

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Division

Chris Clark, Commissioner

W. Ray Luce, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
34 Peachtree Street NW, Suite 1600, Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone (404) 656-2840 Fax (404) 651-8739 <http://www.gashpo.org>

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Helen Talley-McRae, 404-651-5268

helen.talley-mcrae@dnr.state.ga.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Rockmart Downtown Historic District Listed in National Register

ATLANTA (July 7, 2009) –The Rockmart Downtown Historic District was listed in the National Register on June 24, 2009. The district is roughly bounded by Water, Beauregard, Marble, and Elm streets in downtown Rockmart, Polk County, Georgia. The City of Rockmart sponsored the nomination and a consultant prepared the nomination materials.

In 1871, in anticipation of a railroad from Cartersville to Cedartown running through his property, Colonel Seaborn Jones laid out lots for the city of “Rock Market.” A number of merchants and citizens from nearby Van Wert moved to Rockmart in order to be near the new railroad, which was not completed until 1879. Rockmart remained a small town of about 500 people until 1910 when the population doubled with the construction of a cotton mill outside of town. The city’s population increased again in 1929, when Goodyear constructed a large mill and mill village. The economy and population of Rockmart has primarily been centered on manufacturing since the 1930s, and the population of Rockmart has remained at approximately 3,800 since 1950.

The Rockmart Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of community planning and development as a good example of a railroad strip-type town as defined by the statewide context *Georgia Community Development and Morphology of Community Types*. In a railroad strip-type town, the main street is parallel to the railroad instead of crossing the tracks at a right angle and the commercial development also parallels the railroad.

The district is also significant as the center of commercial activity for this area from the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries. The historic commercial buildings in Rockmart are generally one-, two-, or three-story, attached or freestanding, brick commercial buildings. Many of these buildings retain their historic storefronts and/or decorative brickwork which define the

-more-

Commercial Style, including recessed storefront entrances, large display windows, transoms, and decorative brick parapets, pilasters, and cornices. Rockmart drew shoppers on a local and countywide basis for its goods and services.

The Rockmart Downtown Historic District is significant in architecture for its contiguous, intact collection of historic commercial, community landmark, and agricultural-related industrial buildings that represent common types and styles of buildings built in small Georgia towns from the late 19th through the early 20th centuries. A unique feature in Rockmart is the presence of slate used as a building and roofing material in some of the commercial buildings and in the 1882 Rockmart Presbyterian Church. In the 1850s, Welsh miners from the Northeast settled in the area to mine slate, which continued after the Civil War until 1913. Community landmark buildings in the district include the Presbyterian church, the 1914 Romanesque-style Rockmart Methodist Episcopal Church South, the 1921 Colonial Revival-style city hall (now the police department), and the 1951 Rockmart Lodge #97. A historic gas station and circa 1900 water treatment plant and tank are also within the historic district. There are a number of agricultural-related industrial buildings including the 1915 Rockmart Warehouse and Transfer Company building, a 1940s cotton and fertilizer gin and warehouse, and the circa 1900 J.M. Cochran Cotton Warehouse.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as Georgia's state historic preservation office. Their mission is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia. HPD's programs include archaeology protection and education, environmental review, grants, historic resource surveys, tax incentives, the National Register of Historic Places, community planning and technical assistance. For more information, call 404-656-2840 or visit their Web site at www.gashpo.org.