

Set up Office of Economic Development for Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County

To be funded jointly by the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Development Authority will be responsible for the hiring of a director for that office. The director will be accountable to the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Development Authority Board of Directors. The legal charter of this Authority assures that the City of Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County and the Chamber of Commerce will all have representation on the Board of this Authority.

We also recommend that the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill Development Authority appoint a three member industrial advisory committee. This committee would have no voting rights, but have meetings with the Authority as needed to provide them with their expertise about industrial development from a job creator's perspective. These members will be elected only from local industrial entrepreneurs, by nomination and majority vote of the Board of Directors.

This office will have a director that is the coordinator of:

All economic development activities in Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County

which includes:

Fitzgerald- Ben Hill County Development Authority	(Lead Authority on Industrial Recruitment)
Ben Hill County Development Authority	(Small Business and Quality of Life)
Downtown Development Authority	(Downtown Properties)
Ben Hill - Irwin Joint Development Authority	(Millineum Tech Park)
Tourism Department	(Advertising and Promotion)
Fitzgerald - Ben Hill County Arts Council	(Promotion of Arts)
Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce	(Business Relations and Assistance)

Other economic development activities conducted by
the City of Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County, and their agencies.

Each one of these authorities and activities will maintain their own autonomy and boards. However, the director will be aware of and understand all of their activities and projects and the director will coordinate these activities through the most appropriate body or bodies.

The Director will coordinate with these agencies through the following contacts:

Fitzgerald - Ben Hill County Development Authority - Chairman (Ron Paulk)
Ben Hill County Development Authority - Director (Courtney Whitman)
Downtown Development Authority - Director (Cam Jordan)
Ben Hill - Irwin Joint Development Authority - Chairman (Mark Masee)
Tourism Department - Director (Alesia Davis)
Fitzgerald - Ben Hill County Arts Council - Director (Brandy Elrod)
Ben Hill County School System - Superintendent (Nancy Whidden)
Wiregrass Technical College - Associate VP for Operations (April McDuffie)
Fitzgerald - Ben Hill County Chamber of Commerce - Director (Neesa Williams)
City of Fitzgerald - City Economic Director and Mayor (Cam Jordan and Mark Masee)
Ben Hill County - County Administrator and County Commission Chair (Frank Feild and Philip Jay)
Fitzgerald Utilities - Manager and Attorney (Jeff Lewis and John Croley)

Funding of Projects and Economic Development Activities

In addition to all of the financing options available through all of the above listed authorities and bodies,

A local group of civic leaders have formed a civic corporation which will help finance and/or facilitate financing through private capital. The Director is urged to call on this civic corporation at any time he feels appropriate.

The renewal of SPLOST funds for economic development purposes needs to be a priority. Serious thought and consideration of how to best utilize these funds needs to be given.