalding County, there’s good and bad news when it comes to economic development, says David Luckie, executive director of the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority.

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“The good and the bad news is our latest industrial park, The Lakes at Green Valley, is full, so we’re in search of more industrial land. The good news is we’re full and the bad news is we’re full,” he says.

In addition to The Lakes at Green Valley, the county’s other three industrial parks are also full, a sign that developers recognize the industrial growth that is happening in Spalding County, Luckie says.

“A number of private developers are now purchasing industrial land in Spalding County,” he says. “We’re partnering with the private developers since we’re out of land ourselves. Before there was not a lot of interest from private developers, but now

there’s a lot of interest and private developers are buying tracts of industrial land. People are finally recognizing the [industrial] growth that’s been happening here.”

The Lakes at Green Valley isn’t your typical industrial park. It’s a 570-acre mixed-use development that will include an aquatic center, which is under construction now, as well as retail and commercial space.

“In the aquatic center part of the park we’re also in the process of trying to develop a retail/commercial space on 15 acres for companies in the park, [with] services like restaurants, maybe a bank and a dry cleaner,” Luckie says. “All of our industrial parks are on the east side of the county. They all sort of line up one after another, so we have a mass of maybe 4,000 jobs in one area of the county and there are not that many retail/commercial establishments over there.

“We’re trying to get some restaurants and other services that the people who actually work in those plants can take advantage of.”

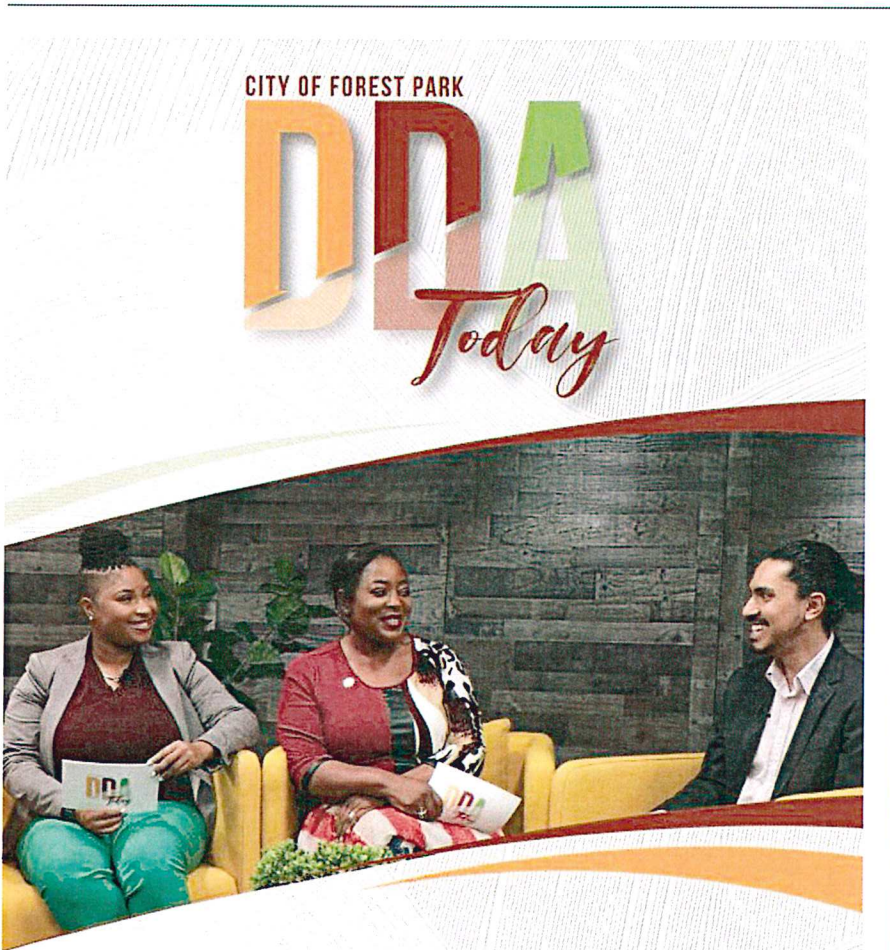
And, while a mixed-use industrial park may sound like an unconventional idea, Spalding County pioneered the concept back in 1996 when it built a day care center in its Green Valley industrial park.

“People asked why a day care center in an industrial park, but it’s the perfect place for it,” Luckie says. “It opens early and stays open late. They do well.”

Next door in Fayette County, the city of Fayetteville is busy expanding its downtown footprint to bring more restaurants, retail and housing options to its residents. According to Downtown Development Director Brian Wismer, the 2021 construction of a new city hall and park on 10 acres of land a couple of blocks from downtown has created a plethora of new development opportunities.

“As we’re trying to attract all the fun stuff, all that cool stuff, that we want to have, we have to have a 24/7 presence downtown, so we need that residential base to get the businesses we were actively recruiting,” Wismer says. “Things that will create that quality of life that you normally associate with more urban-driven centers.”




To that end, the city welcomed multi-family developer Walton Communities to town. Walton Fayetteville* is a 270-unit development on 30 acres fronting the city park. The first units began leasing in February, according to Wismer.



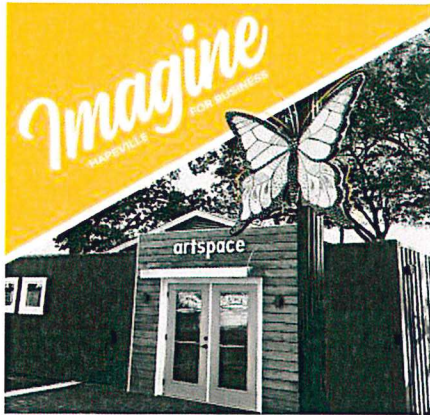
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is proud to announce the launch of DDA Today – a new initiative which will highlight economic development initiatives and progress through video interviews with local leaders, industry experts, and other special guests.

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Searching for More Land: David Luckie, executive director of the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority

“It’s a beautiful development,” he says. “It’s like New York Central Park-style. There’s zero set-back and the development is right on the edge of the park. The first floor facing the park will be flexible commercial space, and we’re working to help secure a tenant mix that’s going to complement the vision we are looking for – interesting retail, food and beverage.”

Wisner says the city hopes to continue diversifying its housing inventory downtown to one day include small cottages, townhomes and two-story live-work buildings.

“Historically everything has been large-lot residential and there’s a demand for something else,” he says. “Those [large-lot houses] are still good to have, but it’s not all you need to have.”

For many years the airport-adjacent counties of South Metro have been a diamond in the rough, but thanks to visionary leaders, strategic planning and pivotal partnerships that diamond is beginning to shine brightly. ■