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Georgia—Rural Business Service

Community Building

Agriculture Mural Promotes Cultural Heritage Tourism in Colquitt

Outline Of Need:

Downtown Colquitt started a series of murals to support the cultural heritage tourism industry. This industry has significant economic impact on the state of Georgia, causing Georgia to form the Georgia Made Georgia Grown label to create a brand and expand marketing. Colquitt has suffered from the economic downturn along with the rest of the nation. They needed funds to continue this initiative.

How Rural Development Helped:

USDA Rural Development provided a Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) for \$99,999 for the “Georgia’s Agriculture Mural Monument,” one of the largest outdoor murals in the state.

The Results:

The mural takes up 26,700 sq. ft. and required 175 gallons of primer and about 500 gallons of paint. According to the artist, the project took almost a year to complete, including the preliminary work, design paperwork and planning.

The mural is painted on a clover-leaf shaped silo that is 100 ft. tall and 80 ft. in circumference. Mural artist Charlie Johnston of Canada, who's won five Mural of the Year Awards, was tapped to create it.

While working on the mural in Colquitt, he stayed in the former school and boarding house and was given a decommissioned police car to get around in. "The Colquitt/Miller Arts Council has had a hugely successful history with Swamp Gravy now in its 19th season," Thomas said. "This community has become a model for others that would hope to replicate similar success. Currently, about 50,000



visitors come to this town of less than 2,000 each year."

The mural was dedicated in October, 2010, and was finished in February, 2011.

The State of Georgia contributed \$10,000 and local contributions totaled over \$30,000. The Colquitt/Miller Arts Council was started 19 years ago and is now the fifth largest employer in town with 45 employed in full or part-time jobs.

Fast Facts

Program: Rural Business Enterprise Grant
Investment: \$99,999

Partners: Colquitt/Miller Arts Council
Congressional District: GA-02

Impact:

- Promotes tourism, jobs
- Contributes to community pride