

2017 STATE OF DOWNTOWN

Athens Downtown
Development Authority

29 August 2017





ABOUT ADDA

Formed by state legislation in 1977, the Athens Downtown Development Authority (ADDA) administers the revitalization and redevelopment of the Central Business District. The ADDA encourages and promotes the economic improvement, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of the downtown area and makes long-range plans in cooperation with the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County.

The ADDA mission is to promote, to maintain, and to enhance a safe and economically viable central business district by focusing both public and private resources on the fulfillment of downtown's potential to benefit the entire community.

ADDA exists to:

- Create an economically sustainable, vibrant, and viable downtown
- Create an environment that attracts people and investments
- Be an advocacy group for downtown constituents
- Promote downtown to residents, businesses, and visitors

DIRECTORS' VIEW

It is an exciting time for downtown Athens. The year 2017 has been one of growth and opportunity, not only for the downtown community, but for the Authority itself. The boundary of the district expanded, to more accurately reflect downtown's economic footprint. As bordering properties become part of a larger urban fabric, their economic significance increases.

This year also produced an ADDA funded economic impact report, which quantitatively confirmed the widely-held notion that downtown Athens is thriving. The few blocks in the district annually produce an out sized economic impact of \$290 million. The Authority's goal is to further this success as we grow an authentic, vibrant downtown that will attract business and talent to Athens-Clarke County.

Downtown is seeing tremendous private investment - two new hotels are under construction, and the number of student residential units has tripled in the last four years. Businesses continue to locate and expand here. This reflects confidence in the Athens economy and ensures downtown's vitality.

Downtown Athens is creative, lively, inclusive and economically strong. We look forward to a new year focused on economic development, beautification, infrastructure, and public art backed by diversity and innovation. We hope you enjoy the 2017 State of Downtown report, and that it inspires you to tell our story.

David Lynn,
Director of Planning and Outreach

Linda Ford,
Director of Business Services

IT'S ALL HERE.

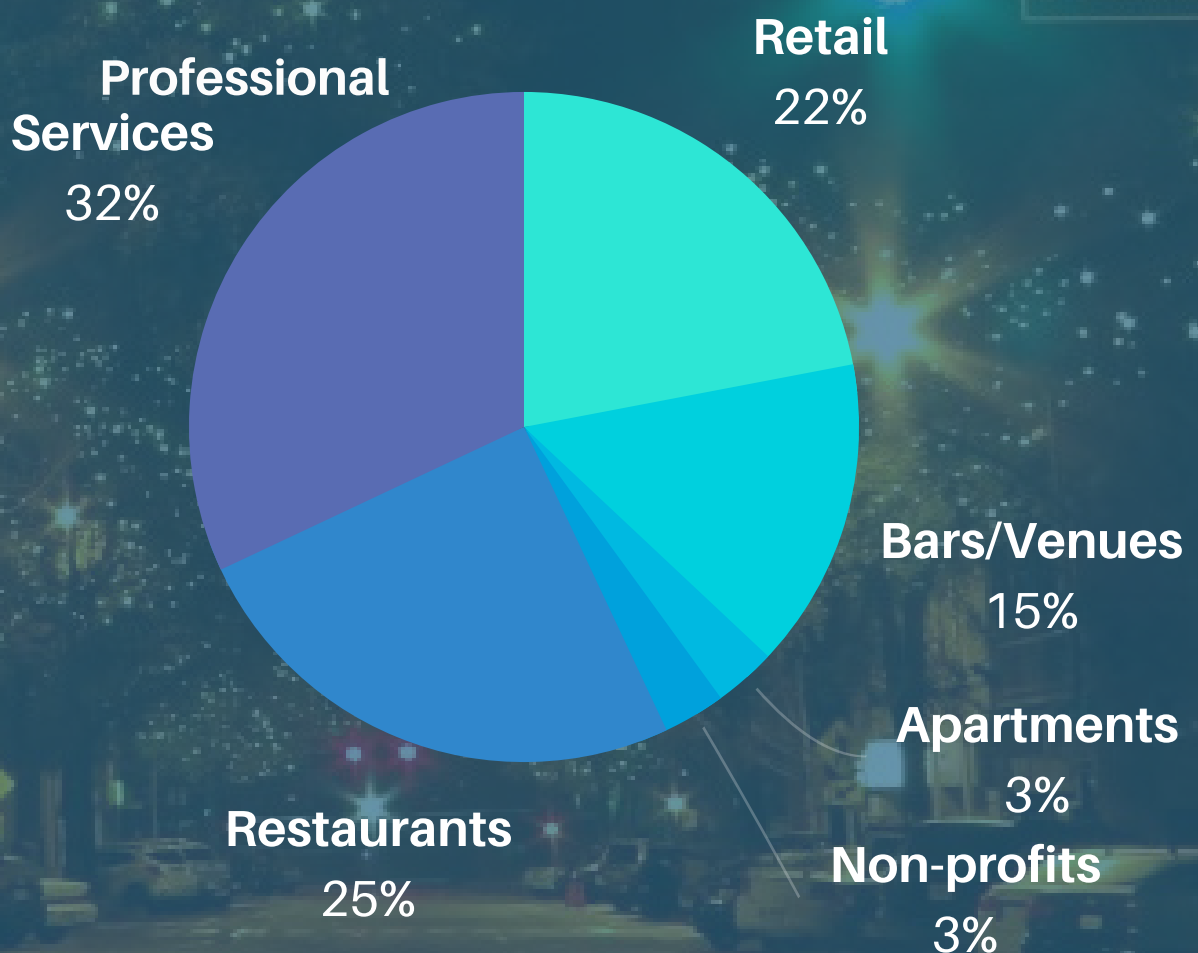
The average downtown Athens business is a small business that is locally owned in Athens-Clarke County or the surrounding region.

69% of the 300 businesses inside the boundary are owned by local Athenians.

83% of downtown businesses are licensed in the state of Georgia.

6% of businesses are franchises.

Four downtown businesses are internationally owned, helping bring the world to Athens and Athens to the world.

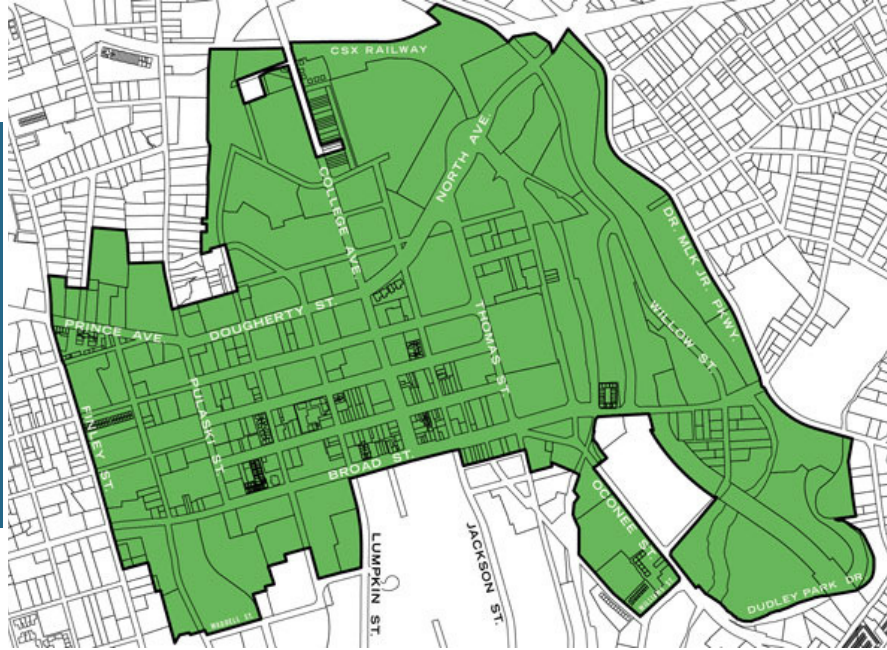


EXPANDED BOUNDARIES

From Bottleworks, to Lay Park, down Oconee Street to the river

In 2017, the Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 590, which expanded the boundaries of the ADDA for the first time since its creation in 1977.

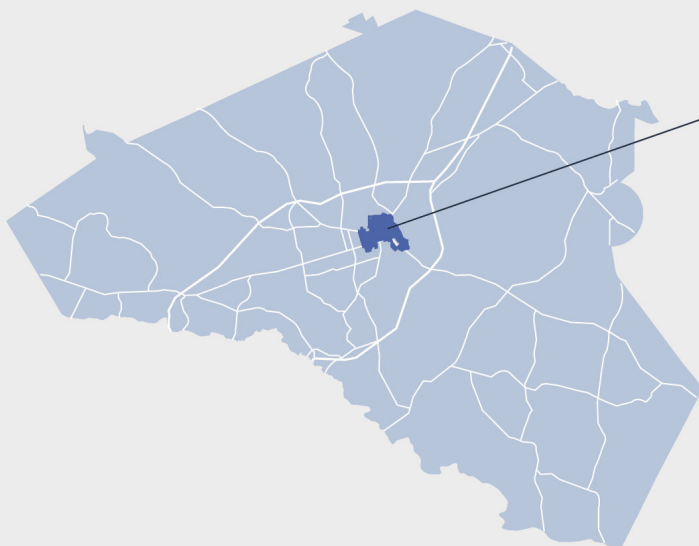
The new boundaries are reflective of the expanded, growing downtown economic footprint. The boundaries also added much needed green space to the district, including three parks, the trail head of the Firefly Trail, and a section of the North Oconee River.



INSIDE THE DISTRICT

- **0.6 square miles**
- **2,384 FTE employees**
- **>3,350 bedrooms and 1,416 housing units**

DOWNTOWN FUELS ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY



Less than 1% of Athens-Clarke County land area **produces**

6.5% of ACC property tax revenue

9.4% of ACC sales tax revenue

70.0% of ACC hotel-motel tax revenue

23.0% of ACC business license and alcoholic beverage license revenue

290 MILLION
In goods and services produced
within a 0.6 square mile area



9.4%
Of ACC Sales Tax
Revenue

36,000+
Students at The
University of Georgia



20+
Live Music Venues
"Live Music Central"
by the New York Times

DOWNTOWN ATHENS

In one look

**BEST PLACES
TO RETIRE**
From Forbes and AARP

\$12.4 Million
Value of public investment downtown both
completed and planned 2016-2017



350,000
Annual Convention Visitors



Ranked by Fansided
**#1 COLLEGE TOWN IN
AMERICA**

2,384
Full-time equivalent
direct employment



DEFINING THE LIFE- WORK BALANCE: DOWNTOWN ATHENS



creating a place where people want to be

Downtown Athens blends the best parts of life in a single area.

Employees can live, eat, play, and learn, all within a few downtown blocks. Athens-Clarke County offers high-quality amenities at a small-town cost.

Those who live here can attest that Athens has been one of the South's best-kept secrets. But now the secret is out, and businesses are thriving in Athens. Ranked the number one "coolest town in the USA" by the Matador Network, Athens' rich history informs an inclusive and innovative present, identified best through its many curious visitors and the loyal support Athenians show local businesses.

With several top-of-the-line residential developments and an abundance of talent across Broad Street at the University of Georgia, businesses are never short for hires and have access to the world's top professionals in their fields. Some of the fastest growing companies like Docebo, VoxPro, & Cogent are not only located but expanding in downtown Athens.





DOWNTOWN THRIVES



Athens is consistently ranked by a variety of outlets as both one of the best college towns and one of the best places to retire in the USA. The juxtaposition of these two titles is evidence that Athens is a welcome place for all people.

The city's Southern hospitality and artistic history are embedded in every corner of the downtown district. Students, families, retirees, and employees trek the sidewalks at all times of day, contributing to the district's open and eclectic identity.

HOSPITALITY

6 full service hotels, 2 under construction
200,000 visitors per year
350,000 convention visitors

RETAIL & RESTAURANTS

74 Restaurants
62 Retail Stores
Award-winning Brewery

INNOVATION DISTRICT

Guaranteed, redundant line service provider
Tech Business Incubator



CULTURAL VITALITY



MUSIC & SHOWS

Voted one of the 12 best cities for music lovers, Athens has a rich history and active presence of music. The downtown area has over 20 venues and a recording studio to support the local music scene.



PUBLIC ART

Downtown Athens is embracing public art. Three new murals have been added within the last year and more public art is planned. Visitors and Athenians can enjoy art on the street with Downtown's new Art Walk Tour or visit galleries at the Lyndon House, the Indigo, and the Classic Center.



photo: Kelly Lambert, OnlineAthens

GREENSPACE

Downtown's expanded boundaries include the linear park along the North Oconee River and one of Athens' premier green spaces, Dudley Park. The Firefly Trail will intersect with the Greenway in Dudley Park, placing the center of that trail network directly in the western end of downtown. Recognizing that development results in more demand for green space, the downtown Master Plan includes additional parks and public spaces in the district.



DOWNTOWN MILESTONES

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The ADDA contracted with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government to produce an Economic Impact Report for the ADDA Service Area. The report provides insight into the economic health of the Central Business District and is a guide for growing the economy in the downtown area, ACC, and the region.

FACADE GRANTS

Since it was implemented in 2015, the ADDA Façade Grant Program has assisted five properties with exterior restoration by awarding a total of \$38,000.

STARTUP INCUBATOR

Four Athens has a history of creating jobs and providing workforce development resources. The ADDA's expanded boundaries brought the startup incubator into the district. The ADDA supports Four Athens and their mission with a monthly rental subsidy.

BEAUTIFICATION

Attractive, vibrant streets promote pedestrian activity and a prosperous image. With our community partners, the ADDA's goal is to fill downtown's 80 planters so they are as eye-catching as the beds that have been planted on College Square.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

The ADDA has worked with Georgia Cities Foundation to secure over \$500,000 in low interest loans for The Rook and Pawn and Creature Comforts Brewery.

EXPANDED BOUNDARIES

House Bill 590 was passed into law in 2017, expanding the boundaries of the ADDA for the first time since 1977. The larger area reflects the expanded economic footprint of downtown Athens and will provide additional economic development opportunities.

DOWNTOWN INTERNET

An innovation district was identified where guaranteed, redundant internet is available. A business guide with information about internet service in the ADDA District was created.

MICROLOAN PROGRAM

The ADDA implemented a revolving microloan program this year to assist small businesses with low-interest loans up to \$10,000.

PROMOTING DOWNTOWN

A weekly e-newsletter full of information about downtown news and ADDA activities was initiated in 2017. ADDA produced commercials for local cable stations, touting downtown as a destination for all.

CREATING EXPERIENCES

Events and activities like the Downtown Art Tour, Family Itinerary, Downtown Fireworks, Outdoor Chess, and the UGA Freshman Scavenger Hunt are creating unique opportunities to discover downtown.

RESIDENTIAL LIVING

Over the last four years, downtown Athens has seen the number of residential student units triple. This new residential population contributes to downtown's vibrancy and year-round economy.

BLUE SKY CONCERTS

Athens is a music town, and its creative heart is the downtown. Visitors and residents enjoyed the revival of the Blue Sky Concert Series, an opportunity for local musicians of all genres to perform on College Square during the lunch hour.

ADDA OFFICE

In 2016, the ADDA purchased an office on Broad Street, saving overhead costs which can be put towards programming.



EVENTS DOWNTOWN

Roughly 60% of sales tax collected by the Athens-Clarke County government is paid by nonresidents. Events in downtown attract local, regional, and national visitors who shop and dine throughout the county. Many of these events are supported through the ADDA by Community Enhancement Program funds.

There's Always Something Going on in Athens

AthFest Music and Arts Festival
Twilight Criterium - Hot Corner Festival
Downtown Fireworks - Black Market
North of the Arch - Third Thursday Art Tour
Christmas Parade - UGA Home Games
Weekly Athens Farmers Market
LatinX Festival - AthHalf Half Marathon
International Festival - PopFest
Christmas Open House - Broadway Shows
Blue Sky Fall & Summer Concert Series
Wild Rumpus - Athens Wine Weekend
Parking Day - Chess and Community



photo: Athens CVB



photo: Joshua L Jones, OnlineAthens

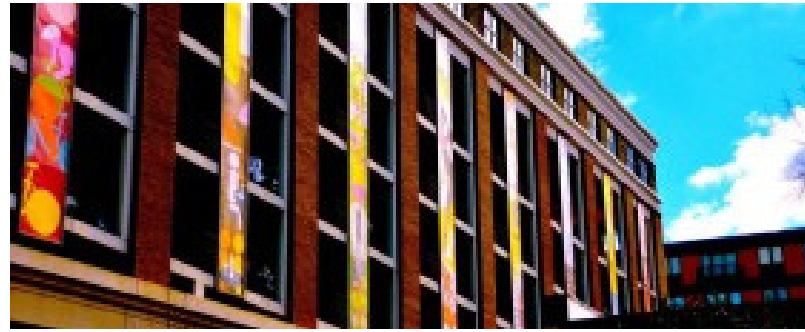


photo: Alexa Rivera, MyAthens

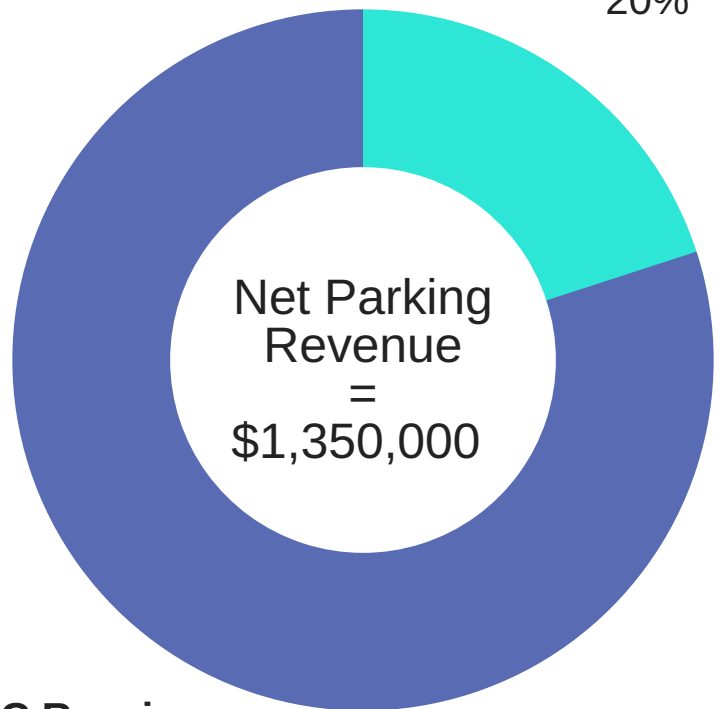
DOWNTOWN PARKING

- On-Street Metered Spaces 855
- Spaces in College Ave. Deck 336
- Spaces in Washington St. Deck 540
- Surface Lot Spaces 359

➔ **Total Spaces: 2,090**



ADDA Receives
20%



ACC Receives
80%

THE ADDA EFFICIENTLY MANAGES DOWNTOWN PARKING TO MAXIMIZE ON-STREET AVAILABLE PARKING

- Pay-and-Display meters have been replaced with traditional meters.
- All meters have been updated to accept credit card payment.
- A regular maintenance program has been implemented for the decks under ADDA management.
- On-street rate was increased by 25 cents/hour to encourage long-term parking in decks.
- On-street parking hours have more than doubled in the last four years.
- Parking management software is being updated to provide greater efficiency.

POSITION DOWNTOWN FOR THE FUTURE



ACTIVATING DOWNTOWN Activate public spaces with activities and events like outdoor chess, scavenger hunts, and Blue Sky concerts. Small, targeted events give participants a unique experience that will bring them back with their family and friends. Way finding signage is planned to encourage visitors to explore.

ENHANCING DOWNTOWN Enhance sidewalks and public spaces with landscaping and art. Keep downtown clean. Use every opportunity to upgrade internet service. Assist businesses with interior and exterior renovation with ADDA grants. An enhanced downtown can be used to recruit business and talent into Athens-Clarke County.

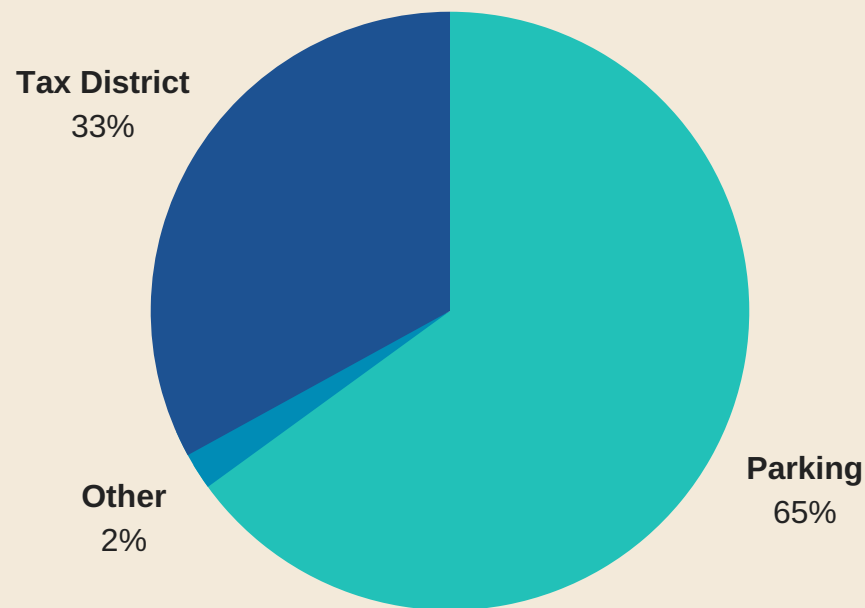
EDIFYING DOWNTOWN Develop downtown incubator space to support innovation and opportunities for human expansion. Support the identity of downtown Athens as a business and creative hub and use that identity as a lynch pin for a successful economy throughout Athens-Clarke County.

ELEVATING DOWNTOWN Develop a brand that reflects the life-work balance of downtown Athens. Community image is critical to economic vitality. Build pride in downtown and engage downtown champions with the creation and investment of a Downtown Foundation to support programming.

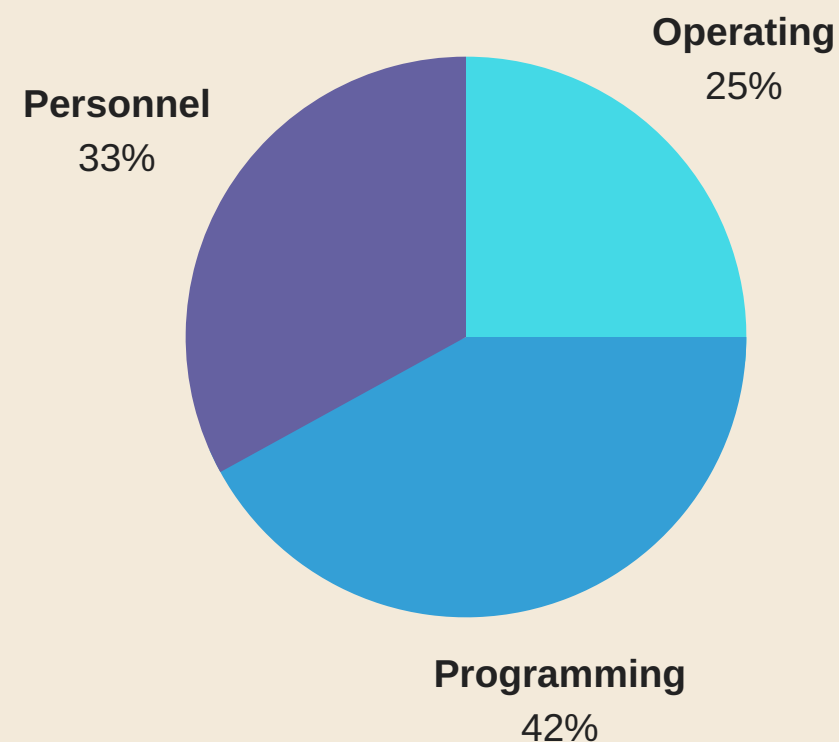
POSITIONING DOWNTOWN Refine the Downtown Master Plan to keep the blueprint up to date. Initiate implementation of projects from the Downtown Master Plan, like the Clayton Streetscape, the City Hall Streetscape, and the Stormwater Park.



WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM:



HOW THE MONEY IS SPENT:



The largest expense for the ADDA is in programming. Programming funds cover the costs of facade grants, beautification, business microloans, public art, and economic incentives.

From FY16 to FY18, the ADDA has more than doubled the funds allocated for programming.

ADDA

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Dynamite Clothing

Shayne Jordan, Vice Chair

Washington Square Studios

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HW Creative Marketing

Katrina Evans

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Pete Dugas

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Nancy Denson, Mayor

Athens-Clarke County

Mike Hamby, Commissioner

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