

MEAG POWER **current** COMMUNITIES

FITZGERALD, GEORGIA

Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission

Jeff Lewis – General Manager/CEO
Terrence Paulk – Chairman
Eddie Charles Lewis – Vice-Chairman
David Griffin – Secretary
W.P. Herlovich – Commissioner
Robert Levenson – Commissioner

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Fitzgerald

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*Serving
Our Citizens
In Many Ways*



FITZGERALD

Timeline of a 100-Year-Old Utility Commission

In 2007, Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission celebrated its 100th year of service to the community. It is an accomplishment to be proud of and along the way, the Commission made many key decisions as they built a solid, organization intent on providing quality utility services

1899 – A \$33,000 bond issue makes construction of water and electric utilities possible for the fledging community of Fitzgerald. In the first 30 years, a steam plant generates the city's electricity. The city's water supply is supplied from deep wells that tap the area's plentiful water resources. Through the years additional wells expand the water system.

1907 – The Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission takes over operation and management of the utilities.

1937 – The Commission enters into an agreement with Georgia Power to supply generation.

1950s – A propane gas company is purchased by the Commission to supply fuel to citizens during harsh winters. Later in the decade, gas mains are laid and a contract is negotiated with South Georgia Natural Gas Company and the Commission begins distributing natural gas to city customers.

1975 – Fitzgerald joins 47 other Georgia communities to form a partnership with MEAG Power to supply reliable, economical wholesale electric power to the city

1986 – The city constructs \$4.2 million C.A. Newcomer, Jr. Wastewater Treatment Plant, a model facility with advanced technology. The facility is enhanced in 2002 to provide the opportunity for more local expansion.

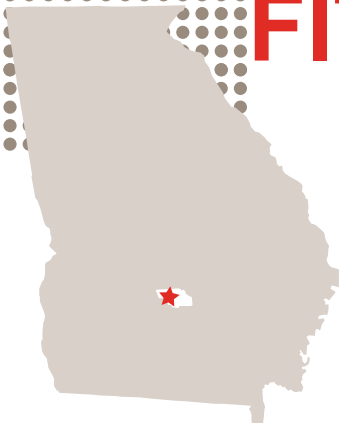
2007 – The Commission marks 100 years of service.





FAST FACTS

FITZGERALD



POPULATION: 8,758

COUNTY: Ben Hill – Population 17,567

UTILITIES: Electricity, Natural Gas, Propane, Water and Wastewater

TRANSPORTATION: Fitzgerald is home to the CSX Rail Atlanta to Jacksonville, Florida, line. U.S. Route 129 is a main route through the city.

NOTABLE EMPLOYERS:

- American Blanching – peanut processing
- Covered Wagon Trailers – cargo trailers
- Look Trailers – cargo trailers
- Modern Dispersions South, Inc. – plastics compounder
- Pace American – high-performance trailers
- Shaw Industries – carpet manufacturer
- Southern Veneer Products – wood products

“My fellow commissioners and I are dedicated to what is best for the city and our Commission. In an era when polarized politics can skew sound decision-making, this is not the case in Fitzgerald.”

Commission Chairman Terrence Paulk

A 19th Century Planned Community: In July 1885, a unique ensemble of Civil War veterans – Yanks and Rebels – selected the 1,000 acres that define the geographic boundaries of Fitzgerald. Their new home was divided into 258 identically sized squares designated for homes, parks, businesses and schools. Streets were named for Northern and Southern generals, regional trees, flowers and bodies of water.

Wild Chicken Festival: Fitzgerald may be the only city that celebrates feral chickens in its community. For a decade, the Wild Chicken Festival has attracted approximately 10,000 people each March. While the story varies about exactly how the special Burmese chicken came to live in harmony amongst the city’s businesses and residences, this unique bird rules the roost in Fitzgerald.

Millennium Technology Pointe: This 214-acre technology park was developed by the Joint Development Authority of Ben Hill and Irwin counties, in coordination with the local technical college, and state and federal government agencies. Unlike typical multi-jurisdictional projects, Fitzgerald was unfazed that 90 percent of the park would be in Irwin County and, in fact, marshaled the full resources of its development staff to the \$6 million effort. The complex is designed to attract call centers, data server farms and other advanced businesses that are part of the high-tech age. Equipped with redundant power, miles of fiber optic cable and a ready workforce trained by nearby Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, this park is looking for move-in-ready businesses.

A NEW ERA OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Patience has paid off for the staff and customers of Fitzgerald Water, Light and Bond Commission. On December 7, 2010, the town celebrated the ribbon cutting of its new 12,000-square-foot office space in the heart of downtown.

The new business offices house 20 employees, including administrative staff, cashiers, customer service representatives, accounting, billing and meter-reading personnel. The remodeled office space was originally built in the 1930s and had former lives as a grocery store, furniture store and printing company.

The new 2,400-square-foot gas office has room for four employees as well as a gas appliance retail showroom where customers can purchase appliances such as gas logs, stoves and heaters.

As the Commission designed the space to meet their business needs, they also considered services for its hometown residents. At the back of the building is a 2,000-square-foot community room that may be reserved for meetings, weddings or receptions. The facility also

includes a new drive-in payment window and an inviting lobby for those who choose to walk in to pay their utility bills. Because of walk-in traffic, it was important to the Commission leadership to be central to the city's downtown district.

Prior to relocation, the Commission offices were housed in an historic depot that was built in 1910. Though a distinctive structure, the space was inadequate to accommodate all the functions of the Commission. The depot remains home to the Blue and Gray Museum.

Commission Attorney John Croley is proud of what the Commission has accomplished. "The leadership has used sound business judgment since the beginning and is to be commended for its sound fiscal management. Take this new building as an example," he concludes. "The new office space is debt free; it is totally paid for."



Celebrating the opening of a new facility to serve the community





Millennium Technology Pointe



Wild Chicken Festival Mascot

More About HOMETOWN FITZGERALD

Fitzgerald is fortunate to have economic expansion and excitement among its industrial ranks. Modern Dispersions South, a producer of plastic compounder materials, is a 20-year-old veteran enterprise that serves worldwide markets. The company has grown from 50,000 square feet of manufacturing space in 1987 to 400,000 square feet today. And its success continues. Additional expansion will be complete in September to allow for more production capacity. “This town did great things for us,” explains Vice President and General Manager Marton Kozma. “We experience a business-friendly environment here.”

In May, Governor Nathan Deal announced a new Fitzgerald joint investment totaling \$6 million. The new project is the initiative of a long-time peanut processor, American Blanching Company, and newcomer, non-profit Mother Administered Nutritive Aid (MANA). The new joint venture operation will process and manufacture Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), a fortified peanut product to revive severely malnourished children around the world.

“We looked all over the United States for a partner with the ability to produce RUTF at a rate adequate to realize our ambitious dreams,” said MANA CEO Mark Moore. “We not only got an expert partner; we got an entire town excited about a vision and mission.”

