Forsyth, Georgia
Tye Howard – Mayor
Gregory Popham – City Administrator
Laurie Pippin – Better Hometown Director
Tiffany Andrews – Chamber of Commerce

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Forsyth is on the move and a $1 million downtown streetscape is just part of the excitement.

“The purpose of the improvements is to increase pedestrian safety and encourage more pedestrian traffic downtown,” explains Laurie Pippin, Forsyth’s Better Hometown Director. The project also includes street lighting and landscaping, and an earlier grant funded a downtown-wide Wi-Fi hotspot. Additionally, there is an ambitious event calendar underway including the Forsythia Festival each spring, a well-attended concert series each summer and a “Taste of Monroe County” with food delicacies from local restaurants.

Another energetic project by the local development authority includes the revitalization of an older residential subdivision into the community’s first business park. The location, better suited for office and warehouse space, will be divided into three-to-five-acre tracts.

“We are doing what it takes to enhance our city’s future,” says City Administrator Greg Popham. “Not many cities our size have three inter-state exchanges. Plus, we are 64 miles south of Atlanta and 25 miles north of Macon. Economic growth is inevitable.”
**Fast FACTS FORSYTH**

**POPULATION:** 5,162

**COUNTY:** Monroe – Population 25,425

**UTILITIES:** Water, sewer, electricity, telecom, cable TV, recycling and solid waste

**TRANSPORTATION:** Forsyth’s town square sits at the intersection of U.S. Highway 41 and State highways 18, 42 and 83. Interstate I-75 is a major corridor through Forsyth.

**NOTABLE EMPLOYERS:**
- Al Burrus Correctional Institute
- City of Forsyth
- Georgia Department of Corrections
- Georgia Power Company, Plant Scherer
- Georgia Public Safety Training
- Monroe County Board of Education
- Monroe County Commission
- Monroe County Hospital
- Perdue Farms, Inc.

**“Forsyth is a multi-enterprise city with a strong infrastructure. We are a community that is poised for economic growth.”**

Mayor Tye Howard

**Incorporated in 1823,** the city is named after John Forsyth, an eminent American political leader who served in the U.S. House and Senate and later became Governor of Georgia.

**Targets, Trails and Fried Green Tomatoes** is a countywide tourism initiative highlighting the area’s outdoor activities and its famous Whistle Stop Cafe, a well-known location for the Hollywood movie *Fried Green Tomatoes.* Visitors may still order Southern cooking, including fried green tomatoes.

The Forsyth-to-Macon Rail Line was completed in 1838, carrying cotton, supplies and travelers between the two towns. The line was later extended to Atlanta and continues to play a role in the region’s economic development.

Monroe County Historical Society Museum is dedicated to depicting the history of Monroe County through exhibits, displays, memorabilia and artifacts. A genealogy library is also on site.

The Forsyth Transmission Training Center, operated by MEAG Power, the city’s wholesale electric power supplier, offers classes and hands-on skill training to utility personnel from its 49 Participant communities, including Forsyth.
When Tift College, located in the very heart of Forsyth, closed in 1987, the community never imagined it would be more than twenty years later before new life would be infused into the picturesque 40-acre campus. But it is happening now in 2010.

The Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC) with a $7 million renovation has moved its five Metro Atlanta headquarters to the campus. The DOC initiative affects all aspects of the city and county, from schools to services, retail, utilities and infrastructure. The relocation of the administrative component of the DOC brings 450 employees to Forsyth, 350 of whom will be in town on a daily basis; that is almost 10 percent of the city’s population. “Our community is looking forward to having new families and faces in town as the DOCs’ employees live and work here. We want to ensure we have the services they need,” explains City Administrator Greg Popham.

Forsyth is well-versed at serving state offices. The Georgia Public Safety Training Center is here and trains thousands of law enforcement workers, fire service employees, 911 personnel, coroners and other emergency service staff from across the state. With the Tift College makeover, the training of 12,000 correction officers simply relocates across town.

Additionally, two post-secondary schools, Macon State College and Central Georgia Technical College, have opened satellite campuses in Forsyth through the innovation of local leadership. This is welcome news for high school students who are exiting one of the top school systems in the state and who previously had to leave their community for further educational opportunities.

The fact that the void in higher education, which the closing of Tift College created two decades ago, is finally being filled with other, and more, educational facilities is a great way for Forsyth to go back to the future in a big way.
• The Rose Theater, originally built in 1904, was roofless and abandoned for years, but it has been recently rehabilitated for the Backlot Players, a community theater group, and has become Forsyth’s cultural center for live productions. The theater seats 150 for live shows and 132 for movies. It is still in a state of refurbishment and future donations will be used to carry out Phase II of the restoration, which will include a real stage, new dressing rooms and proper seating.
• Jarrell Plantation Historic Site is nestled in the red clay hills of Georgia. This cotton plantation was owned by a single family for more than 140 years. It survived General Sherman’s “March to the Sea,” typhoid fever, Emancipation, Reconstruction, the cotton boll weevil, the advent of steam power and a transition from farming to forestry. The romantic plantation, which is reminiscent of the Old South of Tara and Twelve Oaks, includes many historic buildings including a sawmill, a cotton gin, a gristmill, a workshop, a barn and numerous outbuildings.
• Forsyth’s historic train depot was constructed in 1846 and today houses a local museum, gift shop and genealogy room.
• Horseshoe Tournament – During the Forsythia Festival, Lee Smith, a Forsyth downtown businessman, sponsors the Monroe County Championship Horseshoe Tournament. His tournament draws 64 contestants from seven states, including two national winners. "I am the P.T. Barnum for the day,” Smith explains, as 400 people gather to watch the competition.
• Foremost economic drivers in Monroe County are forestry and agriculture, which account for $10.6 million annually. Perdue Farms invested $9 million in its Monroe County feed mill and hatchery in 2005.