



**Center for Agribusiness
and Economic Development**
College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Feasibility of an Agricultural Center in Polk County, Georgia.

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Project Summary

The University of Georgia's Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development (CAED) was commissioned by Polk County to conduct a feasibility study. The purpose of the study was to determine the economic feasibility of constructing a multipurpose facility to host various agriculture and business events, canning operation and farmers market. A top-line summary of the study results is as follows:

- The proposed Ag Center might expect to attract a *maximum* of 101,900 people annually.
- 29,700 visitors to the arena facilities
- 3,600 visitors to the conference/auditorium facility
- 3,600 visitors to the meeting/breakout room facilities
- Cannery 50 people

The Ag Center is estimated to generate \$568,958 annually in revenue once established.

• Meeting/Breakout room Rental	\$ 73,272
• Conference Rental	\$ 54,670
• Arena Facilities Rental	\$ 345,344
• Canning Facility Rental	\$ 15,147
• Farmers Market Revenue	\$ 10,025
• Community events*	\$ 70,500

*Based on county fair numbers as a proxy.

The estimated revenue generated from the proposed Ag Center generates a profit of over \$330,000 annually. The Center's impact on Polk County's economy is significant, estimated to be \$734,654 just under one million dollars annually to Polk County. The impact on the State's economy is also significant and estimate to be \$1,015,535 annually.

Site Conclusion: The Fish Creek Site appears to be the best site due to its central location and accessibility.

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Introduction

Polk County commissioned The University of Georgia's Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development (CAED) to determine the economic feasibility of constructing and operating a multi-functional agriculture education facility in Polk County, Georgia.

By constructing a multi-function complex, Polk County expects to host a variety of events, make the area more attractive for new industry, and provide space for additional civic-center functions. According to conversations with Polk County, the proposed Ag Center is expected to:

- enhance the quality of life for youth, adults and seniors for all population segments in the county and region,
- enhance and facilitate educational programs and opportunities for Polk citizens as well as those in Northwest Georgia,
- provide an adjunct site for students of all levels and academia to use in conjunction with traditional sites,
- provide adequate space for various groups to show, exhibit, meet, perform and to have conventions/ conferences,
- provide a centrally located site in Polk County for all levels of large and small animal shows,
- provide a unique recreational and entertainment facility to serve all the public in many aspects,
- enhance the area for industrial development opportunities,
- provide a potentially positive economic impact on the region through hosting events that would attract visitors,
- Perpetuate the commitment of keeping agricultural and environmental education paramount for present and future generations; this is one of the most important goals of the center.

Background

This feasibility study separates the Ag Education Center into three facilities: 1) the conference center and 2) covered and open-air arenas and 3) a state-of-the-art cannery. This facility has been based on the 28,000+/- square foot Gilmer County Agriculture Center built in 2016. The CAED evaluated each component's feasibility and combine the results to represent the entire facility. The conference/meeting center will be evaluated first followed by the arena facilities Appendix A Gilmer County example.

Conference/Meeting Center Industry Trends

The conference center industry is anticipated to continue to grow into 2018 and beyond as the economy continues to expand. Companies still need to have meetings and corporations still need to train employees to maintain their competitiveness. Actually, there is some indication that an increase in facility demand combined with shortened booking times (how far in advance facilities are booked), has created a situation where many conference organizers are no longer able to book their first choice in facilities, but are having to settle for their second or third choices. In addition, there has been a slowdown in the construction of these high fixed cost facilities.

The International Association of Conference Centers (IACC) conducted a survey of North American Conference Centers reported in the *Trends in the Conference Center Industry*¹. The study provided valuable insight into conference centers' occupancy rates, pricing and cost structures, seasonality and "draw" potential. Executive and corporate conference centers reported an impressive occupancy rate, however, there is seasonality. The study reported occupancy rates exceeding 60% during the peak season which starts in late spring (May) and continues through mid-fall (October). Conference centers' occupancy rates range from a low of 39.9% in January to a high of 69.7% in October. According to industry research, the per person median rental rates for meeting rooms range between 112.80/day, adjusted for inflation. More simply, each conference or meeting attendee generates \$112.80 in revenue. The per person daily revenue can be further broken down into different services, Table 1.

Table 1. Meeting Room Expense Breakdown per Person

Activity*	Where it is Allocated
Meeting Room	\$36.92
Conference planning	\$17.75
Basic Audio/Visual	\$9.23
Coffee Breaks	\$18.46
Lunch	\$26.98
Mis. Expenses	\$2.84
*Trends in the Conference Center Industry - North America, adjusted for inflation to 2018	

Of the \$112.80 generated by one participant, \$36.92 dollars will go toward the meeting room while \$17.75 goes toward planning the meeting or conference. This information is valuable in determining services offered by the conference center. Lunch and coffee breaks have a large mark-up.

¹Trends in the Conference Center Industry-North America. Edition. International Association of Conference Centers, <http://www.iacconline.org> – publication is no longer available.

Business organizations are the largest source of demand for conference centers². Business organizations account for over one-half (54%) of conference center usage, followed by academic institutions (13%), and trade associations (8%). The bulk of a conference center's usage is for management and training/continuing education meetings. The local market is responsible for the largest source of bookings with nearly half of all conference center meetings originating from the local area. The regional market contributes an additional third of all bookings with national and international meetings accounting for the remaining 20%.

Needs Assessment

The CAED utilized an aggregate of four previous agri-center needs assessment surveys to develop the following information. The reason for the needs assessment is twofold. First, there are several facilities within 25-50 miles of the proposed Ag Center that offer some or all of the facilities being proposed. At the state level, the number of competing facilities increases significantly. Therefore, the needs assessment is critical in identifying real or perceived service and facility gaps that may exist between existing facilities and the needs of organizations that utilize these facilities. The CAED aggregated data utilized survey data from a number of associations, clubs, and businesses in Georgia and the region that were identified as potential users of the proposed Ag Center that was collected for previous projects. These results are used in the competitive analysis and in estimating the market potential for the proposed facility.

The weighted figures represent the potential conference center users were interviewed by telephone to determine which features they deem important in selecting a conference/meeting facility. The interview sample consisted of state agricultural commodity and agribusiness associations, other associations, area businesses that employ more than 20 people. The Other Association category, in Table 2, includes organizations like Ducks Unlimited and the Georgia Christmas Tree association, to name a few.

The results of the question can be broken down into four categories to distinguish the relative importance of different facility features, Table 2. It appears that cost, accessibility, location and available lodging are the most important factors in determining these organizations' facility selections. Excluding the cost of renting the facility, the most important criteria were not related to the physical facility but its location. Unfortunately, this feature cannot be controlled, except by the two sites under consideration, by the Polk County representatives. However, it is important to note that all of these features are important as they received an average rating of 4.10 or higher on a five-point scale.

Accessibility to eating establishments is also an important selection criterion. Providing food service to users will be critical in attracting bookings as there are limited eating establishments in the immediate area. The Ag Center may want to explore relationships with area establishments for possible catering needs if there are not sufficient eating establishments near the two proposed sites. The availability of catering may provide an acceptable alternative to the lack of local eating establishments.

²Trends in the Conference Center Industry- North America.

The issues of location, accessibility and area lodging will have to be addressed by the Ag Center's marketing campaign to make the Ag Center attractive to potential users.

Table 2. Conference User Telephone Interview Results- weighted average

Feature	Area				
	Total (n=96)	Other Associations (n=19)	Commodity Assoc. & Agribusinesses (n=19)	County Contacts (n=45)	Area Businesses (n=13)
Rental Rate/Cost	4.86	5.00	4.75	5.00	4.75
Accessibility for attendees	4.76	4.80	4.88	4.50	4.75
Location	4.71	3.60	2.88	2.25	1.25
Local Lodging availability	4.71	5.00	4.75	4.75	4.25
Food service	4.43	4.80	4.63	3.50	4.50
Local restaurants	4.29	4.20	3.75	5.00	4.50
Available facility/structures	4.24	4.60	4.13	4.25	4.00
Audio-visual capabilities	4.24	4.20	4.25	4.25	4.25
Rep. for Community	4.20	4.20	4.25	4.00	4.25
Meeting/breakout rooms	4.10	4.80	3.88	4.00	3.75
Conference room/audit.	4.00	3.20	4.50	3.50	4.00
Handicapped accessibility	3.57	4.20	3.25	4.00	3.00
Conference concierge	3.14	4.40	2.75	2.75	2.75
Auditorium	3.05	3.40	3.00	3.50	2.25
Open air arena	2.62	3.60	2.88	2.25	1.25
Enclosed arena	2.57	4.00	2.38	2.00	1.75
Area attractions	2.57	2.40	2.88	2.00	2.75
Bus parking	2.00	2.60	2.13	1.25	1.75

The information in Table 3 provides the Ag Center with a wealth of marketing information. When a marketing plan is developed, it will be important to educate potential users on the facility's accessibility and location to major population centers. In addition, it will be valuable to provide information on area lodging and eateries. There are nine lodging establishments and two campgrounds within 20 miles of the proposed site in Central Polk County. The issue of lack of immediate lodging and eating facilities can be minimized by expanding on these establishments in nearby communities.

Table 3. Hotels and Campgrounds within 20 miles of Proposed Site

Hotel Name	Address	City
Polk Motel	1601 Atlanta Hwy	Rockmart
Americas Best Value Inn-Rome	2973 Cedartown Hwy SE	Rome
Econo Lodge Inn-Suites-Rockmart	2022 Etowah Dr	Rockmart
Creekside Inn Motel	1 Georgia Ave	Cave Spring
Days Inn	105 Gtm Pkwy	Rockmart
Cedartown Inn & Suites	100 E John Hand Rd	Cedartown
Quality Inn Cedartown	925 N Main St	Cedartown
Cedar Creek	15 Perry Farm Rd SW	Cave Spring
Garden Inn Suites	1275 N Piedmont Ave	Rockmart
The Rock (campground)	4206 Forsyth Lake Rd	Rockmart

Cedar Creek RV & Outdoor Center (campground)	6770 Cave Springs Rd, SW	Cave Springs
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Conference Center Facility Competitive Analysis

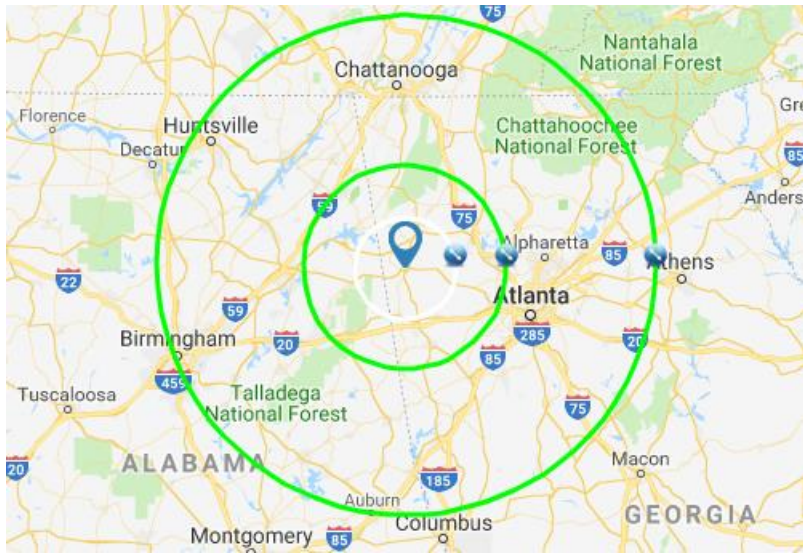
It is necessary to assess competing facilities in order to create a baseline of existing products and services. The CAED’s competitor analysis attempted to identify local, state and regional operations that offer conference, convention and meeting facilities and/or arenas.

The CAED was able to identify approximately 15 conference/meeting facilities within 10 miles of the proposed sites listed in a phonebook. To identify competing facilities in the state and the Southeastern Region, a specialized software program reference USA was employed to locate conference facilities within the proposed site area. The program identifies business by their North American Industry Classification System Code (NAICS code). The NAICS code for conference centers is 561920. The software only identifies businesses that are registered with this SIC code. Not all facilities that offer conference/meeting facilities are registered under this code. This is especially true with hotels and motels. Hotels and motels with conference/meeting facilities in less populated areas were not provided.

Reference USA did not yield any conference facilities within 30 miles of Polk County, Georgia. However, further research located three facilities that would be in competition with the Ag Center for conference and meeting facilities.

These facilities offer audio/visual equipment and other necessities. Therefore, Reference USA the CAED identified more than 800 conference/meeting centers in the state of Georgia. The 800+ conference/meeting facilities that were identified also do not include facilities that are offered at some of Georgia’s state parks because they are registered under state parks and not conference/meeting facilities. For instance, the Unicoi State Park and Conference Center offers eight spacious meeting rooms, ballroom capabilities for up to 475 people, on-site conference coordinators, themed events, and other amenities. The CAED identified at least eight (8) state parks in Georgia with conference/meeting facilities

Expanding to a regional search, there were 865 conference/meeting facilities and 101 convention/ meeting facilities located within 150 miles of the proposed Ag Center. Again, it is important to remember that these numbers do not include the numerous hotels and motels that offer conference/meeting facilities on premises but failed to register their facilities as such again, have to look in Alabama.



The white circle is 20 miles, the smallest green one is 40 miles and the largest green is 100 miles to help put this in perspective.

The competitive analysis suggests that the conference/meeting market is full of competitors in the area, state and region. The Polk County Ag Center will have to work at differentiating its facility from the competition to attract customers. The area already has three direct competitors that can seat over 200 people. The following were the three area competitors mentioned above:

The Oakwood Room – this is a combination wedding venue and conference center. The CAED examined their online booking website and found that there were no bookings from August 2018 through July 2019. The facility can seat 100 and hold a max of 290 people.

Hightower Farms – this is a combination wedding venue and event facility. The following are the available corporate facilities.

- Coosa Hall is a barn style building with rustic elegance that includes chandeliers and vintage decorations. It is fully decorated, is heated and air-conditioned, has an outside patio area, a dance area, serving kitchen and view of the waterfall. We provide tables, chairs and venue setup for this facility. Holds 150-300.
- The Back Porch building is fully decorated, is heated and air-conditioned, and has a beautiful outdoor patio area. Inside, it has a large brick fireplace, dance area, serving kitchen and a creek side view nestled at the foot of the waterfall. We provide tables, chairs and venue setup for this facility. Holds 75-150
- Cabins -Located on the property are eleven Camping Cabins which sleep up to four people per cabin (5 Queen beds, 24 bunk beds), and include electricity, mattresses, and

ceiling fans. We also have a "den" cabin with sofa, chairs, small refrigerator and TV. All cabins are insulated and include both an air-conditioner and heater. Guests need to bring linens and any personal toiletries.

We also have a bathhouse and a covered pavilion. Picnic areas are located along the mountain stream, and there are woodland trails for hiking and a recreational field for outdoor activities.

The Old Mill Venue - This structure was built by slave labor in 1848 for Asa Prior, who came to Polk County in 1837. Originally used as a mill, the structure was operated as a restaurant by Mr. and Mrs. Stephens from 1960- 1991. The old mill was purchased in 1997 by Jim and Ann Madden and now serves as their residence. The mill operated for almost 100-years grinding corn and wheat until 1945. As settlers brought their crops to be milled, which took a great part of the day, the mill became the gathering place of Cedar Valley. This site was also used as the set for the 1984 TV movie "The Baron and the Kid" starring Johnny Cash and Richard Roundtree.

FACILITY AMENITIES - Meeting Facilities and Party Facilities

Conference/Meeting Facility Market Potential

Market potential is a method for estimating the *maximum* number of potential users. The market analysis utilizes potential user's stated intent regarding their use of a facility. Industry research has shown that a disconnect between stated intent and actual follow through. All the market potential estimates are based off stated intent by those surveyed. There is no exact method for determining actual usage in advance. The following figures will serve as good proxies for estimating total market potential.

There appears to be sufficient market potential for the conference/meeting room facility. Within a 25-mile radius of the proposed Ag Center, there are approximately 7,874 businesses. This is encouraging as industry research indicates that over one-half of all a conference/meeting facility's bookings and revenues are derived from local businesses. It is important to remember that the 7,874 businesses that were identified represent all sizes and types of businesses and not necessarily large businesses or businesses that use conference/meeting facilities. The CAED utilized Reference USA to estimate the number of employers within 25 miles of Cedartown, Georgia with over 20 employees. There were a total of 675 employers with 20 or more employees in this search. .

Figure 1. Proxies for Estimating Total Market Potential

Rank	Industry Sector	Number of Establishments	Number of Employees
1	Manufacturing	34	3,563
2	Retail Trade	128	1,725
3	Accommodation and Food Services	66	1,162
4	Health Care and Social Assistance	48	1,036
5	Public Administration	20	589
6	Administrative and Support and Waste Manageme	50	495
7	Transportation and Warehousing	18	413
8	Other Services (except Public Administration)	41	357
9	Construction	60	313
10	Wholesale Trade	26	272

Table 4 shows the number of large employers located in each county.

Table 4. Large Area Employers

County	20 + Employees Number	100 or more Employees
<i>Polk</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>16</i>
Haralson	81	15
Paulding	244	38
Bartow	358	45
Floyd	396	59
Cherokee, AL	54	5
Cleburne, AL	35	2
Calhoun, AL	480	75
Total	1,754	255

Given the relatively small number of large employers in the Eight county area, the estimated market potential for area business conferences dropped from 7,874 in the 25-mile radius to only 1,754. However, the survey results indicated that most businesses bring roughly 100 people to meeting facilities, the number of potential businesses is further reduced to 255.

The relatively small number of potential businesses in the Polk County area poses a problem for the Ag Complex’s auditorium/conference center component. Referring to the industry research, approximately 50% of a facility’s bookings are from local organizations. Therefore, additional revenue will have to be generated from other organizations. The information in table 5 shows the potential from other organizations by measuring whether they would consider the proposed Ag Center Conference facilities for their next function.

Table 5. Q. Would You Consider Using a Multipurpose Facility in North West Georgia? - Conference Center

Response	Total (n=96)	Other Associations (n=19)	Commodity Assoc. & Agribusinesses (n=19)	County Contacts (n=45)	Area Businesses (n=13)
Yes	71%	100%	50%	100%	50%
No	29%	0%	50%	0%	50%

Assuming that 50% of the 255 area businesses employing 100 or more people (153 area businesses) might utilize the Ag Center, it is possible to calculate the market potential for area businesses. According to the results of the facilities aggregated data, most businesses would use about four meeting/breakout rooms. These rooms would typically seat 30 people with each business bringing about 100 people. The median value was used rather than the mean given the small sample sizes associated with each group. Therefore, if assuming one half, or 78 of the area’s largest employers utilized the facility once a year, and each business brought about 100 people, the Ag Center could expect to draw an estimated 7,800 people to the conference center annually.

The availability of breakout/meeting rooms is important to businesses in selecting a facility as shown in Table 6. The addition of state-of-the-art meeting facilities equipped with audio and visual equipment should be very appealing to area businesses.

Estimating market potential can be calculated using the information in Table 4 and the number of potential users in each organizational breakout. There are 1,754 area businesses that employ 20 or more people according to Reference USA. These numbers are encouraging. However, survey results indicate that only about two-thirds of the area businesses would utilize breakout/meeting rooms. Those that did use these facilities were asked what they generally paid for these types of facilities. Survey results indicate these types of facilities generally rent out for approximately \$106.50-142.00 (2018 dollars) per day and are typically reserved for three days.

Respondents from the aggregated data indicated that they are currently paying about \$142 (2018 dollars) per day for meeting/breakout rooms and not a per person fee. The industry data in Figure 1 should be used to calculate add-ons such as providing coffee break supplies and meals. These additional fees will be added to the \$142 per day rental fee on a per person basis. The estimated “real” market potential figure was derived by multiplying the percentage of organization that would consider a multipurpose facility in West Central Georgia by the percentage of those same organizations that utilize meeting/breakout rooms. The results are shown in Table 6. For example, with the other association category, the estimated real market potential is estimated to

be 11 organizations ($17 \times 100\% \times 67\% = 11$). Table 6 assumes that each organization would rent the Ag Center’s breakout rooms once a year for a three-day period. In addition, the typical business reserves four rooms which are rented for \$142 per day. The proposed Ag Center will have two meeting/breakout rooms that can be divided into four rooms using a partition. Since the majority of organizations indicate they use four meeting rooms, four are used in calculating the estimated potential revenue.

Table 6. Estimated Revenue Potential for Meeting/Breakout Room Facilities

Organization	Identified Market Potential	Consider Ag Center	Use Specific Facility	Estimated “Real” Market Potential	Estimated Number of days Reserved	Number of Rooms Reserved	Estimated Potential Revenue*
Other Associations	17	100%	67%	11	3	4	\$18,744
Commodity Ass./agribusiness	21	50%	80%	9	3	4	\$15,336
County Contacts	14	100%	88%	12	3	4	\$20,448
Area Businesses	44	50%	50%	11	3	4	\$18,744
<i>Total Identified potential</i>	96	71%	25%	43	3	4	\$73,272
* Assumes that each room is rented out for \$100 per day							

These results indicate that the Ag Center might expect to generate \$73,372 annually from its four meeting/breakout rooms. The meeting rooms are assumed to be occupied 129 days, 35% occupancy rate.

Table 7 contains similar information and estimates the market potential for the conference center/auditorium. The number of days the conference rooms would be utilized was assumed to be the same as the number of days the meeting/breakout rooms would be utilized, which is approximately three days.

The majority of the respondents were unable to give the typical dollar amount they pay to rent conference rooms and/or auditoriums. The respondents that were able to provide cost information indicated they are paying about \$355 per day, on average in 2018 dollars, for the use of the conference center. The daily rental rate for competing facilities is used in estimating the conference center potential.

Table 7. Estimated Market Potential for the Conference Center/Auditorium Facility

Organization	Identified Market Potential	Consider Ag Center	Use Specific Facility	Estimated “Real” Market Potential	Estimated Number of days Reserved	Estimated Potential Revenue*
Other Associations	17	100%	80%	14	3	\$14,910
Commodity Ass./agribusiness	21	50%	75%	8	3	\$8,520
County Contacts	14	100%	75%	11	3	\$11,715
Area Businesses	35	50%	100%	18	3	\$19,170

<i>Total Identified potential</i>	87	71%	81%	51	154	\$54,670
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* Assumes that the conference center/auditorium is rented out for \$355 per day.

Given the results of the survey, the conference center facilities could expect to generate about \$54,670 (2018 dollars) annually from conference center rentals (table 7). This figure is based on the facility being occupied 154 days of the year or an occupancy rate of 42%. There may be additional revenue potential based on industry data which suggests that comparable facilities have peak occupancy rates of 60%. Assuming the total number of days the facility was rented increased to 216 days annually (a 60% occupancy rate) and a rental rate of \$355 per day, the estimated potential revenue could be expected to increase by \$22,010 to a total of \$76,680 annually.

There are numerous marketing methods used in the conference meeting business. The most successful means of generating qualified sales leads is through referrals (word-of-mouth), repeat business and personal sales calls. Other successful marketing methods include newspaper advertising, web sites and direct mail. The Ag Center will have to implement an aggressive marketing campaign to inform and attract potential clients.

Conference Center Market Potential Conclusion

Given the results presented in tables 6 and 7, the Ag Center is estimated to generate \$73,272 annually from its meeting/breakout rooms and an additional \$54,670 annually from its conference center. In total, the Ag Center is estimated to generate a maximum of \$128,032 in revenue from its Conference Center facilities. These estimates are based on the weighted average aggregated responses from previous consumer surveys and may vary depending on the occupancy levels. Again, aggressive marketing will be a key factor in the success of the Ag Center, as these results depend on the Center attracting customers from existing facilities.

Arena/Complex Analysis

The event hosting industry is well established. There are hundreds of facilities nationwide as well as a national association, The International Association of Auditorium managers (IAAM). The IAAM conducts a periodic industry profile survey that covers arenas, amphitheaters, auditorium/theaters, convention centers/exhibition centers, stadiums and complexes. Based on IAAM industry classification, a complex is a facility that combines two or more of the above facilities on a single property. Given the plans for the Ag Center, the CAED has determined that the IAAM study's results for "complexes" is the most pertinent to this feasibility study. The CAED purchased a copy of the most recent IAAM industry profile study for use in this feasibility study. Further, the CAED has identified numerous facilities in the state and region that offer similar structures, meeting rooms, auditoriums and arenas. The CAED conducted executive interviews with these facilities to collect additional information and to supplement the information obtained from the IAAM study.

Industry Trends

According to Dana Glazier with IAAM, the complex market is very diverse and currently there is no available data to determine whether the market is expanding, shrinking or holding constant. However, data is being collected on the number of new complexes being constructed around the

nation. According to Dana, there is quite a bit of building, renovation and expansion occurring around the nation in the complex market and she interpreted this as a sign of an expanding market.

According to a IAAM industry profile study, 54% of all complexes received dedicated tax or other support to help cover operating costs. The study found that the majority of the facilities were not operating with the objective to make a profit. According to the study results, 41% of the complexes reported that direct operating revenue will be less than operating expenses, while an additional 24% indicated that direct operating revenue will only cover operating expenses. In addition, the facilities indicated that they would be incurring extraordinary expenditure over the next three years to cover new equipment, facility improvements and facility repairs. The majority (84%) of the facilities indicated that they do not pay any taxes from their operating budget.

Potential Activities

Complexes are multi-functional facilities that are capable of hosting a wide variety of events. The following lists some of the potential events that could be hosted by the proposed complex:

- Livestock shows (cattle, horses, poultry, sheep, swine, goats)
- Fall Fair/Festival (Halloween)
- Agricultural Machinery
- Chemical Show
- 4-H rural youth fair or show
- Commodity festivals
- Arts & Craft Show
- Horticulture Show
- Rodeos
- Concerts
- Religious events
- Trade shows
- Dances
- School Graduations
- Auctions
- Beauty Pageants
- Banquets
- Merchandise sales
- Automobile shows
- Easter Egg Hunts
- Antique shows
- Birthday parties
- Company picnics
- Gun and Knife shows
- Commodity Groups
- Theatrical Productions
- Family Reunions

These events are heavily dependent on attracting large numbers of people and are usually found in cities or communities with 200,000 people, Complexes have the ability to bring in people from outside the community and thus generate a positive economic impact on a community. There are a number of complexes in the state of Georgia and surrounding southern states. However, not all of these complexes are identical to the one being proposed in Polk County.

Needs Assessment

In addition to analyzing the competition, the CAED implemented a needs assessment survey for the arena facilities. There are two purposes for the needs assessment. First, there are a number of facilities that will be competing with the proposed Ag Center's arena. These facilities offer some or all of the same amenities as the proposed Ag Center. At the region level, the number of competing facilities increases significantly. Therefore, the needs assessment is critical in

identifying real or perceived gaps that may exist between existing facilities and the needs of organizations. The CAED interviewed representatives from a number of associations, clubs, and businesses in Georgia and the region that were identified as potential users of the Ag Center, these results were then used to calculate a weighted average. These weighted average results are used in the competitive analysis and in estimating the market potential for the proposed facility. In order to attract potential users, the Ag Center must offer facilities the users need and want. Table 8 provides insight into which facility features are important to potential arena users.

Table 8. Q. Importance of Facility Features - Arena

Feature	Total (n=125)	Horse Show/Assoc. (n=32)	Cattle Assoc. (n=19)	Dog Show/Assoc. (n=24)	Rodeo (n=8)	Ag. Mach./ Equip. (n=26)	Trade shows (n=36)	County Contacts (n=42)
Local Lodging availability	4.67	4.89	4.33	4.96	4.75	4.50	4.00	5.00
Accessibility for attendees	4.64	4.89	4.33	4.72	4.75	4.67	4.17	5.00
Rental Rate/Cost	4.58	4.67	4.63	4.80	4.67	4.11	4.83	4.50
Location	4.51	4.89	3.63	4.68	4.25	4.44	5.00	4.50
Available facilities/structures	4.49	4.44	4.78	4.36	4.00	4.56	4.83	4.50
Local restaurants	4.32	4.89	3.89	4.48	4.50	4.33	3.17	4.50
Reputation for center/community	4.31	4.11	4.56	4.17	5.00	4.06	4.83	5.00
Climate Controlled Environment	4.26	3.11	4.11	4.80	4.00	4.06	5.00	3.50
Food service	4.23	3.67	4.00	4.72	3.75	3.94	4.33	5.00
Enclosed arena	4.14	5.00	4.13	4.36	3.75	3.56	3.67	5.00
Paging system	4.00	4.22	4.63	4.32	4.50	3.17	3.50	4.50
Handicapped accessibility	3.94	3.56	3.89	4.44	4.75	3.12	4.33	4.00
Concrete Floor	3.46	3.00	4.00	3.88	3.50	3.00	3.17	3.50
Announcers Stand	3.44	4.78	4.44	3.92	4.50	2.88	2.33	5.00
Multiple Configurations for Rings	3.35	3.89	4.75	4.05	3.50	2.11	1.83	3.50
Show Office	3.15	4.44	4.00	2.72	2.25	3.00	2.17	5.00
Bleacher seating	2.95	4.00	4.33	2.88	5.00	1.83	1.00	4.50
Wash Racks	2.84	4.78	4.78	2.55	3.25	1.50	1.17	5.00
Open air arena	2.44	2.63	3.63	2.32	3.50	1.94	1.67	3.00
Holding Pens	2.39	3.78	4.67	1.59	4.00	1.65	1.00	2.00
Audio Visual Equipment	2.36	1.67	2.67	2.46	2.00	2.44	2.33	3.00
Area attractions	2.36	2.44	2.78	2.28	1.50	2.50	2.00	2.50
Separate Livestock Barn	1.88	1.88	3.33	1.59	3.00	1.61	1.17	1.00

Lodging was rated most important in an organization’s decisions to utilize a facility. As with the conference center, there is adequate lodging but it is some distance away from the proposed Ag Center. This may or may not be a problem for potential users, but must to be addressed by the Commissioners. Accessibility and location are the second and third most important factors considered when choosing an arena facility. The fact that the majority of respondents indicated they would consider a facility in Northwest Georgia is encouraging. Given the high level of consideration, it may be assumed that the proposed Ag Center location is both accessible and meets facility location requirements.

Food accessibility appears in the second tier of importance. Potential users need access to food, either through food service or from local restaurants. Inaccessibility to immediate (local) eating

establishments is a drawback that needs to be overcome before the Ag Center can successfully compete against other arena facilities. Given there are only a few restaurants near the proposed Ag Center, it may be wise to consider operating or contracting with a food service provider or to work with area eating establishments to address this issue. Other features are more important to specific organizational groups. For example, horse shows and associations, along with cattle associations, rated show office and wash rack availability as important while it appears to be unimportant to rodeos, dog show organizations and machine and equipment businesses, table 8.

In addition to the factors that are rated the most important in table 8, the organizations were asked if they required any other facilities or accommodations. These organizations appear to have special security, water and sewer needs, see table 9. These special needs should be investigated in more detail to determine exactly what is needed for each segment. These needs will have to be addressed in order to entice these users to the Ag Center. There does not appear to be an overwhelming need for breakout rooms and special loading docks among these organizations.

Table 9. Q. Special Needs

Feature	Percentage of Respondents Reporting They Have Special Needs - Arena							
	Total (n=188)	Horse Show/Assoc. (n=32)	Cattle Assoc. (n=19)	Dog Show/Assoc. (n=24)	Rodeo (n=8)	Ag. Mach./ Equip. (n=26)	Trade shows (n=36)	County Contacts (n=42)
Q26. Breakout rooms	27%	0%	33%	34%	33%	28%	17%	50%
Q32. Special Security Needs	44%	11%	56%	54%	50%	33%	67%	50%
Q33. Special loading dock needs	15%	0%	11%	12%	25%	28%	17%	0%
Q37. Special water/sewer requirements	34%	48%	33%	48%	25%	6%	0%	50%

Arena Facilities Competitive Analysis

A competitive analysis of existing arena/auditorium facilities was also undertaken. There are numerous arena-type facilities across the state (in addition to the numerous facilities located in Georgia, there are a number Agricultural Ag Centers located in the surrounding southern states). However, few facilities are located near Polk County and many of them do not have an agricultural mission, therefore they were not considered to be direct competitors. Considering facility location and function, nine competing facilities were identified in Georgia. There are agricultural facilities in Gordon and Carroll Counties and in Heard County that could compete with this proposed facility.

Five of the nine competing facilities identified in Georgia are heavily involved with agricultural functions. The remaining four facilities cater to a broader business base but are considered competitors because they have the capabilities to host the same type of events that the Ag Center is targeting. In addition, these competing multipurpose facilities are located in the same general region as the Ag Center. The facilities are located in Columbus, Macon, Dalton and Atlanta areas. For example, the Columbus Civic Center and the Macon Centraplex facilities would compete directly with the Ag Center as would West Georgia University Facilities. These

facilities host concerts, trade-shows, sporting events, rodeos, religious events, and other activities. These Centers are located near larger populations than Polk County. As a result, the Polk Center will have to attract events to its facility at the expense of these facilities. It may be difficult to get event sponsors to move from these high population areas to a relatively lower population area because of the difficulties in attracting people from a larger market area.

Table 10 presents partial listing of competing facilities and their daily rental rates. One important point to remember is that the rental rate is very complex and depends on a number of factors that are associated with attendance and special needs. There appears to be add-on costs for equipment and space besides the cost of renting only the arena. The Ag Center will have to work on a pricing structure similar the ones being used by competing facilities.

Table 10. Competing Arenas

Facility	Daily Rental Rate
Heritage Park -Oconee County	\$350
Georgia National Fair Grounds Multipurpose Arena (Perry)	\$150- does not include dirt which is an additional cost as are stalls.
Chicopee Woods Agricultural Center-Gainesville	\$250 small arena \$350 large arena
Georgia Mountain Center Arena-Gainesville	\$1,000 per day or \$1,000 per day or 10% of gross sales if it is a ticketed event
Georgia International Horse Park	\$1,000- additional charges depending on needs and attendance
McWherter Agricultural Complex (Jackson TN)	\$500-\$1,000- additional equipment for a fee
Clemson (Garrison Livestock Center)	\$750- additional equipment for a fee
Coweta Expo Center	\$300 each – breezeway and meeting room with lobby. \$100 for meeting room alone
Gilmer County Civic Center	\$200 - \$300 deposit. Tables and chairs available for \$1 and \$3, respectively.
Gordon County	No fee if its for and education event/training or agricultural related.

Carroll County	Free for education and ag events. Private events are \$50 per hour with 3 hr. min.
Heard County	\$500 includes tractor, operator and lights.

The competitive analysis suggests that the arena market is full of competitors in the state and region. The Ag Center will have to work at differentiating its facility from the competition to attract customers.

Arena Specifications

According to the IAAM industry profile study, arenas range from 550 seats to 26,000 seats in the larger facilities. Large seating area 200 and 6,000 people while exhibition spaces range from 1,200 square feet to 560,000 square feet. The proposed Ag Center will fall within each of these facility ranges.

Arena Market Potential

Complexes similar to the proposed Ag Center are typically located in downtown or city center areas with a resident base of 200,000 or more residents. Given Polk County’s population estimates, 41,524 people, it appears that the Ag Center does not have a population base typically associated with similar complexes. However, as you move into the adjacent eight counties, the total population exceeds 588,900.

According to industry data, a complex can expect to attract business as far away as 75 miles, (a 75-mile radius from the complex) increasing the population base. Organizations that host events in large complexes depend on the area population to support the event. Therefore, it is important to determine the population within 75 miles of the proposed centrally located facility to determine if the population is large enough to support large events. Within in a 25-mile radius of Polk County, there are an estimated 256,754 people. Expanding the radius to 50 miles, the population increases significantly to 2,379,080 million people and expanding the radius 75 miles increases the population to 6,729,051. Therefore, the majority of the expected “draw” will come from the large populations outside of Polk County.

The draw area population estimates are very encouraging. However, within this 75-mile radius, there are numerous competing facilities, which may not identical, but all offer some or all of the facilities being proposed by the Ag Center. The Ag Center will have to compete with these established facilities to attract potential facility users. However, according to Darrell Day, Facility Manager in Irving Texas, and his paper on feasibility studies, he mentions that people from bigger towns will not go to smaller towns for an event, even though on paper it looks like it should happen.

To get a firsthand feel for the market, the CAED surveyed 72 organizations that use arena facilities; the data below represent a weighted average from previous research. According to the

survey results, three-quarters (75%) of the respondents who were interviewed about the two arenas, indicated that they would consider a facility in Northwest Georgia. The dog show/dog association respondents are less likely to use the proposed facility than any other organization category. The results in Table 11 suggest that there are a significant number of organizations interested in the proposed arena.

Table 11. Q. Would You Consider Using a Multipurpose Facility in Northwest Georgia? - Arena

Feature	Total (n=125)	Horse Show/Assoc. (n=32)	Cattle Assoc. (n=19)	Dog Show/Assoc. (n=24)	Rodeo (n=8)	Ag. Mach./Equip. (n=26)	Trade shows (n=36)	County Contacts (n=42)
Yes	75%	89%	89%	54%	100%	78%	83%	100%
No	25%	11%	11%	46%	0%	12%	17%	0%

Estimating the arena’s market potential can be calculated using the information supplied in Table 12 and the number of identified potential users in each organizational breakout. The estimated “real” market potential figure was derived by multiplying the percentage of organizations that would consider a multipurpose facility in the local area by the percentage of those same organizations that utilize closed arenas. For example, with horse shows/associations the estimated real market potential is estimated to be nine organizations ($9 \times 89\% \times 88\% = 7$). Table 12 assumes that each organization would rent the Ag Center’s arena facilities once a year for a three-day period.

Determining the daily rental rate is difficult (Table 12). For example, the Heritage Park facility in Oconee County rental rate is dependent on what the client would like to have made available to them and therefore there is no real set rental rate. On the other hand, the Georgia National Fair Grounds Multipurpose building in Perry has a rental rate and a set-up fee depending on the type of event being held and associated requirements. Also, there may be a stall rental fee. This add-on pricing strategy makes determining an actual daily arena rental cost difficult. Therefore, the median price of \$1,136 per day as reported by the survey respondents in Table 12 was used as the daily rental figure.

Table 12. Estimated Market Potential for The Arenas- Weighted Average.

Organization	Identified Market Potential	Consider Facility	Use Arena	Estimated “Real” Market Potential	Estimated Number of days Reserved	Estimated Potential Revenue*
Horse Shows/Associations	23	89%	88%	18	3.0	\$61,344
Cattle Associations	22	89%	78%	15	2.0	\$34,080
Dog shows/associations	53	54%	92%	26	4.0	\$118,144
Rodeos	14	100%	75%	11	3.0	\$37,488
Ag. Equipment/Machinery	65	78%	38%	20	3.0	\$68,160
Trade Shows	12	83%	67%	7	3.0	\$23,856
County Contacts	14	100%	17%	2	1.0	\$2,272
<i>Total Identified potential</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>\$345,344</i>

* Assumes that the arena facilities are rented out for \$1,136 per day

Given the median price of \$1,136 per day rental fee and the total number of days the facility is estimated to be utilized, the Ag Center might expect to generate \$345,344 annually from its arena facilities (open air and covered). Currently the arena facility is assumed to be occupied for 297 days of the year or 40% of the available time assuming year-round availability for the two arenas. The 297 figure was derived by multiplying the estimated “real market potential of 99 groups each using these facilities for 3 days (99*3=297). Obviously, increasing the occupancy rate would lead to higher revenues. The revenue potential from the arena is significantly larger than from the conference center facility. However, lack of permanent seating may negatively impact these number.

“Other Activities” Market Potential

- Weddings - There is limited potential for hosting wedding and/or wedding receptions.
- Graduation Ceremonies – Two high schools means only one high school graduation ceremony per year, but the facility may not be large enough to accommodate them. Elementary and middle schools may use the facility for graduation ceremonies. In addition, there may be a few class reunions annually.

County Fairs Market Overview

According to the International Association of Fairs Association Marketing Study, the majority of fairs have a target area of about a 100-mile radius. However, according to a 1994 demographic profile of fair patrons, it was noted that the majority of respondents drove less than 25 miles to visit a fair. Using the Rite Site easy demographic software and database, it is estimated that there are approximately 256,754 people within a 25-mile radius of the proposed site. This is a significant population base. Therefore, it would appear that most of the “draw” should come from the local area. This can be useful in marketing. The most intensive marketing should occur within a 25-mile radius of the proposed central Polk County site, with some secondary marketing reaching further locations up too about a 100-mile radius of the Ag Center.

Fair patrons “find out” about fairs in a variety of ways. Television, radio and newspaper are popular media for informing residents about a fair. Roughly 10% of the 2000 Marketing Study respondents indicated they learned about the fair via the television, radio or newspaper. However, over one-quarter of the respondents indicated they learned about the fair though word of mouth, either friend or family member. Interestingly, adults were significantly more likely to suggest going to the fair than were teenagers or children.

The average party size attending fairs was 2.64 people, which is consistent with the average United States family size. Fair visitors can be broken down by age. Forty-one percent (41%) of fair visitors are between 18-50 years of age. Only 20% are between 11-17 years of age while 19% are less than 10 years old. About 20% of fair visitors are more than 51 years old. Table 12.A outlines what visitors liked best about the fair.

Table 12.A Most Liked Fair Activities

Activity	Liked Best About Fair
• Competitive Exhibits	17 %
• Carnival Rides	16 %
• Everything	16 %
• Food	12 %
• Livestock-Animals	12 %
• Entertainment (general)	9 %
• Commercial Exhibits	5 %
• Nothing in particular	2 %
• Other	12 %

The most frequently reported problems associated with fairs were: parking, crowds and costs. However, parking and crowds were only mentioned by approximately 10% of the visitors. The cost issue was mentioned by 20% of the visitors. These are difficult issues that cannot be overcome easily.

Expenditures and attractions

Table 12.B breaks out the dollar amounts spent at fairs by visitor parties.

Table 12.B Fair Expenditures

Dollar Amount/person	Percent
Less than \$15	12%
\$15-\$25	22%
\$26-\$50	34%
\$51-\$100	23%
\$100+	9%
Average	\$47.00

An average party of 2.64 people can be expected to spend about \$47.00 when they visit a fair. Incidentally, only about 47% of the visitors indicated they would visit the fair more than once per year. However, 69% indicated they would visit the fair next year. When the actual receipts are divided by number of attendees, it appears that the average fair-goer spends about \$17.80 at the fair, or \$ 35.60 for a party of two visitors. Table 12 provides insight into per visitor expenditures.

Polk County Fair Market Potential

The average number of visitors for a fair varies significantly. For instance, The Georgia National Fair reported attendance of 336,000 visitors. The Cumming Country Fair and Festival north of

Atlanta reported an attendance of 63,360 visitors. Cumming is a suburb of Atlanta and is in Forsyth County which has a population of 98,000 people. Assuming a 25-mile radius draw, Polk County has a potential population of 256,754 where-as Cumming has a potential population of 1.16 million. Looking through the International Association of Fairs and Expositions' latest Marketing Guide, it appears that most county fairs draw between 10,000 and 25,000 visitors. Assuming these counties are similar to Polk County, Polk County should expect visitor levels in the 15,000 + range instead of the 63,000 reported at the Cumming fair.

Therefore, assuming 15,000 visitors each spending an average of \$47.00, the fair is estimated to generate \$705,000. The Ag Center should receive a percentage of these receipts. Assuming a 10% fee, the fair may generate an additional \$70,500 in revenue. For example, The Gainesville Mountain Center facility charges ticketed events 10% of receipts. Therefore, the CAED used the 10% figure in estimating fair receipts. The Ag Center needs to remember, during this time, other functions cannot be held in the facility.

Farmers Market

The Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development (CAED) conducted a survey to assess the current Georgia's Farmers Market operation, trends and potential in order to get a better understanding of the needs surrounding the direct sales of local foods to consumers.

Managers and vendors were reached through two online surveys¹ in order to assess the current situation of their activities, of their offering and, of their customers. In addition, managers and vendors were asked to provide key improvements that they see making a difference.

After a brief presentation of the survey's methodology, insights and overall implications, we will present the key elements pointed out by the members of the Farmers Market Community.

The two surveys were conducted between March 31st and August 2nd, 2016. For the managers, the link to an online survey was sent to a list of 127 recipients². The response rate was about 20% (N=26). For the vendors, they were reached through their Farmers Market managers (N=34). Fresh vegetables, baked goods, and jams/jellies/preserves (95% each) are the top 3 categories of products sold at the farmers market in 2015

Most vendors produce fresh vegetables (53%) and fruits (44%), or herbs (35%). Near half of these vendors have their production "certified" organic (43%) and labeled "Georgia Grown" or "locally grown" (37% each). Though, the organic certification doesn't necessarily refer to "U.S.D.A organic" (6%) but rather to "certified naturally grown" or "grown using organic and natural methods".

Over ¾ of the managers declared being in short supply for several products such as dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and eggs.

¹ Online tool used: Survey Monkey.

² A list of 156 recipients was available, 29 email addresses were defectives.

Table 13. Top 10 Categories of Products Sold by Vendors in 2015 according to Farmers Market Managers (n=21)

Product	n	(% of N)
Baked goods	20	95.24
Fresh vegetables	20	95.24
Jams, jellies, preserves	20	95.24
Honey	19	90.48
Fresh fruits	18	85.71
Meat and /or poultry products	17	80.95
Herbs	17	80.95
Plants	17	80.95
Nuts	14	66.67
Prepared foods (for immediate consumption)	13	61.90

Budget, Sales and Marketing

The average annual operating budget is \$17,907 with some disparity among the farmers market. A majority of them (77%) declare less than \$10,000 per year. However, most markets were economically self-sustained in 2015 and their managers receive an income of \$10,025 in average (Min \$1,300 – Max \$34,000).

Direct sales to consumers is the main purpose of a farmers market so it is not surprising that 94% of the sales fall into this category. Restaurants, other businesses and institutions represent 13%. The average total amount of sales is \$157K (Min \$3,000-Max \$1.3M).

The average expense on advertising in 2015 is \$1,702 which represents 10% of the average operating budget among the respondents. Among the most effective promotional tools according to the managers:

- Facebook – 95%
- Signs/Banners – 71%
- Brochures/Flyers – 67%
- Internet/Website – 55%

- Newsletter (45%), newspaper (43%) and Instagram (42%) are used too as a somewhat effective promotional tool.
- Expect for brochures and flyers, this statement is largely confirmed by the vendors too.

Consumers

In 2015, there is an average of 18,787 visitors according to the 19 responding managers with a percentage of 89% of buyers. A third declared a need for more customers. According to a majority of vendors (53%), there is an overall increase of the number of customers but the average amount spent remains small (less than \$20 – 65%).

Most important reasons for shopping at a farmers’ market according to managers:

- Freshness and condition of product -95%
- Health attributes of products -90%
- Access to locally produced food -76%
- Support of local agriculture – 76%
- Taste and texture of products (67%), Social atmosphere of the market (67%), Variety of products offered (62%), Ability to know how food products are produced (62%) play a somewhat secondary role for managers. Nevertheless, these factors seem to have more importance according to vendors (83%, 72%, 83%, and 79% respectively).

Perception of the importance of customer innovation for patronizing farmers market:

- Freshness of product -100%
- Access to locally produced food -81%
- Support of local agriculture – 76%
- Taste and texture of products -76%
- Support community & Food programs
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the main program, farmers market managers and vendors reported to be involved in (65% and 36% respectively).
- Farm to school (40%) or “My Market Club” (35%) are popular too.

Survey Highlights Summary

- According to managers, nearly 58% of the farmers market have been in operation for 5 to 10 years, 35% for less than 5 years.
- More than one third of these markets are open year round.
- The majority of vendors are agricultural producers (62% according to managers).
- A third of the managers declared a need for more vendors/producers.
- Most vendors produce fresh vegetables (53%) and fruits (44%), or herbs (35%). Near half of these vendors have their production “certified” organic (43%) and labeled “Georgia Grown” or “locally grown” (37% each).

- Over ¾ of the managers declared being in short supply for several products such as dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and eggs.
- The most important reasons for shopping at a farmers market: Freshness and condition of product -95%, Health attributes of products -90%, Access to locally produced food -76% and Support of local agriculture – 76%.
- Potentially areas of improvement related to vendors’ activities, i.e. how they could advertise their products at the market, and fund food campaign, and to customers; i.e. how to increase their number and their average spending.

Canning Facilities

There are several canneries operating in Georgia. See Appendix B for a list of canneries in the state. This analysis will use the following pricing for using the cannery. If the user has their own glass jars, the charge will be 25¢ per pint and if they use their own quart jars it is 30¢ per quart. Users can purchase metal cans at the facility for 55¢ per can which includes cost and processing.

Canning Estimates – 200 users canning an average of 50 units per person.					
people	No. of People	Cost/unit	Units/person	No. of Units Canned	Revenue Estimate
pints	134	\$ 0.25	50	6,700	\$ 1,675.00
quarts	33	\$ 0.30	50	1,667	\$ 500.00
cans	33	\$ 0.55	50	1,667	\$ 916.67
Total	200		150	10,033	\$ 3,091.67
Assume 4/6 use glass pints, 1/6 use quarts and 1/6 use cans.					

Canning Estimates – 200 users canning an average of 100 units per person.					
people	No. of People	Cost/unit	Units/person	No. of Units Canned	Revenue Estimate
pints	134	\$ 0.25	100	13,333	\$ 3,333.33
quarts	33	\$ 0.30	100	3,333	\$ 1,000.00
cans	33	\$ 0.55	100	3,333	\$ 1,833.33
Total	200		300	20,000	\$ 6,166.67
Assume 4/6 use glass pints, 1/6 use quarts and 1/6 use cans.					

Canning Estimates – 500 users canning an average of 50 units per person.					
people	No. of People	Cost/unit	Units/person	No. of Units Canned	Revenue Estimate
pints	333	\$ 0.25	50	16,667	\$ 4,166.67
quarts	83	\$ 0.30	50	4,167	\$ 1,250.00
cans	83	\$ 0.55	50	4,167	\$ 2,291.67
Total	500		150	25,000	\$ 7,708.33

Assume 4/6 use glass pints, 1/6 use quarts and 1/6 use cans.					
Canning Estimates – 500 users canning an average of 100 units per person.					
people	No. of People	Cost/unit	Units/person	No. of Units Canned	Revenue Estimate
pints	333	\$ 0.25	100	33,333	\$ 8,333.33
quarts	83	\$ 0.30	100	8,333	\$ 2,500.00
cans	83	\$ 0.55	100	8,333	\$ 4,583.33
Total	500		300	50,000	\$ 15,416.67
Assume 4/6 use glass pints, 1/6 use quarts and 1/6 use cans.					

Estimated Revenue Summary

The CAED has estimated the potential revenue from various activities that may be hosted at the proposed Ag Center. Table 14 provides a summary of the estimated revenue potential for each of the facility components. Overall, the CAED estimated that the Ag Center can expect to generate approximately \$568,958 annually from its facilities, including agricultural education events. It is important to remember that these figures are estimated using a combination of survey and industry data. The actual realized revenue generated from the facility could differ significantly. In addition, the Ag Center should not plan on generating this level of revenue its first couple of years in operation. It will take time to market the Ag Center and generate the level of activity needed to make the estimated \$568,958 annually.

Revenue Source	Estimate Potential Revenue
Meeting/Breakout room Rental	\$73,272
Conference/Auditorium Rental	\$54,670
Arena Facilities Rental	\$345,344
Farmers Market Revenue – average from survey	\$10,025
Cannery Revenue – using highest estimates	\$15,147
Fair	\$70,500
Ag Education	
Total Estimate Facility Revenue	\$568,958
<i>*Includes agricultural education events.</i>	

Analysis of Operating Costs and Revenues

The purpose of the following analysis is to provide an overview of the likely construction costs and the estimated operating cost and revenues associated with the proposed Polk County

conference center and agricultural arena. This information is intended to provide a preliminary overview of both startup and ongoing operational costs and revenues for the proposed project. The projected operating results presented here are based on a set of simplifying assumptions about the size and scope of the proposed center's operations that were derived from conversations with county officials and from a survey of clients likely to rent the proposed facilities for conferences, meetings, events, and other activities.

Cost and revenue assumptions were researched by the University of Georgia Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development through interviews with similar facilities that are currently operating and reviews of publicly available financial statements for additional facilities. These cost and revenue assumptions were determined to be representative of industry benchmarks or provide a reasonable representation of costs and returns within the conference center and agricultural arena industries. It should be noted that while the estimated financial results presented here are based on information derived from a number of sources, the results do not necessarily reflect the opinion expressed by any single source. Estimates such as those pertaining to demand for conference center and event space, construction and operating costs, and rental fee schedules are derived from a number of industry sources and publications which are cited elsewhere in the study. While every effort has been made to assure that all estimated costs, prices, rental fees, and other data used in the study are as accurate as possible at the time the study was completed, data is always subject to some degree of estimation risk and actual costs and prices may be subject to change as market supply and demand, economic conditions, and other factors impacting the conference and meeting industry change. Facility rental rates used in the study are based on average rental rates for comparable facilities, however they may not reflect many of the additional amenities and conveniences that such centers typically provide at an extra cost.

The results of this study are limited in scope to an evaluation of Polk County's proposed facility, based on general discussions with county officials regarding the size and scope of the project. The study does not compare the proposed facility to any other possible alternatives such as constructing only an arena, or renovating the county's existing facility, nor does it endorse the proposed center as the optimal or most appropriate alternative for meeting the county's current or future needs for such a facility.

The analysis performed was limited in nature and, as such, the Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development does not express an opinion or any other form of assurance on the information presented in this report. As with all estimates of this type, the authors cannot guarantee the results nor is any warranty intended that they can be achieved. The estimates of revenues and expenses are based on the anticipated size, quality and efficiency of the proposed new multi-use events center. Since these estimates and assumptions are based on circumstances that have not yet transpired, they are subject to variation. Further, there will usually be differences between estimated and actual results because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected, and those differences may be material.

Construction Costs

In initial conversations regarding the proposed facility, Polk County officials expressed their intentions that, if constructed, the project would be funded through the county, and would therefore be relieved of the financial burden of having to generate cash flow sufficient to meet mortgage, interest, or bond payments. Nevertheless, in order to provide an accurate representation of the potential size and scope of the project, as well as to account for costs associated with the ongoing operations of a new conference center and arena in Polk County, an analysis was conducted of order-of-magnitude hard construction costs pursuant to the supportable building program elements presented earlier in this report. Construction costs tend to vary widely among comparable conference center and agricultural arena type projects. Many variables exist that influence actual realized construction costs, including type of facility, size, components, level of finish, integrated amenities, costs of goods and services in the local market, location and topography of the site, ingress/egress issues, and other such aspects.

Order-of-magnitude construction cost estimates are the simplest and least expensive form of construction cost estimates, requiring only basic information on the use and size of the planned structure. The “units” to describe the structure may be very general, and need not be well defined. What is lacking in detail and accuracy is more than compensated by the minimal time and cost of generating the estimate. Such estimates are usually sufficient for initial feasibility studies which seek to examine costs and revenues from a broad perspective without the assistance and associated cost of employing a professional architect during the exploratory phase of a project. If the Polk County Board of Commissioners should choose to pursue a conference and agricultural center facility, one of their first steps should be to engage the services of a professional architect and builder to draft a detailed plan and construction cost estimate.

Table 15 presents the estimated order-of-magnitude hard construction costs for the proposed conference/agricultural center, adjusted for current economic conditions and local conditions in Polk County Georgia. The facility is envisioned as consisting of an auditorium capable of accommodating events up to and including small market concerts, an enclosed, heated and air conditioned agricultural arena of sufficient size to attract officially sanctioned equine events, and meeting room space that could be utilized independently of, or in conjunction with, events that use the auditorium or arena space. Such events might include, but not be limited to, trade shows, corporate training, professional meetings, and so forth. In addition, the facility would also need to include a common area such as a rotunda, restrooms, offices, storage space, and kitchen facilities. Architectural design and site/infrastructure analysis will be required to fully estimate ultimate development costs. In addition to the estimated order-of-magnitude hard costs, soft construction costs, costs associated with land purchase and improvement, other potential infrastructure improvement costs and potentially annual operating costs will also need to be considered in the ultimate planning scheme, if subsequent planning steps are taken.

Table 15. Hypothetical Hard Costs of Facilities

Arena: 10,000 sq. ft., plus 500 sq. ft. for commercial kitchen priced at \$174.40 per square foot	\$1,831,200
Auditorium: 400 seats at 10 sq. ft. / seat priced at \$180.94 per sq. ft.	\$ 723,760
Breakout Rooms, Common Area, Restrooms, Office, etc.: 5,500 sq. ft. at \$180.94 per sq. ft.	\$ 995,170
Farmers Market Pavilion: 7,500 square feet / \$60 per square foot.	\$ 450,000
Cannery Facility: 3,500 square feet / \$138 per square foot average cost.	\$ 483,000
Total Hypothetical Hard Costs	\$
4,483,130	

Order-of-Magnitude estimates are generally accepted as being accurate within +/- 30%, meaning that that actual hard construction costs could range from a low of \$3,138,191 to a high of \$5,828,069. Construction cost per square foot estimates were obtained from R.S. Means/Reed Construction Data. Auditorium square feet per seat was obtained from: *Size Matters: How a growing American audience affects the size and cost of performing arts spaces* published by Theatre Projects Consultants in 2010.

Soft costs (i.e., financing costs, legal, architectural, consulting, permitting, etc.) would be in addition to these estimates, and could add 25 to 30 percent to total construction costs. Site acquisition and preparation costs, as well as any necessary infrastructure costs would also be in addition to these figures. A detailed architectural concept, design and costing study would be required to specifically estimate construction costs for a potential Polk Ag center.

Costs of Ownership and Operating Costs

The information that follows summarizes the estimates of operating revenues over operating expenses before taxes and depreciation for a stabilized year of operations. This estimate is based on information from primary and secondary sources including, but not limited to, general market data (i.e., demographic/economic data, accessibility, hotel inventory, attractions and tourism statistics); similar existing facilities in the State and the region; input from area stakeholders; input from potential users; information on comparable facilities as well as input provided by the County and its advisors. This analysis represents a net revenue and expenses assessment and is subject to change depending on the actual building program, contractual agreements with service providers, and further refinements regarding operating strategies for the proposed new facility.

This financial operating analysis only considers revenues and expenses generated through the operation of the conference center and agricultural arena itself and does not consider other potential ancillary income that may be related to the center (such as incremental tax revenue, admissions surcharges, interest income, etc.), nor does it consider other non-operating costs, such as construction or financing costs. The cost of construction is assumed to be borne by the county in the form of a SPLOST.

This presentation is designed to assist project representatives in assessing the financial effects of the potential Center and cannot be considered a presentation of expected future results. Accordingly, the analysis of potential financial operating results may not be useful for other

purposes. The assumptions disclosed herein are not all inclusive, but are those deemed to be significant. Because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected, there usually will be differences between estimated and actual results and these differences may be material. The estimates presented here are based on a number of general, simplifying assumptions.

General Assumptions

- The primary objectives of the proposed new facility are to accommodate a variety of locally based activities, as well as events that attract out-of-town attendees that generate economic and fiscal activity.
- The proposed facility will be owned by and managed by the Polk County government.
- Due to the competitive environment in which the proposed new facility will operate, facility management will need to have established contacts and strong relationships with regional and national event promoters/producers, particularly in the equine/livestock industry, in order to maximize bookings.
- The facility is will be aggressively marketed by established tourism agencies at the local, state, and regional levels in addition to facility marketing efforts.
- A high level of quality/customer service is provided.
- The site is adequate in terms of visibility, ingress and egress, parking, safety and other similar issues.
- Sufficient supporting infrastructure is located nearby (i.e. hotel rooms, restaurants, retail, entertainment, etc.).

Cost of Operating

Depreciation represents the economic cost of using the facilities. Depreciation can be thought of as physical deterioration and functional obsolescence. Over time equipment and building become worn down and need replacing. This same time period laws and regulations or technology may change creating a need for the facility to make renovations and updates. Depreciation captures all this in the form of a tax shelter. If publicly financed, these costs can be thought of as the fixed cost born by the community. Interest is the opportunity cost of the community involvement if publicly financed. If bond financing is used, both depreciation and interest needs to be used in the economic analysis as well a risk rated interest. The community views the interest as what return they could have received from other investments. The bond holder receives interest for their investment into the firm. This interest needs to be included and on top of the opportunity cost. Typically corporate bonds yield around 8%. These companies are of low risk and well established in the marketplace. A project similar to this one will need to either have a portion of the bonds backed by the community or offer a high interest rate.

The cost figures used in the following sections assumes that the fixed cost will be covered by a government office. The researcher assumed the facility would be built by a government agency which removed the fixed cost, then attempted to balance the depreciation by increasing the repair cost on the variable cost side. The interest expense was wiped out assuming government agencies do not particularly care of if an operation has a return above opportunity cost due to the nature of their budgets were if it is not spent it is lost.

Operating Expenses

The primary sources of operating expenses for a potential new Polk County conference center include employee salaries, wages and benefits, utilities, repair and maintenance, general and administrative, insurance, materials and supplies, professional fees and other expenses. It is important to recognize that this financial operating analysis does not consider additional marketing expenditures that will be necessary to market the convention center to non-local groups. Incremental marketing expenditures will be particularly important during the convention center construction period and during the initial years of operations. It is not known whether the County's existing Convention and Visitors Bureau is sufficient to appropriately market a new conference center, particularly under a "stand-alone" model that would be owned and operated by the public sector. Without adequate marketing and sales support, any county investment in "bricks-and-mortar" may not be optimally leveraged.

The estimated operating expenses for a potential new conference center are based on historical operating expenses of comparable facilities and industry standards. Specifically, comparable facility operating expense data was analyzed on a per square foot basis. Consideration was given to operating efficiencies that could be expected to occur at the potential Center, as well as cost of goods/services adjustments specific to the Polk County area and the surrounding region.

In estimating operating expenses, and staffing costs in particular, it is important that high-quality service is provided at a potential facility. Otherwise, the facility will not be in a position to attract and retain its market potential of event activity. The estimates provided in the previous chapter also assume that this quality standard is maintained.

Salaries, Wages and Benefits

Estimated salaries, wages and benefits include compensation for full- and part-time employees. Employee benefits include payments for employee hospitalization programs, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, and FICA. This analysis is based on the financial operations of comparable and competitive facilities, and a potential facility's size and event levels. It has been assumed that the Center will be staffed with personnel levels similar to that of other similar centers. These estimates reflect the assumption that some many of the operations, maintenance, and setup staff will be volunteers or prison labor. Additional labor required in preparation for, or clean up after, major events is assumed to be accounted for as overtime or contracted out and is under contract labor in the analysis. The center is assumed to employ the full time employees listed in table 13 along with their estimated annual salaries.

Although the staffing requirements and subsequent salaries and wages represent a significant expense, permanent full-time staffing plans vary widely across similar facilities. This variance in staffing levels is generally attributed to multiple factors. One factor relates to the management philosophy of maintaining event-related personnel as full-time, part-time staff or voluntary. Another factor relates to the management and physical relationship the facility might have to other public facilities and opportunities for sharing employees across facilities. For example, certain skilled maintenance workers such as electrician or plumbers, or laborers such as landscape maintenance crews may service multiple county buildings. In addition, the extent that

contracted services are used also impacts staffing at a facility. For purposes of this analysis, a staffing plan of 2.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs) is estimated for the proposed new multi-use events center.

Table 16 Salary and Wage Cost (to county)

Center Director (Young Farmer, cost share with state’s 70 percent).....	\$24,000
Office/Sales Manager (Cost share with county 50 percent).....	\$17,500
Custodian	\$25,000

Based on these assumptions, salaries/wages for the proposed new facility are estimated to be approximately \$66,500 in a stabilized year. This figure does not include overtime pay associated with additional night and weekend hours worked in conjunction with events. *Benefits* – For purposes of this analysis, benefits are estimated to be 38% of salaries/wages, which amounts to an estimated \$46,550 in a stabilized year.

Utilities

Utilities expense at a new Agriculture Education Center in Polk includes costs for electricity, water, gas, internet and telephone. The estimates are based on industry averages and the assumption that the new facility will include all the current energy-saving components such as solar panels and use the latest cost saving methods (eg low flow toilets, LED lighting, etc) to reduce costs.

Utilities generally represent one of the highest expense items for these types of facilities and can be variable depending upon the level of utilization, the type of facilities and climate. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the operating entity passes through to the user, to the extent possible, utility costs related to a particular event. In many facilities, these costs are handled as an expense that is fully or partially reimbursed by the event at a later date or, for civic uses, a utilities charge is assessed. The utility cost shown in this analysis represents the total non-reimbursable costs. Based on these assumptions, utility costs are estimated to be approximately \$65,551 in a stabilized year. It should be noted that actual utility expenses will depend on facility design and decisions concerning energy systems and management.

Contracted Labor and Services

Unreimbursed contract services represent a variety of professional services which may include legal, accounting, janitorial, trash removal, landscaping, and/or maintenance contracts as well as other services that are not chargeable to event promoters/producers or users and are borne by the facility. It is expected that many of these functions will be carried out by prisoner and the expense of this will not be tied directly to the center.

Repairs and maintenance include various expenses that will be incurred related to building, equipment and grounds maintenance and will vary based on utilization. Expense allocations for repair and maintenance are also highly dependent upon the owner/management philosophy relative to upkeep of the facility. The analysis assumes that the maintenance costs for a potential

Center in the early years of operation are relatively low. It is likely that such costs will increase incrementally over time as the facility depreciates. It is likely that the repairs and maintenance costs could eventually exceed the base-year estimates presented in this analysis. The establishment of a separate repair and maintenance reserve is recommended to fund future major capital projects. Total estimated costs for contracted labor and services are estimated to be \$58,083 in a stabilized year.

General, Administrative, and Supply Expenses

General and administrative expenses include various day-to-day costs such as subscriptions, staff training, licenses and permits and other such items. This category also includes costs related to administrative business-related expenses such as postage, administrative supplies, administrative furniture and fixtures, auto allowances, administrative travel, and maintenance of the administrative space.

Costs for materials and supplies for the proposed Center include those materials, supplies and equipment used for facility operations and its administrative offices. The analysis of materials and supplies expense is based on comparable facility operations and the levels of facility space.

Insurance

Due to factors such as utilization and facility size as well as the amount and type of coverage typically carried by such facilities, insurance expenses can vary greatly. This analysis assumes that the proposed multi-use events center would be insured similar to other comparable facilities. Insurance costs are estimated to be approximately \$21,150 in a stabilized year.

Table 17. Summary of Expenses in an Average Year

Employee Salaries	\$ 66,500
Overtime	\$ 17,860
Benefits	\$ 46,550
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 130,910
Technical	\$ 5,586
Custodial	\$ 6,439
Dry Cleaning	\$ 397
Repairs and Maint.	\$ 9,858
Rental - Equip/Vehicles	\$ 2,650
Insurance (other than emp.)	\$ 22,419
Communications	\$ 5,035
Travel	\$ 1,510
Dues and Fees	\$ 1,166
Education and Training	\$ 583
Contract Labor	\$ 530
Other/Misc.	\$ 3,180
Contracted Labor & Services	\$ 59,352
General Supplies & Materials	\$ 4,142
Supplies - Janitorial	\$ 2,491
Supplies - Office	\$ 934
Supplies - Automotive	\$ 50
Supplies - Building/Grounds Maint	\$ 75
Water/Sewer	\$ 8,968
Natural Gas	\$ 12,455
Electricity	\$ 43,842
Fuel	\$ 156
Other	\$ 131
Computer Equip (<\$5,000)	\$ 523
Furniture/Fixtures (<\$5,000)	\$ 1,362
Other Small Equipment (<\$5,000)	\$ 2,989
Other Supplies	\$ 241
General, Administrative, Supplies	\$ 78,357
Total Annual Budgeted Expenses	\$ 268,619

Financial Summary

The preceding financial estimates for a proposed conference center and livestock arena in Polk County present a rough estimate of anticipated revenues and expenses for a stabilized year of operations, which is expected to be achieved by the fifth year of operation. These estimates show that such a project, if executed according to the assumptions laid out above, could be expected to cover its operating expenses and generate a profit of \$300,339 per year. These projections are based on operating costs that are being paid from other sources and not totally dependent on generating revenue, i.e., prison labor, volunteer labor, SPLOST funds, and Young Farmer Manager being paid by the state. These estimates, however, should be interpreted with caution, based on revenue and expense projections for a hypothetical facility which has yet to be constructed and is still only in its conceptual stage of development.

Both revenues and expenses could vary significantly depending on such things as the final design of the building, which will determine its suitability and attractiveness for the various events that it is envisioned to support. The county's marketing efforts will play a key role in the project's likelihood of financial success, as the small operating surplus projected here could quickly become a large operating loss based on the inability to attract a single major event. The county should expect, or at least be prepared to accept, operating losses for the first several years of the project's life.

While every effort has been made to ensure that the financial projections presented here are realistic and unbiased, small changes in the number of events, event attendance, or even the ability to profitably pass along food and beverage or service costs could significantly alter the bottom line financial outcome of the center. In reality, many similar facilities reviewed in the course of completing this study failed to consistently cover all annual operating expenses on a regular basis. Consequently, it is strongly recommended that the Polk County Board of Commissioners carefully review its goals and objectives in developing such a project and be full aware of the range of potential financial outcomes before moving forward

Polk County Economic Impact (Contribution)

In looking at the economic contribution of a project or industry, output is defined as the value of all sales transactions in the economy; employment is the number of part-time and full-time jobs in the economy while average wages and benefits are income for these jobs. Value added is equal to sales less the costs of purchased inputs (Shaffer, Deller, and Marcouiller 2004). Value added for the region is equivalent to the term gross state product.

Methodology

Economic contributions demonstrate the role of a project or industry through multiplier effect that begins with input expenditures stimulating business to business spending, personal income, and employment. This analysis uses estimated data from the exemplary stabilized year of operations of the facility, as proposed in this analysis. This can be estimated with input-output models (IMPLAN) that separate the economy into various industrial sectors such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, trade, and services. The input-output model then calculates the role that an industry comprises within the economy, expressed in terms of direct and indirect effects and are interpreted as the contribution of the enterprise to the total economy. Direct and indirect

effects represent the role of the industry and other industries that supply inputs to the directly affected sector. Induced effects are the changes in household spending due to changes in economic activity generated by other effects. Thus, the total economic contribution or role is the sum of direct, indirect, and induced effects.

Jobs calculated within an IMPLAN industrial sector are not limited to whole numbers and fractional amounts represent additional hours worked without an additional employee. With no measure of hours involved in employment impacts, IMPLAN summations for industrial sectors which include fractional employment represent both jobs and job equivalents. Since employment may result from some employees working additional hours in existing jobs, instead of terming indirect employment impacts as “creating” jobs, a more accurate term is “involving” jobs or job equivalents. It is also important to note that this type of analysis does not include cost/benefit analysis, net economic benefit, or social benefits resulting from the project.

Economic Contribution

Economic impacts to the Polk County economy due to annual operations for an exemplary stabilized year of operations are presented in the following table.³ We find that direct output impact of \$568,958 in the following table is equal to the value of annual sales/revenue, with the entire contribution in terms of the economy of \$734,654. Labor income impacts, including overtime and benefits, account for total labor income contribution of \$175,348 representing 3.0 direct jobs and a total of 4.8 jobs in the economy.

Economic Contribution Summary for Polk County

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct Effect	3	\$139,894	\$240,560	\$568,958
Indirect Effect	1.2	\$21,048	\$42,066	\$102,921
Induced Effect	0.6	\$14,405	\$33,935	\$62,775
Total Effect	4.8	\$175,348	\$316,561	\$734,654

Calculations by CAED using IMPLAN Group, Inc., IMPLAN System (data and software), 16740 Birkdale Commons Parkway, Suite 206, Huntersville, NC 28078. www.implan.com. *Includes proprietor’s income.

Economic Contribution

Economic impacts to the State’s economy due to annual operations for an exemplary stabilized year of operations are presented in the following table.⁴ We find that direct output impact of \$568,958 in the following table is equal to the value of annual sales/revenue, with the entire contribution in terms of the economy of \$1,015,535. Labor income impacts, including overtime and benefits, account for total labor income contribution of \$272,781 representing 3.0 direct jobs and a total of 6.0 jobs in the economy.

³ Table is in 2018 dollars. These impacts would vary depending on the proportion of inputs purchased within the county. For the purposes of this study, all purchases will be purchased locally.

⁴ Table is in 2018 dollars. These impacts would vary depending on the proportion of inputs purchased within the county. For the purposes of this study, all purchases will be purchased locally.

Economic Contributions to the State

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct Effect	3.0	\$136,755	\$253,465	\$568,958
Indirect Effect	1.6	\$74,567	\$144,414	\$249,662
Induced Effect	1.4	\$61,460	\$115,294	\$196,916
Total Effect	6	\$272,781	\$513,173	\$1,015,535

Feasibility Study Conclusion

There appears to be significant interest in hosting various events at the proposed Ag Education Center facilities. As a result, the proposed Ag Education Center is estimated to generate just over a half million dollars in revenue once it has been properly marketed and established in the marketplace. The Ag Education Center is expected to generate a profit at this level of operation. According to the economic analysis, the Ag Education Center will operate at a profit given the outside sources of revenue, labor and volunteers.

The proposed Ag Center is expected to have a significant impact on Georgia's economy. It is estimated that the level of business activity at the proposed Ag Center would be associated with \$734,654 in economic activity for Polk County. Looking at the state level, there will be an impact of \$1,015,535 economic contributions to the state of Georgia.

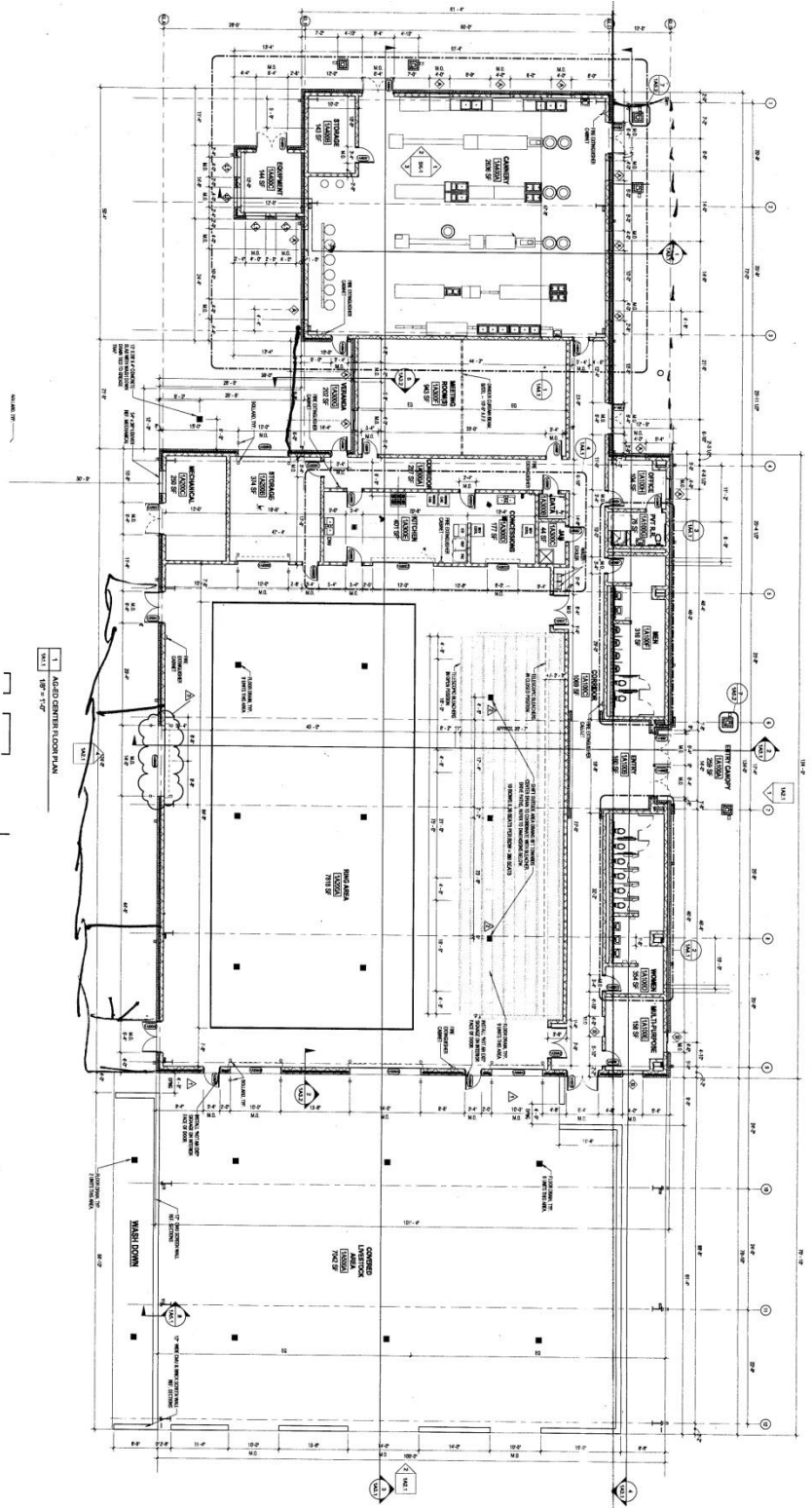
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Shaffer, Deller, and Marcouiller. 2004. *Community Economics – Linking Theory and Practice*, 2nd Edition. Blackwell Publishing, Ames, IA.

Smithson Mills, Inc., Feasibility study for establishment of a value-adding for and agricultural processing facility in Floyd County, Virginia, October 31, 2011, Ash

APPENDIX A: Gilmer County architectural plans.





1 - AGED CENTER FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FLOOR PLAN LEGEND	
1	WALLS TO BE REMOVED
2	WALLS TO BE ADDED
3	WALLS TO BE RECONSTRUCTED
4	WALLS TO BE REFINISHED
5	WALLS TO BE PAINTED
6	WALLS TO BE STAINED
7	WALLS TO BE GLAZED
8	WALLS TO BE BRICK
9	WALLS TO BE CONCRETE
10	WALLS TO BE STUCCO
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100	WALLS TO BE STUCCO

GILMER COUNTY AGRICULTURE EDUCATION CENTER & LIVESTOCK FACILITY
 CLEAR CREEK SCHOOL DR, ELLIJAY, GA 30538
 GILMER COUNTY CHARTER SCHOOLS

B&A
 Breau & Associates
 ARCHITECTS
 4080 MCGINNIS FERRY ROAD, SUITE 1407
 ALPHARETTA, GA 30005 P. 678-585-4506

APPENDIX B – Canneries in Georgia

- **Blue Ridge Cannery** -
811 Summit Street, Blue Ridge, GA 30513. Phone: (706) 632-0208. Directions: 67 miles from Atlanta.
- **Calhoun County High School Cannery** -
700 Manry Street, Edison, GA 39846. Phone: (229) 835-2435. Alternate Phone: (229) 849-2765. (located behind the school)
- **Dawson County Cannery**
205 Allen Street, Dawsonville, GA 30534. Phone: 706-265-0153.
- **Eastonolle Cannery** -
P.O. Box 9 School Road, Eastonolle, GA 30538. Phone: 706-779-2218 .
Comments from a visitor on March 15, 2012: "My girlfriend that lives in Tocoa, GA has been to this facility and recently shared her experience with me. The following is what I found online about them. I Believe that they may offer a lot more than just canning ie freezing and processing. Stephens County Cannery processes both tin cans, which they provide, and glass jars, which you provide. Meat is 70 cents a can to process and vegetables are 65 cents. Glass jars cost 30 cents each to process."
- **Gilmer County Cannery**
408 Bobcat Trail, Ellijay, GA 30540. Phone: (706) 276-5095.
- **Habersham County Cannery** -
Stanford Mill Road, Clarkesville, GA 30523. Phone: (706) 754-3133. Alternate Phone: (706) 754-2110.
- **Lavonia Cannery** -
57 Hartwell Road, Lavonia, GA 30553. Phone: (706) 356-8115. Directions: 80 miles from Atlanta
- **Lowndes Food Processing Center** or better known as "The Canning Plant" -
Located at Lowndes High School, it is operated by the Lowndes County Agriculture teachers from late May through mid-July and is open to the public to process and preserve food products such as peas, tomatoes and other vegetables. Many of the patrons make soups and jelly as well in the facility.
- **Seminole County Canning Plant** -
208 Adams Avenue, Donalsonville, GA 39845. Phone: - Ag. Dept. (229) 524-5165.
- **Turner County Canning Plant** -
601 E. Madison Avenue, Sycamore, GA 31790. Phone: (229) 567-9337. Alternate phone: (229) 567-4346.
- **White County School** -
2600 Hwy. 129 North, Cleveland, GA 30528. Phone: (706) 865-2312. The cannery is located at middle school.
- **2012 Agriculture Education Food Processing Centers of Georgia**
- **Appling County High School** -
482 Blackshear Highway, Baxley, GA 31513. Phone: 912 367-8610. Ag Dept. 912 367-8617. Fax : 912 366-9877
Email: Jim Galvin, Agriculture Education Teacher james.galvin@appling.k12.ga.us. or

Van Mills, Agriculture Education Teacher vmills@appling.k12.ga.us.

Open: 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 AM, June 8-10, 15-17, 22-24 & 28-30, July 1, 5-8, 14-15 & 18-22, Open later in the fall for peanut season.

- **Berrien County High School -**

500 East Smith Avenue, Nashville, GA 31639. School Phone: 229 686-7428. Canning Plant: 229 686-3464. Fax 229 686-6251. Email: Tim Meeks, Agriculture Education Teacher, tmeeks@berrien.k12.ga.us. Kane Staines, Agriculture Education Teacher kane.staines@berrien.k12.ga.us. Robert Bodiford, Agriculture Education Teacher, robert.bodiford@berrien.k12.ga.us. James Hunter, Agriculture Education Teacher james.hunter@berrien.k12.ga.us. Open: 8:00 am to 2:00 PM, Monday, Tuesday & Thursday.

- **Brooks County Schools -**

1008 West Bartow Street, Quitman, GA 31643. Phone: 229 263-7531 (Board of Ed). Email: Dave Bearden, Agriculture Education Teacher dbearden@brooks.k12.ga.us. Blake Kendrick, Agriculture Education Teacher bkendrick@brooks.k12.ga.us. Open: June 1-July 1, Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8 am to 2 PM; July 14-22 Tuesday and Thursday from 12 PM (noon) - 6 PM.

- **Calhoun County High School -**

P.O. Box 366, Edison, GA 31746. Phone: 229 835-2435. Cell: 229 310-9246. Fax: 229 835-3040. Email: David Wolfe, Agriculture Education Teacher davidwolfe@calhoun.k12.ga.us. Canning plant is located behind the school.. BOE 229 849-2765
Open: July 7, 8, 14, 15 & 22.

- **Colquitt County High -**

1800 Park Avenue, Moultrie, GA 31768. Stacey Beacham, Agriculture Education Teacher sbeacham@colquitt.k12.ga.us.
Primary Contact: 229-890-6292 or 229-873-4202. Email: Gene Hart, Agriculture Education Teacher ghart@colquitt.k12.ga.us. For off season appt: 229-873-1049. Shawn Collins, Agriculture Education Teacher scollins@colquitt.k12.ga.us. Steve Bass, Agriculture Education Teacher sbass@colquitt.k12.ga.us. Adrienne Gentry Smith, Agriculture Education Teacher asmith@colquitt.k12.ga.us. Open: May 14,16 from 8:00-12:00, May 21,23 from 8:00-12:00, May 29,30 from 8:00-12:00; and 8:00am-2:00pm on June 4-July 13 (Monday-Friday) and 8:00 am to noon on the Saturdays of June 23, 30 and July 7, 14. Our canning plant has quart sized cans for purchase and capability to process glass jars supplied by the customer. We also offer shelling, washing and blanching of peas and butter beans. We also have equipment to peel potatoes.

- **Dodge County Food Processing -**

Dodge County Middle School, 5911 Oak Street, Eastman, GA 31023. Phone: Tom Cranford, Agriculture Education Teacher 478-278-8507.
Email: tcranford@dodge.k12.ga.us. Canning Plant is located behind the school tennis courts.

- **Dooly County High School -**

HWY 27 E, Vienna, Ga 31092. Phone: 229-268-8181. Email: Anderson Jenkins, Agriculture Education Teacher Anderson.jenkins@dooly.k12.ga.us.

Steve McCray, Agriculture Education Teacher Smccray@dooly.k12.ga.us. Open: June 1 - July 23 (After July 23 by appointment only), M-F 7:30am - 4pm. Cans and Jars Canning, Shelling and Juicing.

- **Early County High -**

420 Columbia Road, Blakely, GA 31723. Phone: 229 723-3006 ext. 5302. Fax: 229 723-8690. Ag Dept. 229 723-5503. Email: Eric Harris, Agriculture Education Teacher eharris@early.k12.ga.us. Catherine I. Simmons Ksimmons@early.k12.ga.us. Larry Worsley, Agriculture Education Teacher worsleylarry@hotmail.com. Open: June & July on Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:00am-2:00pm, Closed Week of July 4th. Pea sheller, blanching and canning in cans only. Open by appointment only during peanut season

- **Emanuel County Canning Facility -**

P.O. Box 218, Twin City, GA 30471. Phone: 478 763-3661. Email: John Harrison (jbharrison@emanuel.k12.ga.us) Justin Coleman (justin.coleman@emanuel.k12.ga.us) Faith Patrick (fpatrick@emanuel.k12.ga.us) Ashley Henry (athenry@emanuel.k12.ga.us) Open: May-July on Monday-Thursday from 7:30am to 2:00pm. Contact for additional information if processing corn.

- **Old State Farmers Market -**

East First Street, Blue Ridge, GA 30513. Phone: 706 632-0208. Email: Rhonda Mathews, Agriculture Education Teacher rmathews@fannin.k12.ga.us. Open: July-September's Schedule: Tuesday & Thursday at 8:00 am, Product must be in cooker by noon. Bring own glass jars 25¢ pints, 30¢ quarts for processing. Purchase metal cans 55¢ includes cost and processing.

- **Franklin County Food Processing Center -**

57 Hartwell Road. Lavonia, GA 30553. Phone: 706-384-4245, EXT 1336, Ag Dept. Email: Gary Minyard, Agriculture Education Teacher, gminyard@franklin.k12.ga.us. Owen Thomason, Agriculture Education Teacher othom@franklin.k12.ga.us. Cale Watkins, Agriculture Education Teacher cwatkins@franklin.k12.ga.us. Open: Monday and Thursday from 7:30 am to 12:00 Noon, through August 8; The center will be closed July 4 and July 11.

- **Gilmer County Cannery -**

465 Bobcat Trail. Ellijay, GA 30540. Phone: Cannery: 706 276-5095. Email: Ashton Allen, Agriculture Education Teacher, ashton.allen@gilmerschools.com. Josh Hitt, Agriculture Education Teacher, joshua.hitt@gilmerschools.com. Open: Tuesday & Thursday, June 23 - December 31, 8:00 - 5:00; Processing must begin by 11:00 am. Tin cans are available for purchase. Customers must provide their own glass.

- **Habersham County Cannery -**

Stanford Mill Road, Clarkesville, GA 30523. Email: Amy Crump, Agriculture Education Teacher acrump@habersham.k12.ga.us. Kyle Dekle, Agriculture Education Teacher kdekle@habersham.k12.ga.us. Cannery is under construction. New cannery is projected to open summer 2012. Location at the new Habersham Central High School.

- **Perry High School -**

1307 North Avenue, Perry, GA 31069. Phone: School 478 988-6312. Phone: 478 988-6322. Email: Argene Claxton, Agriculture Education Teacher argene.claxton@hcbe.net.

Phil Gentry, Agriculture Education Teacher. philip.gentry@hcbe.net. Open: Monday - Thursday, 8:00 - 12:00 Noon; Closing date this year is July 19.

- **Irwin County High School -**
149 Chieftain Circle. OcOcilla, GA 31774. Phone: 229 468-9421
Wesley Paulk, 229 424-3446. Email: wpaulk@irwin.k12.ga.us. Shayla Johnson, Agriculture Education Teacher. sjohnson@irwin.k12.ga.us. Ira Tucker , Agriculture Education Teacher, itucker@irwin.k12.ga.us. Open: last week of May, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Blanch, Can, Shell peas
No glass product nor meat processing.
- **Lanier County High School -**
52 West Patton Avenue, Lakeland, GA 31635. Phone: 229 482-3868. Email: Ben Culpepper, Agriculture Education Teacher, bculpepper@lanier.k12.ga.us. Shannon Danforth, Agriculture Education Teacher, sdanforth@lanier.k12.ga.us. Open: 7:30 am to 12:00 Noon, Monday, Wednesday, Friday; Closed Wednesday, July 4, 2012; Closed Monday, July 9 and 11, 2012 for GVATA Summer Conference. Our canning plant has quart sized cans for purchase and the capability to process glass jars supplied by the customer. We also offer shelling, washing, and blanching of peas and butter beans. We also have equipment to peel potatoes.
- **Thomson High School**
1077 White Oak Road, ThoThomson, GA 30824. Phone: 706-986-4297. Fax: 706-986-4201. Email: Rick Dubose, Agriculture Education Teacher b. 706 986-4200. duboser@mcduffie.k12.ga.us. Open: from June 16 on Tues, Wednesday & Thurs through July 30 - 7:30 - 2:30.
- **Murray County High School -**
1001 Green Road, Chatsworth, GA 30705. Phone: 706 695-1414. Fax: 706 517-2625.
Mike Bushey, Agriculture Education Teacher, 706 517-5738.
Email: mike.bushey@murray.k12.ga.us. Open: Have produce to facility by 10 AM; July: Tues, Wed, Thurs. from 8:00 -12 Noon., (Week of July 11 open Thurs. and Fri. only); August: 1st two weeks Tues. and Thurs. only.
- **Pickens County High School -**
500 Dragon Drive, Jasper, GA 30143. Phone: 706 253-1800. Fax: 706 253-1806. Email: Joe Wright, Agriculture Education Teacher, joewright@pickens.k12.ga.us. Jason Cantrell, Agriculture Education Teacher jasoncantrell@pickens.k12.ga.us. Open: Plan to arrive before 11 AM to allow time for preparation and processing before closing, Late June - Tues. & Thurs.; July - Tues. Wed., Thurs. Closed: Week of July 9th-Thurs., Fri. Only) Beginning Aug 1st: Open: Every Wed. afternoon after 2 PM throughout August.
- **Seminole County Canning Plant -**
208 Adams Street. Donalsonville, GA 39845. Ag Dept. 229 524-5165. Email: Mike Casey 229-220-1786, Agriculture Education Teacher, mcasey@seminole.k12.ga.us. Dusty Smith 229-493-0553, Agriculture Education Teacher, dsmith@seminole.k12.ga.us. Open: Spring Tues/Thurs 2:00 - 4:00
Summer Tues/Thurs 8:00 - 3:00; Fall Tues/Thurs 2:00 - 4:00; Peanuts - August - November.

- **Eastanollee Cannery -**
207 School Circle, Eastanollee, GA 30538. Phone: Farish Mulkey, 706 779-2218.
Email: Agriculture Education Teacher, farish.mulkey@stephenscountyschools.org. Nick Moody, Agriculture Education Teacher nicholas.moody@stephenscountyschools.org.
Open: Year-round 8 am to 4 PM, Monday: Meats; Tues, Wed, Thurs: Vegetables.
- **Tattnall County High School -**
1 Battle Creek Warrior Blvd.. Reidsville, GA 30453. Phone: 912 557-4374. Fax: 912 557-4542. Phone: 912 557-8999. Email: Adam Carpenter, Agriculture Education Teacher acarpenter@tattnall.k12.ga.us. Donald Crumpler, YF Teacher. dcrumpler@tattnall.k12.ga.us. Open: Tues - Friday; 8:00 am to 12:00 Noon, through end of July.
- **Tift County High School -**
One Blue Devil Way, Tifton, GA 31794. Phone: 229 387-2480. Phone: 229 387-2475.
Email: Lynn Cook, Ag Teacher, lcook@tiftschools.com. Jimmy Cargle, Ag Teacher jcargle@tiftschools.com. Steve Hobbs, Ag Teacher, shobbs@tiftschools.com. Beth Golden, Ag Teacher bgolden@tiftschools.com. Carl Nichols, cnichols@tiftschools.com. Open: Monday - Thursday, May 31, 2011 to July 7, 2011; (Except July 4 and July 14, 2011 Times: 8:00 am to 2:00 PM, Open by appointment during all other times of the year. Metal Quart cans or bring your own jars. New facility located behind Tift County High School (Enter the bus entrance off of New River Church Road).
- **Treutlen County High School -**
1201 Fowler Street, Soperton, GA 30457. Barry Norris (912) 529-4536 ext.2108.
Email: bnorris@treutlenhighschool.org. Open. July 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15. There is a new schedule of dates for every year.
- **Canning Plant -**
261 S. Labelle Avenue, Sycamore, GA. Phone: 229-567-9337.
Email: Chuck Majeski, Ag Ed Teacher, cmmajeski@windstream.net. Dennis Kendrick, Ag Teacher, dkendrick@turner.k12.ga.us.
Process in cans only. Open: July: Tues and Thurs from 8 am to 2 PM. (Product must be in by 2 PM); August (Peanut Season) By Appt. only.
- White County
 - **White County Middle School -**
283 Old Blairsville Road, Cleveland, GA 30528-1133. Phone: (706) 865-4060.
Email: Brad Dalton, Ag Teacher, bdalton@white.k12.ga.us. Dustin Keener, Ag Teacher, dkeener@white.k12.ga.us. Amanda Martin, Ag Teacher, amartin@white.k12.ga.us.
Open: July- Aug - Sept, Tues 8 AM -12 Noon, Thurs 4 PM - 8 PM.
You may purchase or bring your on glass jars. No tin cans available.
- Worth County
 - **Worth County Schools -**
504 E. Price Street, Sylvester, GA 31791. Phone: (229) 776-8600.
John Lindsey, Ag Ed Teacher. PhPhone (229) 776-2068.

Email: jlindsey@worthschools.net.

Donald Gilman, Ag Teacher. dgilman@worthschools.net.

Buddy Whiddon, Ag Teacher, bwhiddon@worthschools.net.

Directions: The canning plant is located behind the Worth County Board of Education complex in the old cafeteria building.

Open: 8:00 AM on Tuesdays and Thursdays; All food must be ready to process by no later than 2:00 PM.



**Center for Agribusiness
and Economic Development**
College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development is a unit of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of the University of Georgia, combining the missions of research and extension. The Center has among its objectives:

- < To provide feasibility and other short term studies for current or potential Georgia agribusiness firms and/or emerging food and fiber industries.
- < To provide agricultural, natural resource, and demographic data for private and public decision makers.

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Samuel L. Pardue, Dean & Director