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Vogtle Update

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Goals of the two-day exercise include practicing incident response plans, enhancing lines of communication, and sharing lessons learned within organizations and throughout the industry. The exercise is organized by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) and hosted by its Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC).

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Mayor Jim Thornton is a lawyer by profession and a champion of his community by avocation. First as a LaGrange council member and now as a second-term mayor, Thornton is a seasoned civic leader who is ardent about citizen engagement.

What are some highlights of the job?
I am excited to be part of the group that helped create a council of high school juniors and seniors to get them involved in civic decision-making. The LaGrange Youth Council is an advisory board composed of local youth that provides advice and counsel to the local governing body. It gives our community youth a more formal role in the local decision-making process, offering real-world experiences with elected bodies. Today, 24 junior and senior high school students serve on the LaGrange Youth Council.

I am also proud of helping with the development of LaGrange 101, a six-week class for citizens to get an inside look at city governance, typically with a waiting list to join. Indeed, The Thread, a 26-mile multi-use trail, began with a citizen-led plan.

What is the best part of being Mayor of LaGrange?
It’s a vibrant city, and I like the fact that our citizens feel our community is on the move. Being part of this spirited, positive attitude is certainly one of the best parts of being its mayor. And one of the most interesting things about being mayor is what I have learned about running a utility business.

How would you describe LaGrange’s relationship with MEAG Power?
MEAG Power is an invaluable resource in helping us identify best practices and understanding the wholesale electric market.

Adel
The city was among five communities chosen for the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, which collaborates and offers technical assistance related to housing and community development.

Marietta
The city’s smart traffic system, which allows emergency vehicles to more quickly and safely cross intersections, earned Marietta the Technology Innovation Showcase award from the State of Georgia.

Moultrie
The Downtown Moultrie Development Authority has received a $25,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture Community Facilities Grant to improve area safety.

Newnan
Goodyear Tire and Rubber announced a new 1.5-million-square-foot distribution and warehouse facility covering more than 34 acres and expected to bring 250 jobs.

Thomasville
The city won the Georgia Economic Developers Association’s “Deal of the Year” for Check-Mate Industries, expected to create 230 jobs and invest more than $16 million in a new manufacturing location.

2020 MAKE A NOTE

MEAG Power Board Meeting
March 19, 2020
MEAG Power Participant Orientation
March 25-26, 2020
Participant-Hosted MEAG Power Dinner & Board Meeting
April 15-16, 2020 (Cartersville, Ga.)
MEAG Power Annual Meeting
July 13-15, 2020
MEAG Power Mayors Summit
November 6-8, 2020

MEET YOUR colleagues

Mayor Jim Thornton
Mayor
City of LaGrange

Evolution Motors
The city was among five communities chosen for the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, which collaborates and offers technical assistance related to housing and community development.

Volvo
Volvo upped the ante on electric vehicles, saying it aims for 20% of its new-vehicle sales in 2020 to be plug-in EVs, and 50% by 2025. Meanwhile, Ford announced that it will offer the FordPass Charging Network, the largest North American network of EV charging stations. Ford is working with EV charging companies Greenlots and Electrify America, which is building its network using funds from a multibillion-dollar settlement the U.S. EPA, states and car owners reached with German carmaker Volkswagen after its recent diesel emissions scandal. Earlier in 2019, General Motors and construction giant Bechtel announced that they would build their own nationwide charging network.

Cybersecurity Portal
MEAG Power and ECG have joined together to provide opportunities and resources to improve Participant communities’ cybersecurity posture. The new Cybersecurity Portal was established to assist Participants with acquiring the essential tools and resources to become more secure. The Portal consolidates links to numerous industry sites and helpful tools. It can be accessed at: https://ecoga.org/resources/cybersecurity/

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LAGRANGE, GEORGIA

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LAGRANGE
A Place to Be

The City of LaGrange is one of the state’s West Georgia star communities. In 2018, LaGrange received the Live, Work, Play Award presented by the Georgia Municipal Association for its community assets, innovations and quality of life.

The city is rich in cultural and recreational amenities, with museums, the 26,000-acre West Point Lake, Sweetland Amphitheatre and Great Wolf Lodge Georgia adventure park, to name a few.

There are more than 100 manufacturers in the area, 41 of which are international companies from 18 different countries. Eight are suppliers to the KIA Motors Manufacturing Georgia plant in neighboring West Point, Georgia. The community’s 10,000-acre Georgia International Business Park, stretching along Interstate 85, pledges infrastructure for environmentally conscious businesses. For future workers, Thinc College and Career Academy focuses on real-world learning in a business-driven environment.

Visitors and hometown residents alike feel the energy of LaGrange.
FAST FACTS

LAGRANGE

POPULATION: 30,472
TROUP COUNTY: 69,786

UTILITIES: Electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water/sewer and solid waste

TRANSPORTATION: LaGrange has easy access to Interstate 85, and Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is just 55 miles from LaGrange

NOTABLE EMPLOYERS:
• Milliken & Company—textile and chemical manufacturer
• Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia—auto manufacturer
• Mountville Mills Inc.—mat manufacturer
• Jindal Films Americas LLC—packaging manufacturer
• Great Wolf Lodge—indoor water and adventure park
• West Georgia Health—medical center
• InterfaceFLOR LLC—textile manufacturer
• Kimberly-Clark—manufacturer of towels, wipes and dispensers
• CW Matthews Contracting Co. Inc.—cement-mixing plant
• Troup County School System—educational system

“My vision for LaGrange is that it is a thriving city, a safe city and a fun city.”

Mayor Jim Thornton

LaGrange Notables:

• Sarah B. Marbry established a hosiery mill in LaGrange shortly after the Civil War. Marbry was one of a few female mill entrepreneurs of the time. Her products were shipped as far away as New Orleans and Philadelphia.

• When Marquis de Lafayette, a Revolutionary War hero, visited Georgia, he remarked on the similarity between the west Georgia countryside and his wife’s estate in France, LaGrange. Leadership named the city for that remembrance. Today, a French fleur-de-lis icon embellishes the LaGrange brand.

• Born in the early 1800s, Horace King learned bridge building as a slave and became a sought-after bridge builder and architect along the Georgia-Alabama border. King was freed in 1846 and later served two terms in the Alabama legislature while continuing to build covered bridges and buildings. He moved to LaGrange in 1873.

• Great Wolf Lodge Georgia is an indoor water and adventure park for the entire family. The resort features kid-friendly activities, dining options and adult-friendly amenities, all under one roof. The 93,000-square-foot water park’s pools and slides are kept warm at 84 degrees year-round. It is the only one of the company’s 16 U.S. properties located in Georgia.
The city of LaGrange has a rich history with the textile industry. The early era of spinning cloth came and went, largely lost to overseas competition. But the vision and leadership of LaGrange textile titans left a legacy that is still very much alive today. It is a thread that weaves through every aspect of city life.

In 1895, Fuller E. Callaway risked his entire life savings to make Dixie Cotton Mills a LaGrange success. With investors from the Northeast and Atlanta, Callaway invested $10,000 to replace the antiquated machinery in the factory on Greenville Street to weave cloth. As he built personal wealth, he crafted a life of philanthropy. He told an early journalist that he was “making American citizens and running cotton mills to pay expenses.”

Today, the Callaway Foundation Inc. ensures that its benefactor’s dedication to community development remains a part of the fabric of LaGrange.

Southbend Park, a downtown greenspace, was funded by the foundation. It is flanked by a wildly popular city-financed skate park and the nearby entrepreneurial gathering place, Wild Leap Brewery. Across the city, municipal leadership, along with private investors and philanthropic dollars, creates abundant opportunity for living, working and playing.

Visionaries imagined a 26-mile multi-use trail winding through the neighborhoods of LaGrange. With a nod to the city’s textile history, the trail network was named The Thread. Over seven miles of The Thread have been built so far, using SPLOST funds. A cadre of volunteers serve on its board, and corporate sponsors underwrite its maintenance.

LaGrange’s 21st century business roster carries on Callaway’s community focus. Milliken & Company, a global company with a floor covering plant in LaGrange, has been a city partner and key employer since 1968, when it purchased Callaway Mills. Milliken & Company amped up its community commitment by repurposing a 143,000-square-foot administrative building into a distribution center and plans a $70 million investment in its LaGrange operations.

InterfaceFLOR LLC, an international textile manufacturer known for its revolutionary carpet tiles, was founded by a local, Ray Anderson, in 1973. The company has been an innovation leader not only on the manufacturing side, but also environmentally. In 1994, Anderson formulated a plan to make Interface an environmentally sustainable and restorative company before sustainability was a movement. Having accomplished its goal of zero environmental footprint, known as Mission Zero®, the company now works toward “giving back” to the environment more than it takes.

LaGrange is indeed a city inspired, with a common thread of innovation and community dedication linking its past and present.
Located less than 15 minutes from the heart of the city is West Point Lake, which provides 26,900 acres of bass and game fishing, boating and camping, plus a 6,397-acre wildlife management area. Just 17 miles away is Callaway Gardens, a four-star recreation and nature resort with golfing, tennis, horticulture and butterfly conservatories surrounding a conference center that hosts groups of up to 1,000.

In 2018, the LaGrange Development Authority officially launched the Georgia International Business Park. This LaGrange park is the largest business park in the Southeast and the fourth-largest in the country. The city also boasts Callaway South Industrial Park, a 1,600-acre development that is home to four Fortune 50 and seven Fortune 500 companies. Located three miles from I-85 and I-185, adjacent to the region’s Callaway Airport, and a designated CSX Select Site, it was the first industrial park in LaGrange.

Hills & Dales Estate was the home of textile magnate Fuller E. Callaway, Sr., and his family. The property features the historic Ferrell Gardens, which are one of the best preserved 19th century gardens in America. The gardens were created by Sarah Ferrell between 1841 and 1903 and include extensive boxwood plantings, fountains, an herb garden and a greenhouse. The centerpiece of the 35-acre estate is a beautiful Italianate villa designed by the noted architects Neel Reid and Hal Hentz, which was completed in 1916. A major restoration of the house was completed in April 2010, and all three floors of the home are open for guided tours.

From lively dramatic theater to symphonic classics and ballet, the arts are showcased in the $2.5 million LaGrange College drama theater, a facility that is greatly appreciated and enthusiastically attended. The works of outstanding and emerging artists are displayed at the Lamar Dodd Art Center and the Chattahoochee Valley Art Museum.