



*Board of Commissioners*

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
1994 - 2014**

**SUMTER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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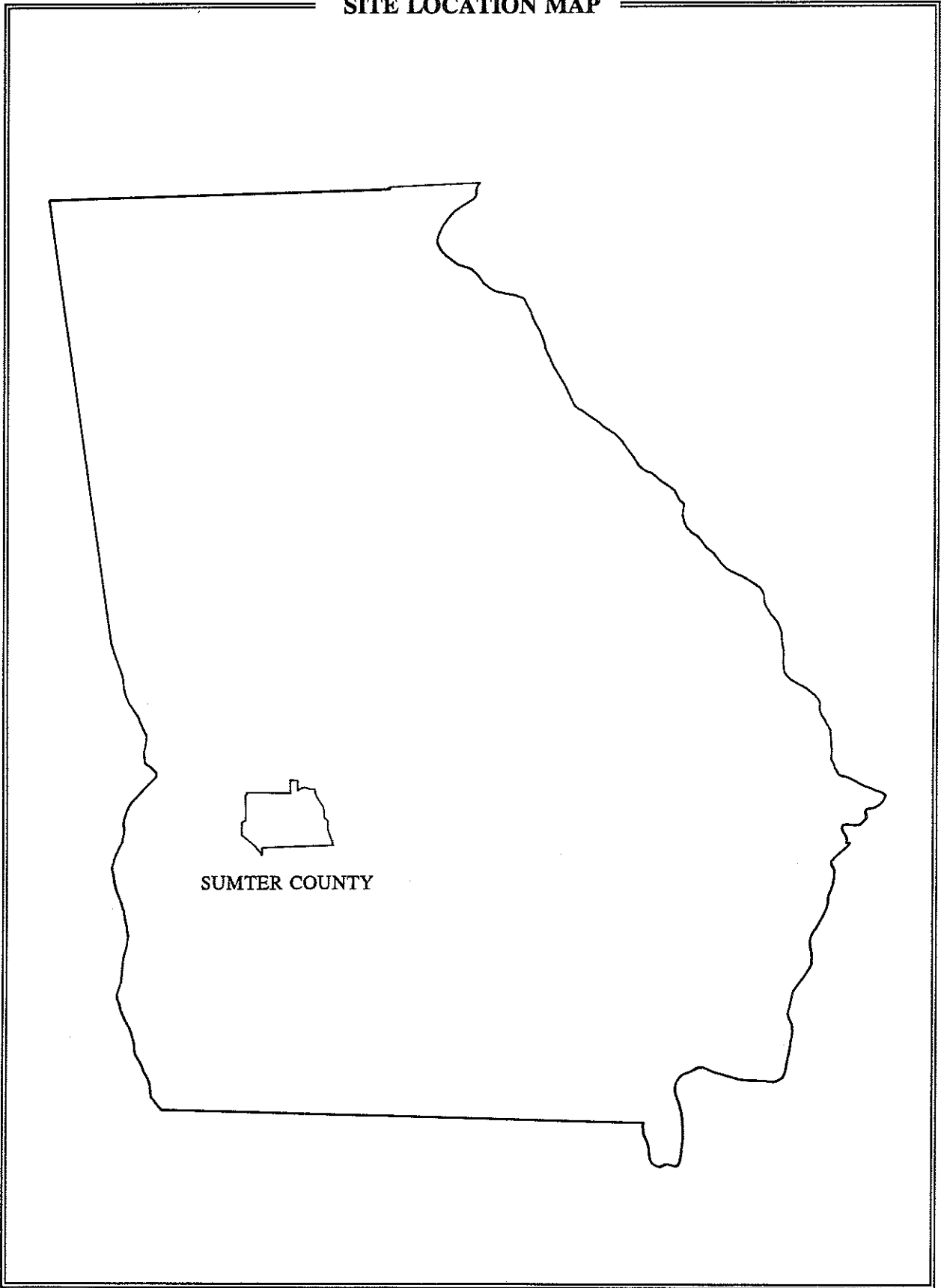
**SUMTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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**Assisted By  
Middle Flint Regional Development Center  
228 West Lamar Street  
Americus, Georgia**

**SITE LOCATION MAP**



## BRIEF HISTORY

Creek and Cherokee Indians were the original inhabitants of present day Sumter County. By 1830 they had been relocated further west, clearing the way the following year for the Georgia Legislature to create Sumter County from lands previously part of Lee County. According to the local census taken in 1846, Sumter County was inhabited by 37 families for a total population of 117.

The initial key to Sumter's growth and success was the railroad. In 1850 local investors raised \$75,000 with which to buy railroad stock for the purpose of attracting rail line development to the county. In October, 1854, the Southwestern Railroad extension from the City of Oglethorpe to Americus was completed. Enhanced commercial access stimulated trade and population growth. Population growth was stimulated further by the small pox induced flight of Oglethorpe residents in 1860. By 1880, the county could claim the fifth largest city in the state-Americus with a population of 16,000.

During the next century Sumter County would have an important role to play in two historic events. In 1923, Charles Lindbergh purchased his first airplane and made his first solo flight at Souther Field. Four years later, almost to the day, "Lucky Lindy" was the first to fly nonstop across the Atlantic Ocean. In November, 1976, Sumter County native-son Jimmy Carter was elected the 39th President of the United States.



In May of 1923, Charles Augustus Lindbergh came to Americus' Souther Field from St. Augustine, Florida, where he was employed as a wingwalker for a traveling circus. Traveling by motorcycle the twenty-one year old came searching for an airplane to purchase, and while here paid \$500 for a surplus, disassembled, LN4D Jenny. Lindbergh had previously logged some eight hours flying time, but had not soloed. Late one afternoon he piloted his newly reassembled Jenny to an altitude of approximately 4,500 feet. Lindbergh completed his solo flight by returning to Souther Field at sun set where a lone observer complimented him on his flying skill. Four years later, May 20 - 21, 1927, Lindbergh was the first to fly nonstop across the Atlantic Ocean.

## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

The Sumter County Comprehensive Plan 1994 - 2014 has been prepared for use by elected officials as a management tool to control and guide the county's growth and development through the year 2014 . The Plan represents local participation in and contribution to the coordinated planning process as set forth by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. By meeting the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures established as part of the law, the Comprehensive Plan establishes a framework from which the county can work when planning for the future provision of public facilities and services. In addition, the Plan will serve as the basis for local government decision-making regarding economic development, environmental protection, and future patterns of land use.

### PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan was prepared using the basic three step planning process required by the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. The process is summarized as follows:

1. **Inventory and Assessment:** Background information on population, housing, community facilities, economic development, natural and historic resources and land use was collected and organized. An assessment of conditions found in each of these topical areas and identification of deficiencies in each was performed in light of projected population changes and anticipated future development patterns.
2. **Findings, Recommendations and Goals:** Based upon the inventory and assessment, needs were identified and goals were established to meet the identified needs.
3. **Implementation:** This consists of a Five Year Work Plan which identifies the various projects and programs to be undertaken and/or completed by the year 1997 to meet identified needs.

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In accordance with applicable state mandated Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, two public hearings were held related to the preparation of this document. The first hearing was held at the very beginning of Plan preparation (January 6, 1993) to apprise the general public of the purpose of this effort and to solicit citizen input. After numerous work sessions the Sumter County Planning Commission prepared a draft of the Plan and the second hearing was held (January 27, 1994) to solicit citizen input into Plan Findings and Goals. Subsequent to the second hearing the Sumter County Board of Commissioners authorized submission of the draft Plan to the Middle Flint Regional Development Center for review in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act.

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## **POPULATION**

An understanding of a community's past, present and probable future population characteristics serves as the basis of any comprehensive planning effort. The following section provides an overview of the county's various demographic characteristics.

It is important for the interested reader to understand that some of the numbers presented on the following pages are projections, not predictions, of future populations. Far too many variables affect mankind and development for one to consider population projections as prophecy. This is especially true in small, sparsely developed areas for which some demographers will not make projections because accuracy is so elusive. Additionally, the further into the future one projects, the greater the margin of error is likely to be.

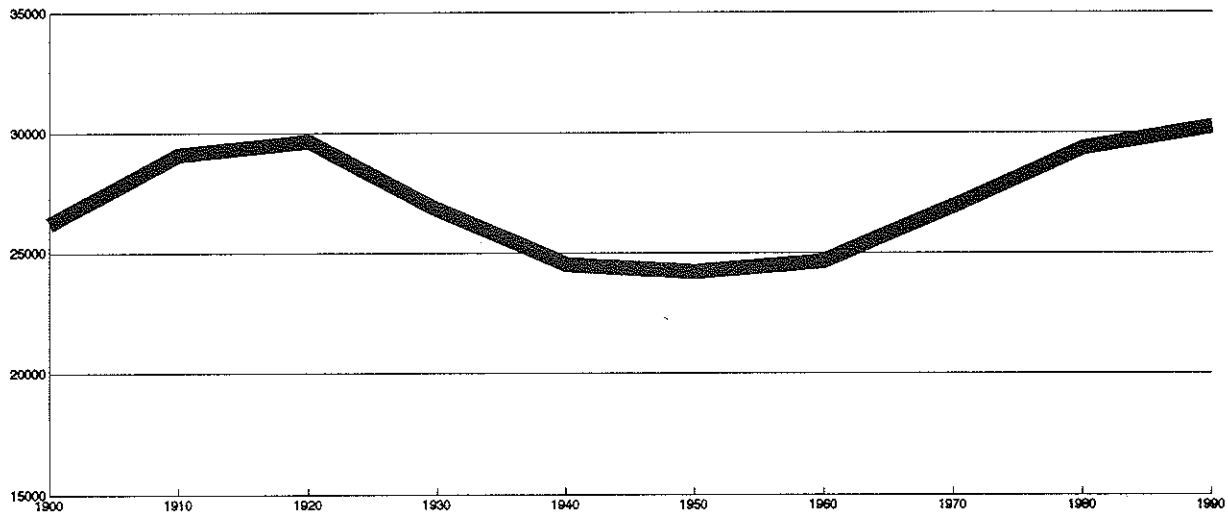
Generally, the best tools for projecting the future are trends of the past. Since we do not presently know the extent and degree of variables which will affect future residents, it is assumed that future developments will build upon those of the past and that the resulting impacts will, likewise, be proportional to those of the past. Population trends are of greater importance than knowing the precise number of residents.

## POPULATION

The Census of 1900 credited Sumter County (all-inclusive) with 26,212 residents. During the first decade of the century the population increased by 11%. The much lower rate of growth recorded between 1910 and 1920 (1.9%) was an indicator of an imminent trend reversal.

Between 1920 and 1950, the number of people residing in Sumter County decreased by 5,432 (-18%). This population loss was part of a statewide, economically induced migration from rural to urban communities. Georgia's urban population during the period 1920-1950 increased 96% (114% according to 1950 Census definitions), while the rural<sup>1</sup> population decreased 7% (-13% according to 1950 Census definitions). The local population stabilized during the 1940s despite the loss of an additional 300 residents.

TABLE 1  
SUMTER COUNTY POPULATION  
1900 - 1990



Source: U. S. Census

Sumter County's contribution to the industrialization of America came in the 50s, a decade after the advent of the mobile home. This new industry was the driving force behind the addition of 450 residents in the 1950s, and 2,300 residents during the 1960s. By the dawn of the 1970s there were approximately 10,000 mobile homes produced every year in Americus. With some forty mobile home and component parts manufacturing plants within a forty mile radius of the city, Americus was the hub of Georgia's mobile home industry.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document the term "rural" refers to the unincorporated area.

As the mobile home grew in popularity the buying public demanded larger units. Meeting this market demand meant transporting units wider than state law allowed; raising concerns in the minds of members of the Georgia General Assembly over public safety. By the time of enactment of legislation allowing the transport of 14 feet-wide mobile homes, some manufacturers had closed local production facilities and relocated out-of-state where transport of the wider units was already legal. Although not able to regain pre-eminence in the mobile home industry after this economic loss, the community had developed sufficient industrial diversification and expansion to enable continued population growth in the 1970s (2,429) and, to a lesser degree, in the 1980s (868).

During the period 1960-1990, growth of the county's municipal population outpaced that of the rural area. Collectively, the five cities increased by 3,125 residents (21%), while the number of rural residents increased by 2,451 (26%). The greatest level of growth recorded anywhere in the county was credited to the unincorporated census division around Americus, reportedly increasing in population by 3,234 (87%). The City of Americus recorded a 3,040 (23%) resident increase.

Population growth in the unincorporated area around Americus is attributed to expansion of the local economic base, mostly in Americus, and the lack of sufficient housing in the city to accommodate the needs of workers locating in the community. The area around Americus also benefitted from economic activity in surrounding communities as middle and upper management personnel purchased housing proximate to Americus, and commuted to their place of employment in neighboring counties.

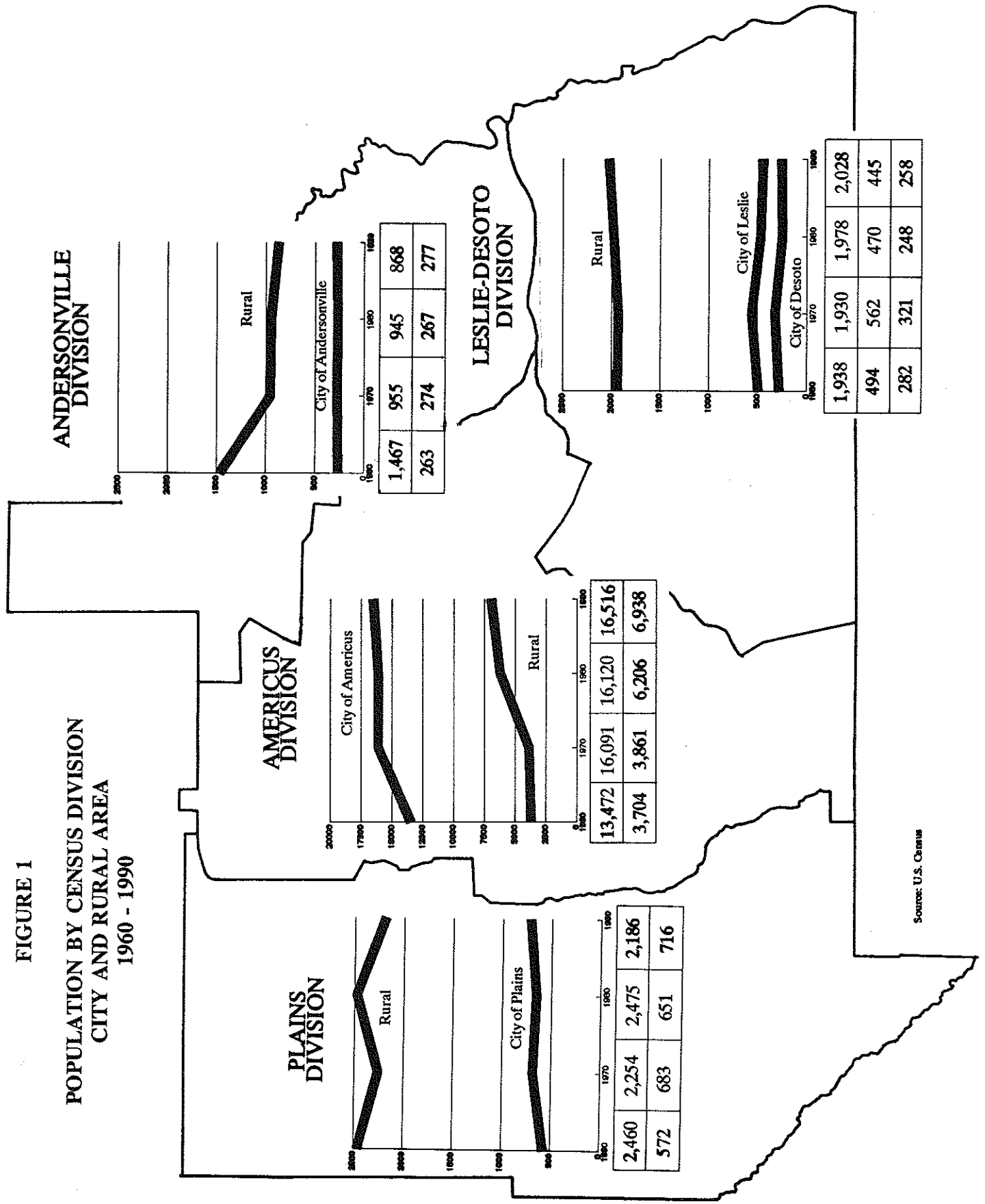
During this thirty-year period (1960 - 1990) the City of Americus recorded its greatest population surge in the 1960s, in large part due to the expanding mobile home industry. The greatest level of growth in the unincorporated area around the county seat occurred during the 1970s. By this time Americus had effectively "built-out" of single-family housing sites, and the demand for housing generated by increasing numbers of workers at the largest local employers was satisfied by residential developments beyond the city's corporate limit.

The unincorporated Plains Census County Division (CCD) comprises the western quarter of Sumter County (Figure 1). This area has maintained a history of intensive agricultural production and a relatively constant population level despite the most prolonged (1977-1991) and severely depressed agricultural economy since the Great Depression. Approximately 300 (14%) of the CCD's population (1990) reside in an established subdivision adjacent to Plains' southern corporate limit. No significant residential development or population increase is anticipated in this region because of the lack of development (schools, business/industry, retail establishments) in the census division and further west. Such development would be needed to entice future Sumter County residents to locate so distant from existing amenities in Americus.

The Leslie-DeSoto CCD is the most agriculturally rich section of the county. Approximately 10% of the region's population is concentrated in a subdivision south of DeSoto. Residential development on Lake Blackshear sustains a major portion (20%) of the recorded 1990 population. Both Americus and the City of Cordele, a retail and employment center just 12 miles east of the county line, help support residential development along the lakefront.

**FIGURE 1**

**POPULATION BY CENSUS DIVISION  
CITY AND RURAL AREA  
1960 - 1990**

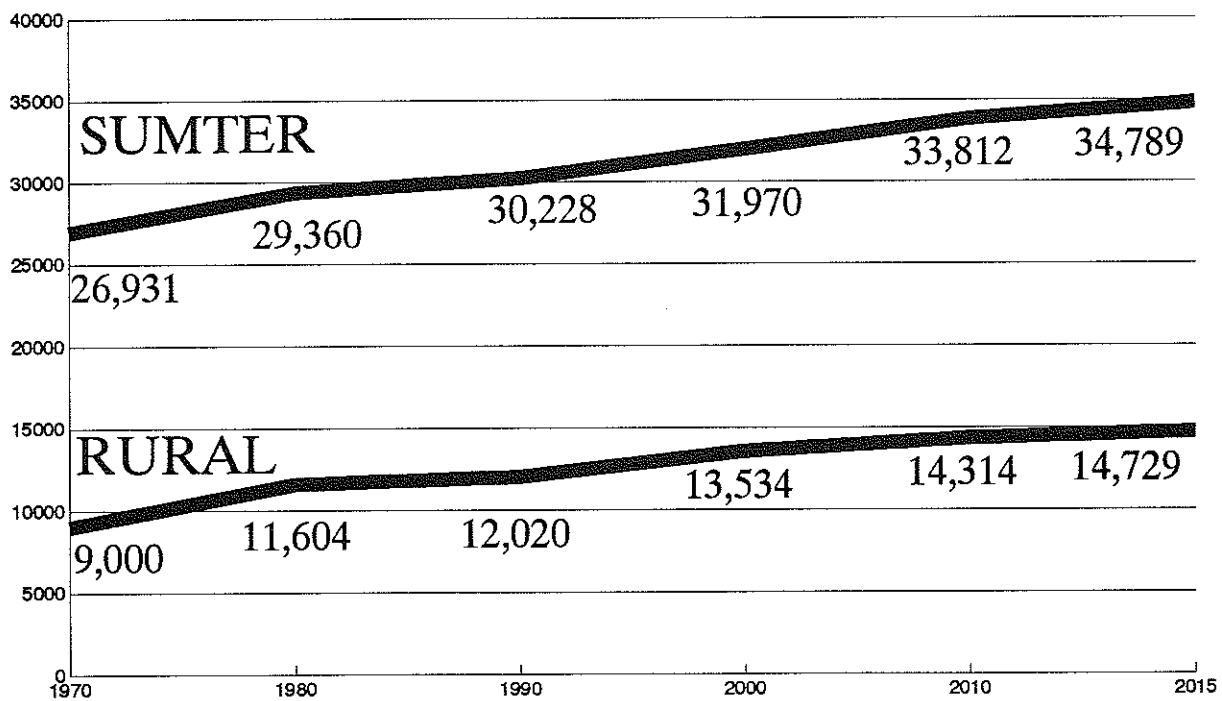


Source: U.S. Census

The Andersonville division has the county's greatest concentration of forest land and steepest terrain, and the northern half has the county's least fertile soil. These factors, plus the least developed road network of any of the county's four regions, have helped keep this the most sparsely developed and populated of the county's census divisions.

Historic data were used as the basis for the population projections presented in Table 2. The countywide projection is based on the average percentage change recorded per decade between 1950 and 1990. Extrapolation of the average numerical change documented during the same period yielded a projection deemed unrealistically low considering the county's current economic potential and aggressive economic development posture. Likewise, extrapolation of a constant ratio between the county and larger geographical areas, i.e., the eight county Middle Flint region and the State of Georgia, yielded future populations which were deemed unrealistically low and unrealistically high, respectively. The methodology used suggests a 4,561 (15%) resident increase for Sumter County all-inclusive between 1990 and 2015.

**TABLE 2**  
**SUMTER COUNTY POPULATION**  
**ALL-INCLUSIVE AND RURAL**  
**1970 - 2015**



Source: Middle Flint RDC



The projected population of the rural area was derived from the historic ratio (1950 - 1990) between the County's all-inclusive and rural populations. Sharp population losses documented in mid-century negatively skew results of the arithmetic (average numeric change) and geometric (average percentage change) projection methodologies, and recent periods (1970-1990) of population growth were deemed an inadequate projection base for either of these methodologies. The methodology used suggests a population increase in the rural area of 2,709 (23%) during the period 1990-2015. The reader is advised, however, that annexation by the City of Americus could have a significant effect on the rural population census.

Sumter County is not projected to increase its proportionate share of the state population because the local rate of growth will continue to lag the projected state rate. Projected growth rates for the period 1990 - 2015 are: Sumter - 15%; Rural Sumter - 23%; and Georgia - 33%.

Presented in Table 3 are annual, straight-line estimates/projections of local populations for the current decade. Also shown are projections of local and state populations early next century, in five year intervals.

**TABLE 3**  
**POPULATION ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS**  
**1992-2015**

|         |           |        |           |        |           |        |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
|         | 1992      | 1993   | 1994      | 1995   | 1996      | 1997   | 1998      | 1999   |
| Sumter  | 30,576    | 30,751 | 30,925    | 31,099 | 31,273    | 31,447 | 31,622    | 31,796 |
| Rural   | 12,323    | 12,474 | 12,626    | 12,777 | 12,928    | 13,080 | 13,231    | 13,382 |
|         | 2000      |        | 2005      |        | 2010      |        | 2015      |        |
| Sumter  | 31,970    |        | 32,891    |        | 33,812    |        | 34,789    |        |
| Change  | -         |        | 3%        |        | 3%        |        | 3%        |        |
| Rural   | 13,534    |        | 13,924    |        | 14,314    |        | 14,729    |        |
| Change  | -         |        | 3%        |        | 3%        |        | 3%        |        |
| Georgia | 7,523,788 |        | 8,025,363 |        | 8,470,216 |        | 8,907,732 |        |
| Change  | -         |        | 7%        |        | 6%        |        | 5%        |        |

Sources: Sumter and Rural estimates and projections by Middle Flint RDC

Georgia projections by Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

Change denotes percentage increase from preceding period.

Neither state nor local populations have experienced significant fluctuations in the male-female ratio in recent years (Table 4). Locally, the higher countywide female ratio is bolstered by the greater concentration of females in the five incorporated communities; Americus, Andersonville, DeSoto, Leslie and Plains. According to the 1990 Census, females constitute 56% of the county's aggregate municipal population. Projections indicate the current ratio will be maintained at least until the year 2015.

**TABLE 4**  
**POPULATION BY SEX**  
**1970-2015**

|         | 1970 |     | 1980 |     | 1990 |     | 2000 |     | 2010 |     | 2015 |     |
|---------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|
|         | M    | F   | M    | F   | M    | F   | M    | F   | M    | F   | M    | F   |
| Sumter  | 47%  | 53% | 46%  | 54% | 46%  | 54% | 46%  | 54% | 46%  | 54% | 46%  | 54% |
| Rural   | 50%  | 50% | 50%  | 50% | 49%  | 51% | 49%  | 51% | 49%  | 51% | 49%  | 51% |
| Georgia | 49%  | 51% | 48%  | 52% | 49%  | 51% | 49%  | 51% | 48%  | 52% | 48%  | 52% |

Source: U.S. Census 1970, 1980, 1990  
Projections by Middle Flint RDC

Racial data is presented in Table 5. During the period 1970-1990, the rural area recorded increases in the numbers of both black and white residents. However, blacks constituted decreasing percentages of the rural total. During the 1980s the decrease in the number of black residents was equivalent to over half of the 780 person increase in black residents recorded during the preceding decade. While white residents increased in number both decades, the rate of increase documented in the 1980s was only half that recorded in the 1970s. Countywide, increases in the number of black residents was almost identical both decades 1,036 - 1,064. During the 1980s, the decrease in white residents countywide was equivalent to 24% of the 1,249 person increase recorded in the 1970s.

According to the 1990 Census, blacks comprise 53% of the county's aggregate municipal population. The increasing concentration of black residents in the cities is a nationwide trend. With characteristically lower incomes this segment of the population typically migrates to locations proximate to such basic services as health care, grocery stores, transportation, churches, better housing, etc. Projections indicate black residents will constitute a gradually increasing share of aggregate municipal and total populations.

**TABLE 5**  
**POPULATION BY RACE**  
**1970-2015**

|         | 1970  |       | 1975  |       | 1980  |       | 1985  |       | 1990  |       |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|         | White | Black | White | Black | White | Black | White | Black | White | Black |
| Sumter  | 56%   | 44%   | 56%   | 44%   | 55%   | 44%   | 54%   | 45%   | 53%   | 46%   |
| Rural   | 55%   | 45%   | 56%   | 44%   | 58%   | 42%   | 61%   | 39%   | 63%   | 36%   |
| Georgia | 74%   | 26%   | 73%   | 27%   | 72%   | 27%   | 71%   | 27%   | 71%   | 27%   |

|         | 1995  |       | 2000  |       | 2005  |       | 2010  |       | 2015  |       |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|         | White | Black | White | Black | White | Black | White | Black | White | Black |
| Sumter  | 52%   | 47%   | 51%   | 48%   | 51%   | 48%   | 50%   | 49%   | 49%   | 50%   |
| Rural   | 65%   | 34%   | 66%   | 32%   | 68%   | 30%   | 70%   | 28%   | 72%   | 26%   |
| Georgia | 71%   | 27%   | 70%   | 27%   | 69%   | 28%   | 69%   | 28%   | 69%   | 28%   |

Sources: U.S. Census 1970, 1980, 1990

Sumter & Rural mid-census estimates and decennial projections by Middle Flint RDC

Georgia mid-census estimates and decennial projections by Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

Other races are not included in these percentages.

Population trends and projections are plotted by age groups for Sumter County and the rural area in Table 6. General trends in these two jurisdictions are quite similar. Projections indicate the bulk of the county's population growth through the year 2015 will be in the school, college and young adult (5-14 and 15-24) age groups.

The greatest numerical differences in population of Sumter County and the rural area are in the 15-24 and 5-14 age groups, respectively. A greater proportion of these age groups reside in local cities than is the case with other groups. The 65+ age group also has a concentration of residents in the cities. Although the City of Americus has the greatest number of "elderly" residents, they comprise only 15% (1990) of city residents; very similar to the distribution in Andersonville, Desoto and Leslie. The "elderly" constitute 28% of Plains' population. The 100-bed Lillian G. Carter Nursing Center maintains this latter percentage at an artificially high level.

**TABLE 6**

**POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS  
1970 - 2015**

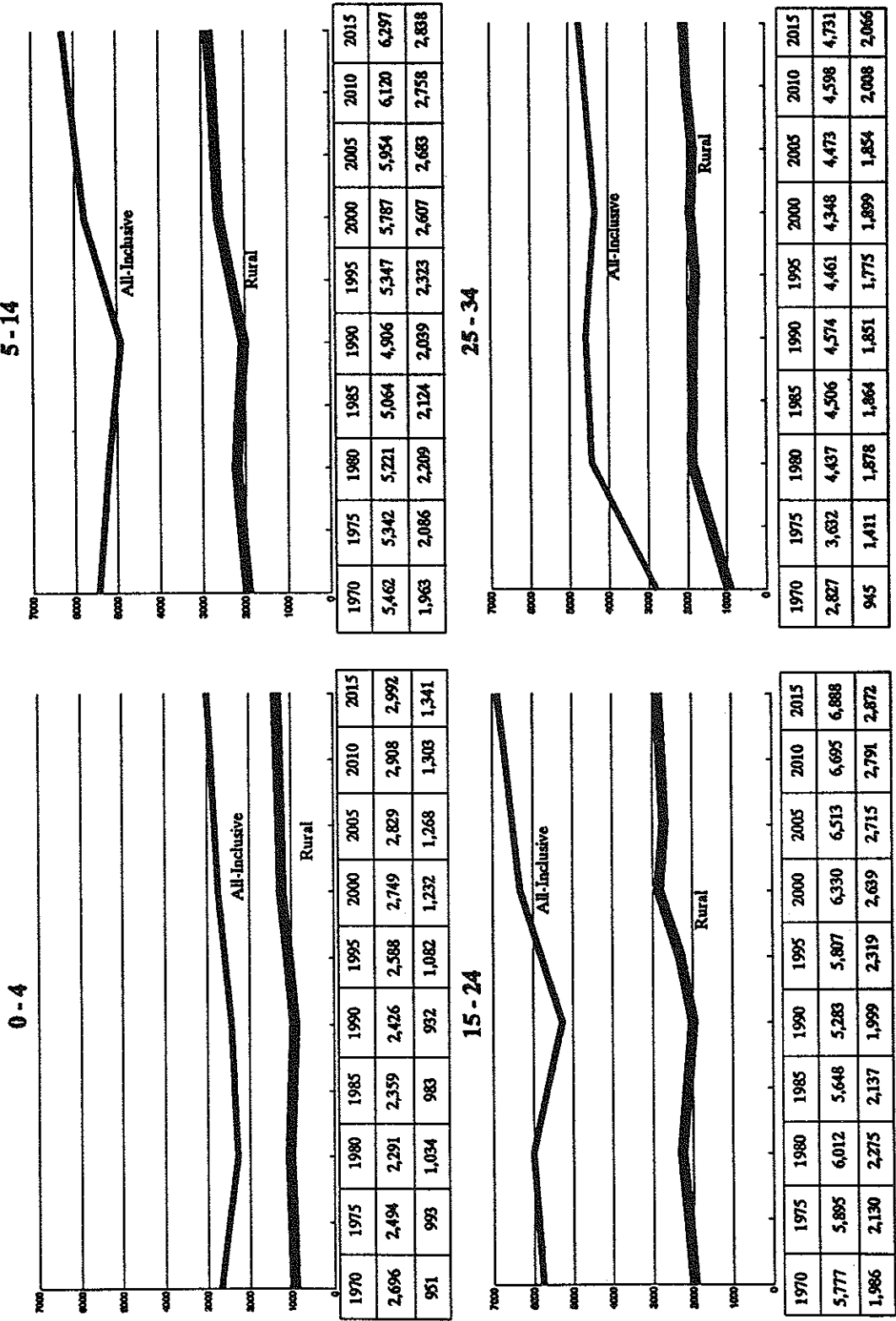
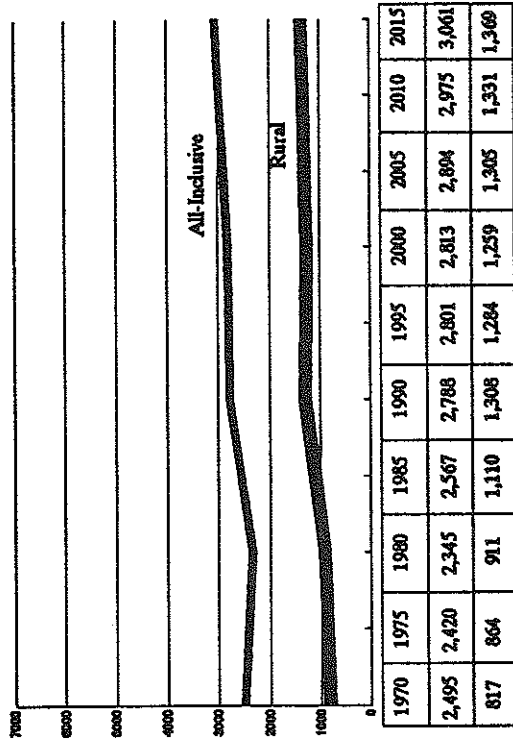


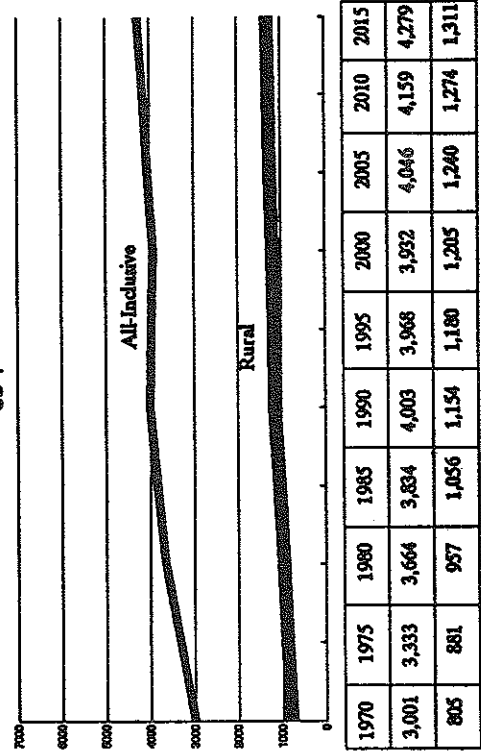
TABLE 6 - Continued

POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS  
1970 - 2015

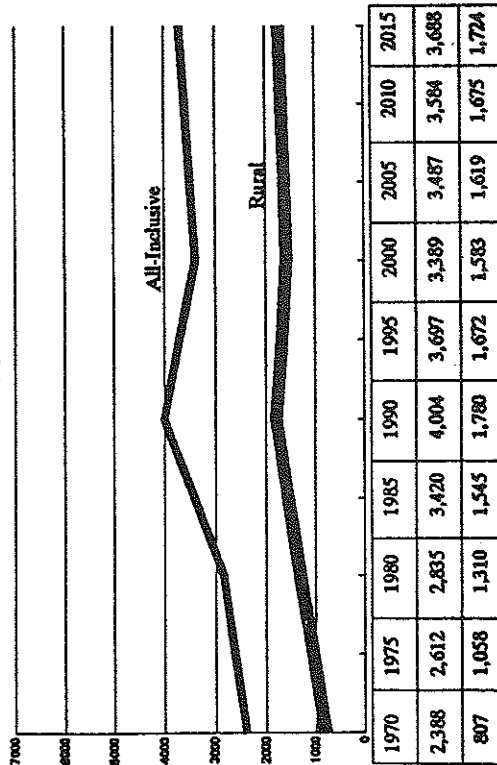
45 - 54



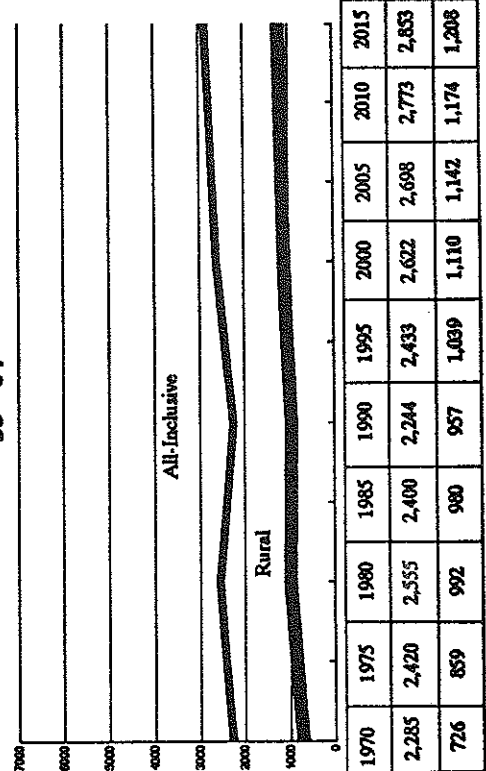
65+



35 - 44



55 - 64



Sources: U.S. Census 1970, 1980 and 1990, Mid-Census and projections by Middle Flint RDC

The 1990 Census documented a significant proportional decrease in the local population 0 - 24 years of age. In 1970, this age group constituted 52% of Sumter County's population. By 1990, the percentage had decreased to 42%. For the rural area the percentages were 54 and 41, respectively. The state recorded only a three percentile decrease, from 49% to 46%. In all three jurisdictions the vast majority of this decrease was counterbalanced by proportional increases in the 25-44 age group.

Table 7 reveals the proportionate increase in the population 25 - 49 years of age by subgroup, between 1970 and 1990. It also shows that the local proportion of each subgroup remained consistently lower (1 1/4 percentile±) than the state. If local proportions had been equal to those of the state in 1990, Sumter County would have had an additional 375 residents in the age group which comprises the younger half of the labor pool. As a consequence, Sumter County has a significantly higher economic dependency ratio than the state, or a higher proportion of residents who are not "economically productive", and not contributing to economic activity. With the 1990 Census the local dependency ratio recorded a greater rate of improvement from the 1970 level than did the state.

**TABLE 7**  
**INTERMEDIATE AGE GROUPS**  
**1970, 1990**

| AGE GROUPS | PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION |         |        |         |
|------------|-----------------------------|---------|--------|---------|
|            | 1970                        |         | 1990   |         |
|            | SUMTER                      | GEORGIA | SUMTER | GEORGIA |
| 25-29      | 5.9%                        | 7.2%    | 7.7%   | 9.1%    |
| 30-34      | 4.5%                        | 6.0%    | 7.5%   | 9.0%    |
| 35-39      | 4.1%                        | 5.6%    | 6.8%   | 8.2%    |
| 40-44      | 4.5%                        | 5.6%    | 6.4%   | 7.5%    |
| 45-49      | 4.5%                        | 5.5%    | 5.1%   | 5.8%    |

Source: U.S. Census

Median age is a statistical division of the population into two equally sized groups; half younger and half older than the median. Table 8 shows the median age of Sumter County to be lower than the state throughout the 1970-1990 period, despite the county's faster rate of increase during the period. The county's faster rate of increase was caused by the proportional decrease in the youngest age group (0 - 24 years) and the proportional increase in those 65 years of age and older. The gap between the median ages of the two jurisdictions narrowed from 1.8 years in 1970, to 1.2 years in 1990. The 1990 Census reported local (and state) median ages to be 28.1 (30.3) for males, 32.3 (32.7) for females, 25.3 (27.3) for blacks and 35.7 (33.4) for whites.

**TABLE 8**  
**MEDIAN AGE**  
**1970, 1980, 1990**

|         | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | Change<br>1970-1990 | Change<br>1970-1990 |
|---------|------|------|------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Sumter  | 24.1 | 27.3 | 30.4 | 6.3 years           | 26%                 |
| Georgia | 25.9 | 28.6 | 31.6 | 5.7 years           | 22%                 |

Source: U.S. Census

Household and household size data are presented in Table 9. For census purposes a household includes all persons who occupy a housing unit (house, apartment, mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room) as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live and eat separately from any other persons in the building and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall. The occupants may be a single family, a sole occupant, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

During the period 1970 - 1990, the percentage increase in households at the county level was significantly higher than the increase in population (38% v. 12%, respectively). The difference in these growth levels resulted in a .6 person decrease in average household size (Table 9). Growth rates of rural households and population were similar (32% v. 34%, respectively), resulting in the same average household size at the beginning and end of the twenty-year period.

Population and household projections indicate Sumter and its rural area will experience similar decreases (-.5 person v. -.4 person, respectively) in household size between 1990 and 2015. Over the course of four and one-half decades (1970 - 2015) Sumter's average household size is projected to decrease by 1.1 persons; rural households will decrease by only .4 person. Sumter's average household size has, and is projected to continue closely paralleling that recorded at the state level. The rural area is expected to maintain a slightly higher average household size than Sumter and Georgia. It is worth noting that approximately 5% of the local population does not reside in households, but in group quarters such as nursing homes,

correctional institutions, dormitories, fraternity/sorority houses, etc. Consequently, these residents are not included in household size projections.

**TABLE 9**  
**HOUSEHOLDS AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE**  
**1970 - 2015**

|         | 1970  | 1975  | 1980  | 1985  | 1990   | 1995   | 2000   | 2005   | 2010   | 2015   |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Sumter  | 7,613 | 8,502 | 9,390 | 9,937 | 10,484 | 11,202 | 11,919 | 12,637 | 13,354 | 14,073 |
| Size    | 3.4   | 3.1   | 2.9   | 2.9   | 2.8    | 2.6    | 2.5    | 2.5    | 2.4    | 2.3    |
| Rural   | 3,091 | 3,286 | 3,481 | 3,787 | 4,093  | 4,372  | 4,652  | 4,955  | 5,258  | 5,488  |
| Size    | 2.9   | 3.1   | 3.3   | 3.1   | 2.9    | 2.8    | 2.8    | 2.7    | 2.6    | 2.5    |
| Georgia | -     | -     | -     | -     | -      | -      | -      | -      | -      | -      |
| Size    | 3.3   | 3.0   | 2.8   | 2.7   | 2.7    | 2.6    | 2.5    | 2.5    | 2.4    | 2.3    |

Sources: U. S. Census 1970, 1980, 1990

Sumter and rural estimates and projections by Middle Flint RDC

State data is from Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 1991

Because of the greater level of detail collected in the most recent decennial census, 1970 and 1980 educational attainment data are presented separately (Table 10) from 1990 data (Table 11).

These tables reveal a significant improvement in local educational attainment. Between 1970 and 1990, the proportion of residents whose highest level of attainment was one of the elementary grades (0-8), decreased by over half (44% v. 17%). The number who completed at least twelve years of formal classroom instruction increased from 34% to 63%. College attendance increased from 19% to 34%, while the proportion of residents with at least a bachelor's degree doubled from 8% to 16%.

Comparing Sumter County, all-inclusive, with its rural area (1990), the former has a larger proportion of residents who do not have a high school diploma (37% v. 34%). The incorporated areas have larger proportions of elderly and minority residents. Both sub-groups typically have lower educational attainment levels. Attainment in the various levels of post secondary education are quite similar, however.

The state has maintained a smaller proportion of residents lacking high school diplomas than Sumter County; consistently 8-9 percentage points lower. Unfortunately, this attainment level remains descriptive (1990) of large portions (29% and 37%) of the state and Sumter populations, respectively. The percentage of residents whose highest academic attainment was a high school diploma is similar at the local and state levels (29% and 30%, respectively). Cumulative participation in all levels of post-secondary education is seven percentage points higher at the state level (1990). Slightly higher local attainment at the graduate and professional level is attributed to personnel needed at Georgia Southwestern College and Sumter Regional Hospital. Both institutions depend on large numbers of workers with advanced degrees.



**TABLE 10**  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**  
**1970, 1980**

| GRADE LEVELS            | 1970   |         | 1980   |       |         |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|--------|-------|---------|
|                         | SUMTER | GEORGIA | SUMTER | RURAL | GEORGIA |
| Elementary School (0-8) | 44%    | 36%     | 30%    | 30%   | 24%     |
| High School (9-11)      | 23%    | 23%     | 23%    | 22%   | 20%     |
| High School (12)        | 15%    | 22%     | 21%    | 24%   | 28%     |
| College (1-3 years)     | 11%    | 9%      | 11%    | 11%   | 13%     |
| College (4 or more yrs) | 8%     | 9%      | 14%    | 13%   | 15%     |

Source: U. S. Census  
Residents 25 years of age or older (in 1970, 48% of total Sumter population)

**TABLE 11**  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**  
**1990**

| GRADE LEVELS                    | SUMTER | RURAL | RDC* | GEORGIA |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------|------|---------|
| Less than 9th Grade             | 17%    | 15%   | 20%  | 12%     |
| 9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma   | 20%    | 19%   | 23%  | 17%     |
| High School Graduate            | 29%    | 32%   | 31%  | 30%     |
| Some College, No Degree         | 14%    | 14%   | 12%  | 17%     |
| Associate Degree                | 4%     | 5%    | 3%   | 5%      |
| Bachelor's Degree               | 9%     | 9%    | 7%   | 13%     |
| Graduate or Professional Degree | 7%     | 5%    | 4%   | 6%      |

Source: U. S. Census  
Residents 25 years of age or older (in 1990, 58% of total Sumter population.)  
\*Eight member counties of the Middle Flint Regional Development Center: Crisp, Dooly, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, Taylor and Webster

In recent years the two local public school systems have, collectively, averaged approximately 100 high school dropouts annually. The combined dropout rate is 6.5%: 6.2% for Americus City Schools and 6.7% for Sumter County. Statewide the dropout rate is 5.5%<sup>1</sup>. Fourteen fewer dropouts would reduce the local rate to the recent state level.

**TABLE 12**  
**HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS**  
**COMBINED PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS**  
**1988-1992**

| YEAR ENDING | SUMTER      |         |     | AMERICUS    |         |     | TOTAL   |     | GA.     |
|-------------|-------------|---------|-----|-------------|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|
|             | Enrollment* | Dropout |     | Enrollment* | Dropout |     | Dropout |     | Dropout |
|             |             | #       | %   |             | #       | %   | #       | %   |         |
| 1988        | 484         | 22      | 4.5 | 959         | 49      | 5.1 | 71      | 4.9 | -       |
| 1989        | 523         | 44      | 8.4 | 877         | 41      | 4.7 | 85      | 6.1 | 5.6     |
| 1990        | 570         | 39      | 6.8 | 844         | 65      | 7.7 | 104     | 7.4 | 5.6     |
| 1991        | 621         | 37      | 6.0 | 842         | 73      | 8.7 | 110     | 7.5 | 5.3     |
| 1992        | 657         | 49      | 7.5 | 893         | 49      | 5.5 | 98      | 6.3 | N/A     |
| Average     | 571         | 38      | 6.7 | 883         | 55      | 6.2 | 94      | 6.5 | -       |

Source: Americus and Sumter County Boards of Education

Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism

\*Americus and Sumter enrollments are for grades 9-12. Georgia percentages are based on enrollments in grades 8-12.

The 1990 Census documented 1,974 Sumter County residents 16-19 years of age; 240 (12%) of whom were not enrolled in school and were not high school graduates. Forty percent of this latter number were not in the labor force, compared to 34% of the Sumter County adult population (16+ years of age). The unemployment rate among these teenage dropouts who were in the labor force was 43%. Among the adult population unemployment was 6.2%.

Presented in Table 13 are the average test scores of school students in the Americus and Sumter County school systems, and throughout the state. The scores presented are averages of the scores recorded for years 1986 - 1990, inclusive.

Students in the Americus system recorded generally higher test scores than students in the county system, especially at the first grade level. At this grade level Americus scores averaged approximately five points higher in both reading and math. Scores were very similar for third and sixth graders in the two systems with county scores slightly higher in some areas. Eighth grade students in the city system recorded math scores three points higher than students in the county system.

<sup>1</sup> Ratio of dropouts to enrollment in grades 8-12 throughout the state for years 1989-1991. Local ratios are based on enrollment in grades 9-12. Both local and state rates are exclusive of private schools.

**TABLE 13**

**STANDARD TEST SCORES  
CRITERION REFERENCED TEST SCORE AVERAGES  
1986 - 1990**

| TEST AREA | 1ST GRADE |        |        | 3RD GRADE |        |        | 6TH GRADE |        |        | 8TH GRADE* |        |        |
|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|
|           | Americus  | Sumter | State  | Americus  | Sumter | State  | Americus  | Sumter | State  | Americus   | Sumter | State  |
| Reading   | 210.42    | 205.67 | 213.28 | 208.79    | 209.07 | 214.75 | 201.79    | 201.83 | 207.41 | 204.94     | 204.46 | 209.44 |
| Math      | 210.08    | 204.84 | 213.93 | 205.40    | 203.86 | 210.76 | 199.29    | 199.78 | 205.92 | 210.33     | 207.18 | 213.41 |

Criterion-referenced tests measure students' performances on Georgia rated education scales. The score scale for grades 1, 3, 6, and 8 ranges from 100-300 with 200 the minimum passing score.

\* Data presented for eighth graders is the school system average for the years 1988, 1989 and 1990. Five years of data were not available for the Americus system. All other reported grades include years 1986 and 1987 for a five year average of students' performances.

Throughout this five year period students in the Sumter County school system scored consistently lower than their peers throughout the state, with their worst performance recorded at the first grade level. In general, county scores parallel those of the state in both reading and math, but approximately six points lower.

Table 14 reveals significant differences in the directions taken by graduates of the two public school systems within the first year of high school graduation. Based on the most recent five year average, slightly over half (52%) of Sumter County graduates elect not to continue their education; approximately one-quarter attend college while the balance are evenly divided between vocational/technical training and the military. Almost half (48%) of Americus graduates enroll in college. The balance of Americus graduates is relatively evenly divided between vocational/technical training, the military and those not continuing their formal education.

**TABLE 14**  
**CONTINUED EDUCATION OF GRADUATES**  
**COMBINED PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS**  
**1987-1991**

| High School Graduating Class | Graduates |          | College |          | Vocational/ Technical |          | Military |          | Not Continuing |          |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|
|                              | Sumter    | Americus | Sumter  | Americus | Sumter                | Americus | Sumter   | Americus | Sumter         | Americus |
| 1987                         | 104       | 219      | 22%     | 48%      | 25%                   | 17%      | 7%       | 16%      | 46%            | 19%      |
| 1988                         | 101       | 194      | 17%     | 49%      | 12%                   | 17%      | 24%      | 17%      | 47%            | 17%      |
| 1989                         | 92        | 205      | 24%     | 55%      | 4%                    | 16%      | 12%      | 13%      | 60%            | 16%      |
| 1990                         | 96        | 154      | 23%     | 53%      | 8%                    | 20%      | 12%      | 9%       | 57%            | 17%      |
| 1991                         | 117       | 207      | 30%     | 35%      | 10%                   | 24%      | 8%       | 13%      | 52%            | 28%      |
| 5 Year Average               | 102       | 196      | 23%     | 48%      | 12%                   | 19%      | 13%      | 14%      | 52%            | 19%      |
| Totals                       | 1,489     |          | 36%     |          | 14%                   |          | 12%      |          | 37%            |          |

Source: Sumter County and Americus City School Systems

**TABLE 15**

**INCOME  
1970 - 1990**

| <b>PER CAPITA</b>    | <b>1970</b> | <b>1975</b> | <b>1980</b> | <b>1985</b> | <b>1990</b> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Sumter               | \$2,058     | \$ 3,532    | \$5,005     | \$7,304     | \$9,600     |
| Georgia              | \$2,649     | \$ 4,525    | \$6,402     | \$10,017    | \$13,631    |
| <b>MEDIAN FAMILY</b> | <b>1970</b> | <b>1975</b> | <b>1980</b> | <b>1985</b> | <b>1990</b> |
| Sumter               | \$6,719     | \$10,776    | \$14,834    | \$20,255    | \$25,676    |
| Georgia              | \$8,167     | \$12,790    | \$17,414    | \$25,472    | \$33,529    |

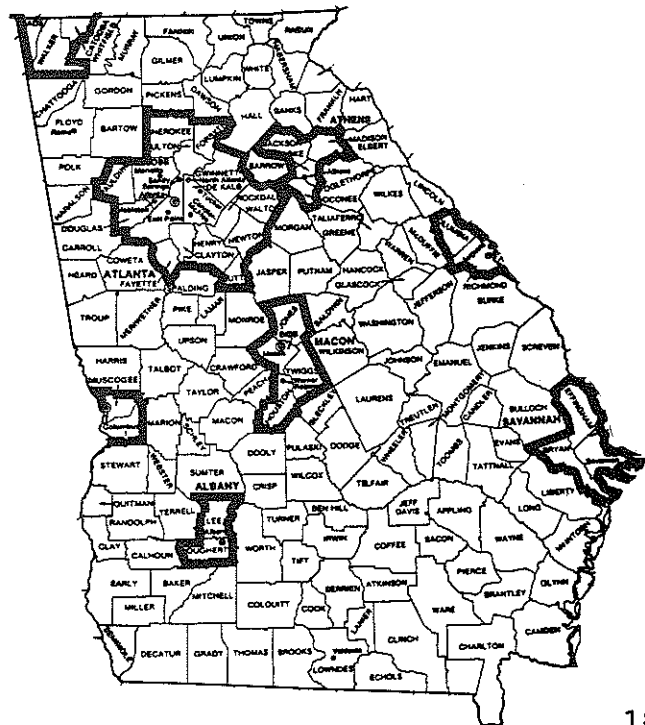
Unadjusted dollars

Source: U.S. Census, 1970,1980,1990

1975 and 1985 are straight-line estimates of Middle Flint RDC.

During the 1970-1990 period local income levels deteriorated in comparison with the state (Table 15). In 1970 and 1980, Sumter's per capita income was equivalent to 78% of the recorded state level. To maintain the same relative position in 1990, Sumter's per capita income needed to be \$1,000 higher than the documented level. In 1970 and 1980, local median family income was equivalent to 82% and 85%, respectively, of state levels. To maintain the 85% level in 1990, the county's median family income needed to be \$2,800 higher than the documented level. The 1990 Census reported U.S. per capita income to be \$14,420; median family income - \$35,225. These incomes are 5% - 6% higher than state levels for the same period.

The stronger increase in incomes recorded at the state level were driven by economic activity in the thirty-six metropolitan counties (Metropolitan Statistical Areas as defined in the 1980 Census and highlighted in graphic at right). The U. S. Department of Commerce reported that during the 1980s Sumter's per capita income ranged between 99% and 101% of the average per capita income of Georgia's 123 non-metropolitan counties. Local income fluctuated between 80% and 83% of state-wide per capita income during the same period (Table 16).



**TABLE 16**

**PER CAPITA INCOME  
1981-1989**

|                    | 1981    | 1982    | 1983     | 1984     | 1985     | 1986     | 1987     | 1988     | 1989     |
|--------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Sumter             | \$7,736 | \$8,021 | \$8,620  | \$9,716  | \$10,187 | \$10,740 | \$11,389 | \$12,380 | \$13,260 |
| Non-Metro Counties | \$7,637 | \$8,048 | \$8,665  | \$9,630  | \$10,122 | \$10,853 | \$11,533 | \$12,358 | \$13,146 |
| Georgia            | \$9,360 | \$9,968 | \$10,672 | \$11,793 | \$12,629 | \$13,451 | \$14,320 | \$15,268 | \$16,050 |

Incomes are in current dollars.

Source: Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Table 17 reveals Sumter County has a disproportionately large segment (15%) of households concentrated in the lowest of income levels. A household with \$5,000 annual cash income and 3.8 persons (the county average in 1990 was 2.8, but low income households characteristically have more members) had approximately \$3.60 with which to provide daily needs of each household member - food, shelter, clothing, utilities, etc. According to the 1990 Census, Sumter County had over 1,500 households subsisting at this level. Thirty percent of local households had 1989 incomes of less than \$10,000. Statewide, 17% fell into this income category. Twenty-five percent of Sumter residents, 15% of state residents, and 13% of the resident U.S. population lived below the 1989 national poverty level of \$12,674.

**TABLE 17**

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION  
1990**

| INCOME              | SUMTER COUNTY   |    | GEORGIA         |
|---------------------|-----------------|----|-----------------|
|                     | HOUSEHOLDS      | %  | %               |
| Less than \$ 5,000  | 1,538           | 15 | 8               |
| \$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999 | 1,347           | 15 | 9               |
| \$10,000 - \$14,999 | 977             | 9  | 9               |
| \$15,000 - \$24,999 | 2,136           | 20 | 18              |
| \$25,000 - \$34,999 | 1,534           | 15 | 16              |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999 | 1,435           | 14 | 18              |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 1,064           | 10 | 14              |
| \$75,000 - \$99,999 | 290             | 3  | 5               |
| \$100,000 or more   | 140             | 2  | 4               |
| <b>MEDIAN</b>       | <b>\$20,957</b> |    | <b>\$29,021</b> |

Source: U.S. Census (1989 income in current dollars)

Percentages do not total 100 due to separate rounding.

Shaded areas depict distribution of median household income in both jurisdictions.

## HOUSING

An inventory and assessment of a community's housing stock provides a foundation upon which to base projections of future housing needs. The use of these projections can be used to help ensure an adequate supply of housing for all residents. This section examines the number, type, location and cost of the existing housing stock and provides an assessment of housing conditions and future housing needs.

## HOUSING

The 1990 Census credited Sumter County, all-inclusive, with an increase of 3,303 (39%) housing units over the 1970 total. Single family housing accounted for 26%, multi-family 24%, and manufactured housing (predominantly mobile homes) 50% of the additional housing units. The increase in mobile homes has been at the expense of "conventional" single family housing. While manufactured housing tripled in proportionate share of total housing, from 6% to 18%, single family housing decreased from 78% to 64% of total housing. Between 1980 and 1990, manufactured housing recorded similar rates of increase at the county (112%) and state (114%) levels, while there was only a 60% increase nationwide. Multi-family housing increased from 16% to 18% of the countywide total over the twenty year period.

**TABLE 1**  
**SUMTER COUNTY HOUSING INVENTORY**  
**1970 - 1990**

|                           | 1970  | 1980   | 1990   | % CHANGE<br>1970-1980 | % CHANGE<br>1980-1990 | % CHANGE<br>1970-1990 |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Housing Units       | 8,423 | 10,066 | 11,726 | 19%                   | 16%                   | 39%                   |
| Occupied                  | 7,613 | 9,465  | 10,484 | 24%                   | 11%                   | 38%                   |
| Owner                     | 4,336 | 6,022  | 6,719  | 39%                   | 12%                   | 55%                   |
| Black                     | 1,147 | 1,838  | 2,311  | 60%                   | 26%                   | 101%                  |
| White                     | 3,189 | 4,150  | 4,383  | 30%                   | 6%                    | 37%                   |
| Renter                    | 3,277 | 3,443  | 3,765  | 5%                    | 9%                    | 15%                   |
| Black                     | 1,818 | 1,820  | 2,088  | .1%                   | 15%                   | 15%                   |
| White                     | 1,459 | 1,602  | 1,644  | 10%                   | 3%                    | 13%                   |
| Vacant                    | 810   | 601    | 1,242  | -26%                  | 107%                  | 53%                   |
| For Rent                  | 230   | 194    | 388    | -16%                  | 100%                  | 69%                   |
| Single Family             | 6,598 | 7,282  | 7,453  | 10%                   | 2%                    | 13%                   |
| Multi-Family              | 1,331 | 1,773  | 2,126  | 33%                   | 20%                   | 60%                   |
| Manufactured Housing*     | 494   | 1,011  | 2,147  | 105%                  | 112%                  | 335%                  |
| Lacking Complete Plumbing |       |        |        |                       |                       |                       |
| Sumter                    | 29%   | 9%     | 2%     | -                     | -                     | -                     |
| Georgia                   | 13%   | 4%     | 1%     | -                     | -                     | -                     |

Source: U. S. Census - Sumter County all-inclusive

\* Predominantly mobile homes

"Other" races included in owner and renter totals

Occupied housing increased by 2,871 (38%) with homeowners accounting for the vast majority (83%) of the increase. Blacks and whites shared equally in the increase in homeownership while blacks accounted for 55% of the increase in rental housing. Local homeownership constituted



64% of occupied housing in 1980 and 1990, up significantly from 57% in 1970. Statewide, homeownership was 61%, 65% and 65% in 1970, 1980 and 1990, respectively.

Although not reflected in the accompanying table, the most recent decennial census recorded lower vacancy rates in Sumter County than throughout the state. Owner rates were Sumter - 1.4% and state - 2.5%; renter vacancy rates were documented at 9.3% and 12.2%, respectively.

The absence of complete plumbing facilities is sometimes considered an indicator of housing condition. Data presented in Table 1 reveals the local rate of units lacking complete plumbing facilities has been approximately twice that recorded at the state level. More detailed local housing condition data is presented later in this chapter.

Rural Sumter County recorded an increase of 1,870 housing units over the twenty year period, 57% of the countywide increase (Table 2). Occupied units increased by 1,710, 60% of the countywide total. This increase in occupied housing is credited to owner-occupied units because the number of rental units reportedly decreased by 81 (8%) over the two decades. Whites comprised 63% of the increase in homeownership. Black-occupied rental units decreased in number by 209 (-36%) while rental units with white occupants increased by 113 (29%).

**TABLE 2**  
**RURAL HOUSING INVENTORY**  
**1970 - 1990**

|                          | 1970  | 1980  | 1990  | % CHANGE<br>1970-1980 | % CHANGE<br>1980-1990 | % CHANGE<br>1970-1990 |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Housing Units      | 2,884 | 3,842 | 4,754 | 33%                   | 24%                   | 65%                   |
| Occupied                 | 2,383 | 3,532 | 4,093 | 48%                   | 16%                   | 72%                   |
| Owner                    | 1,416 | 2,559 | 3,207 | 81%                   | 25%                   | 126%                  |
| Black                    | 258   | 680   | 895   | 164%                  | 32%                   | 247%                  |
| White                    | 1,158 | 1,853 | 2,294 | 60%                   | 24%                   | 98%                   |
| Renter                   | 967   | 973   | 886   | 1%                    | -9%                   | -8%                   |
| Black                    | 576   | 541   | 367   | -6%                   | -32%                  | -36%                  |
| White                    | 391   | 419   | 504   | 7%                    | 20%                   | 29%                   |
| Vacant                   | 503   | 310   | 661   | -38%                  | 113%                  | 31%                   |
| For Rent                 | 50    | 56    | 129   | 12%                   | 130%                  | 158%                  |
| Single Family            | 2,456 | 2,813 | 3,038 | 15%                   | 8%                    | 24%                   |
| Multi-Family             | 41    | 204   | 127   | 398%                  | -38%                  | 210%                  |
| Manufactured<br>Housing* | 387   | 825   | 1,589 | 113%                  | 93%                   | 311%                  |

Source: U. S. Census

\* Predominantly mobile homes

Of the 1,870 units added to the rural housing inventory over these two decades, 31% were "conventional" single family, 5% were multi-family and 64% were manufactured housing. Seventy-three percent of the county's increase in manufactured housing units is credited to the unincorporated area, and 64% of the increase in (rural) manufactured housing was documented during the 1980s. Manufactured housing increased from 13% to 33% of total rural housing units. As was the case countywide, this increase was at the expense of "conventional" single family housing which decreased from 85% to 64% of total housing units.

There is a strong preference among Sumter's rural population for single family housing, intended here to include manufactured housing. This apparent preference is probably influenced, at least in part, by the relative absence of modern, conveniently located, multi-family housing developments. There is a perceived need for such housing to serve the needs of low and middle income families. If alternative housing choices, such as multi-family, are not made available, reliance on manufactured housing will continue to increase unabated. In light of low income levels, the driving force in housing choice will be affordability.

In June and July of 1992, the unincorporated area of Sumter County was surveyed to assess the condition of housing. Performed by a two-person team after thorough study of the classification system, the survey consisted of a visual evaluation of the exterior condition of each dwelling from the public right-of-way, and notation of structure location and condition on a county tax map. The following four-category classification system was used:

**STANDARD HOUSING** - dwelling units that exhibit no deficiencies and require no repair. Housing units in this classification represent well-maintained units.

**DETERIORATED - MINOR REPAIR** - dwelling units that have several minor deficiencies that are corrected in the course of regular upkeep and maintenance. Deficiencies in this class include: need for exterior repainting; repair of gutters and downspouts; and minor repair work on windows, doors, eaves, and trim.

**DETERIORATED - MAJOR REPAIR** - dwelling units which have deficiencies which, through continued neglect, may lead to total deterioration of the structure. These deficiencies are normally a major expense and require the services of a contractor rather than being done by the homeowner. Deficiencies in this class include: structural deterioration of the roof, foundation, or porch; the repainting of exterior walls over raw wood; and the repair of walls, windows, and doors that are out-of-square due to structural problems.

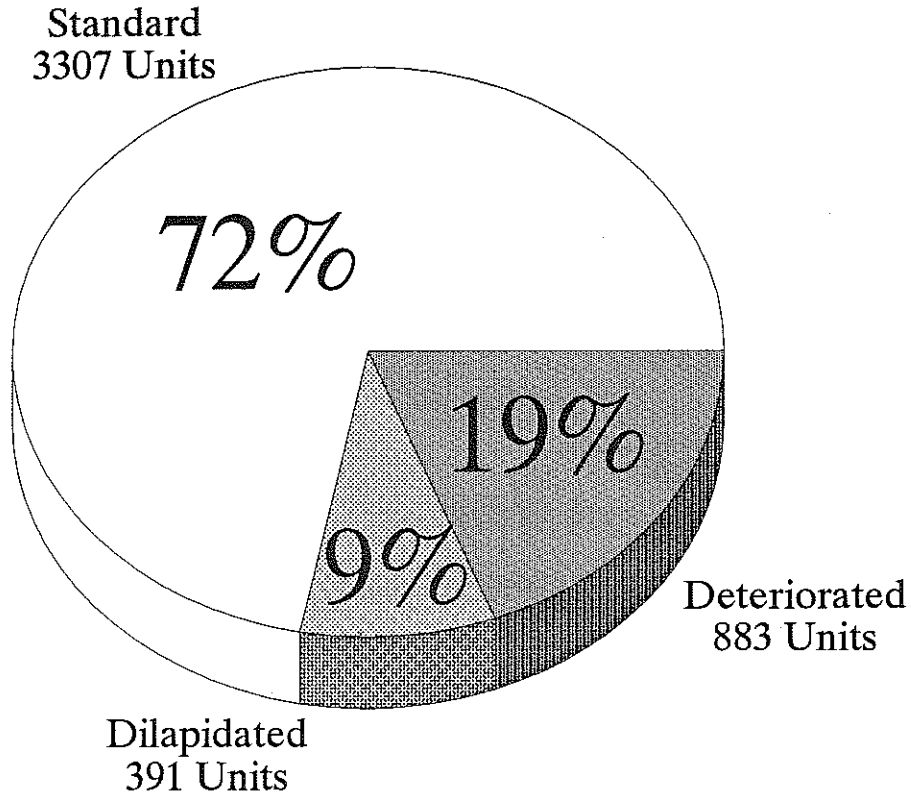
**DILAPIDATED HOUSING** - dwelling units which have a combination of major deficiencies that make the dwelling unsafe and unfit for occupancy. Generally, the cost of repair is too high to make rehabilitation of the structure economically feasible.

Conditions of the 4,581 rural, residential structures surveyed are presented in the following graphic.<sup>1</sup> There is no historic data available for comparison.

---

<sup>1</sup> The reader may note a discrepancy between this total housing unit count and that presented in the preceding table for 1990. This 4% discrepancy is attributed to the use of different sources.

**TABLE 3**  
**RURAL HOUSING CONDITIONS**  
**1992**



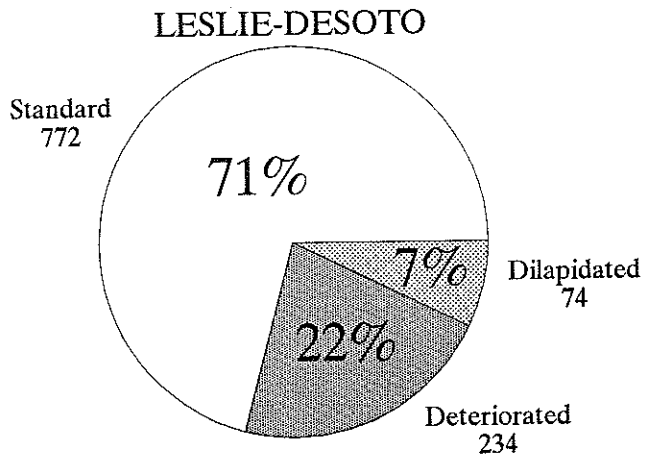
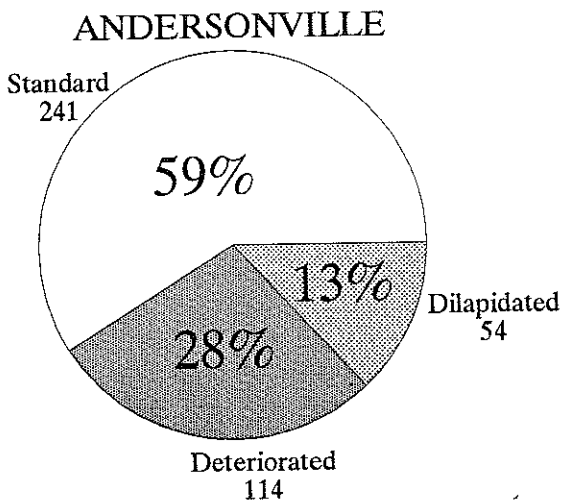
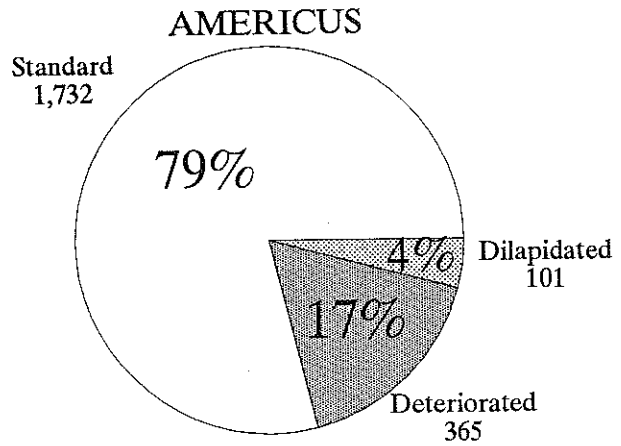
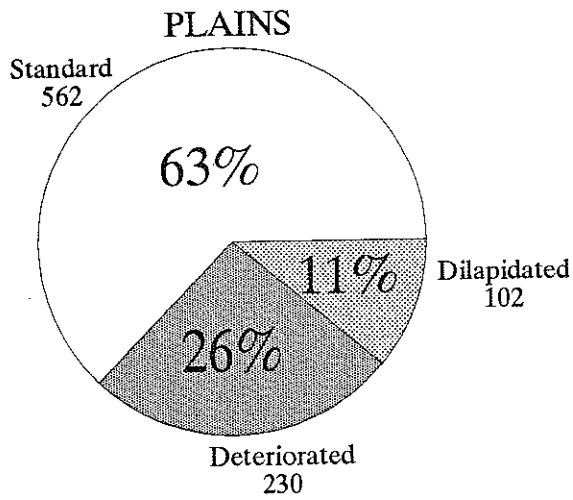
Source: Middle Flint RDC

The Standard category included 1,224 units with minor deficiencies (deteriorated-minor repair, see definitions on preceding page) correctable with relatively small, but prompt, cash outlays. Many of these could be considered maintenance items, while strict interpretation of the housing code would result in reclassification and a 45% standard housing rate. These latter units needed prompt attention before their condition deteriorated further requiring more costly, corrective action.

Field survey data was also compiled to reveal housing conditions within each of the four county census divisions. The following information is based on the same assessment represented in the preceding graphic.

*Sumter County*

**TABLE 4**  
**HOUSING CONDITIONS**  
**BY RURAL CENSUS DIVISION**  
**1992**

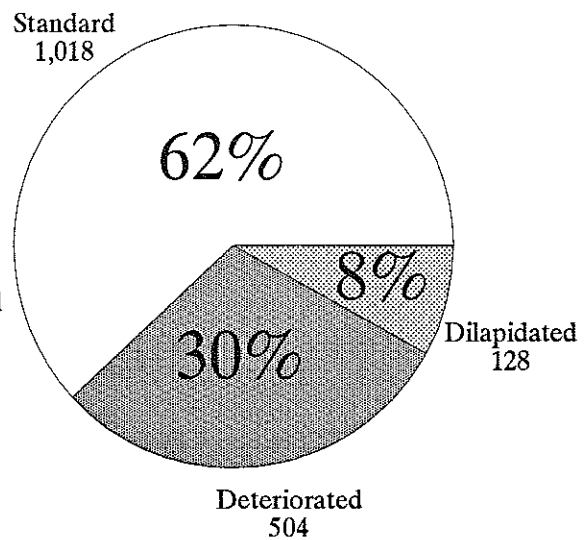
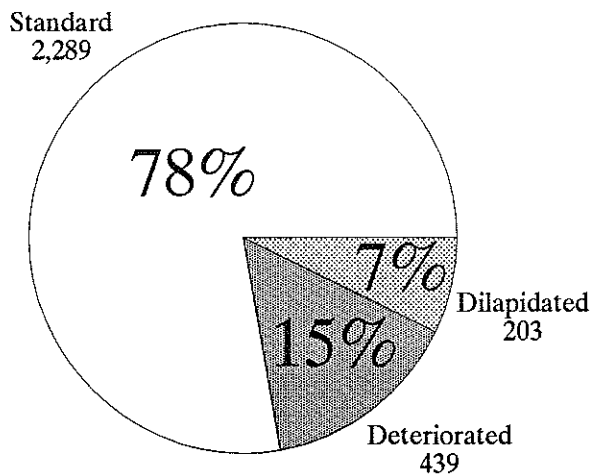


Housing conditions were also compiled on the basis of construction type, i.e., conventional (site-built) and manufactured housing (predominantly mobile homes) and are presented in Table 5. Manufactured units recorded a higher substandard rate (deteriorated and dilapidated) than did site-built housing (38% v. 22%, respectively). Although not revealed in the accompanying table, manufactured housing does not fare well under a strict interpretation of the housing code (refer to narrative on page 23). The strict assessment yielded a 15% standard and 78% deteriorated rate for manufactured housing. Conventionally constructed (site-built) housing recorded strict assessments of 62% standard and 30% deteriorated. Rates of dilapidated housing were similar; 7% of site-built and 8% of manufactured housing units.

**TABLE 5**  
**HOUSING CONDITIONS BY CONSTRUCTION TYPE**  
**RURAL SUMTER COUNTY**  
**1992**

**SITE-BUILT**

**MANUFACTURED**



Sumter County's median contract (cash) rent in 1970 was reportedly \$33, meaning half of the renters throughout the county paid more, and half paid less than said amount; equivalent to 51% of the rent paid across the state. At the time of subsequent censuses local median rent was equivalent to 58% and 55%, respectively, of state levels. Expressed as a percentage of annual median family income (see page 18), annual cash rent increased approximately one percentage point each decade at the county and state levels. Locally, the percentage increased from 6% in 1970 to 9% in 1990. Statewide the increase was from 10% to 12%. Thirty-six percent of Sumter County families, and 22% of Sumter's rural families, were renter households in 1990 (see Tables 1 and 2, respectively).

**TABLE 6**  
**HOUSING COSTS**  
**1970, 1980, 1990**

|          | MEDIAN CONTRACT RENT |       |       | MEDIAN VALUE OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING |          |          |
|----------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|
|          | 1970                 | 1980  | 1990  | 1970                                | 1980     | 1990     |
| Sumter   | \$33                 | \$ 89 | \$189 | \$11,900                            | \$31,600 | \$45,300 |
| Americus | \$36                 | \$ 92 | \$192 | \$12,400                            | \$30,900 | \$44,000 |
| Georgia  | \$65                 | \$153 | \$344 | \$14,600                            | \$36,900 | \$71,300 |

Source: U. S. Census

Median value of owner-occupied housing as published in the census is based on estimates of owners who responded to the decennial survey. Despite a 281% increase in cost (unadjusted dollars) 1970 - 1990, local value decreased as a percentage of statewide value from 82% to 64%. Unlike rental costs, there were significant shifts in the ratio of housing value to median family income. In 1970 and 1990 the local median value of owner-occupied housing was equivalent to 176% of Sumter County's median family income; but, the 1980 Census recorded a value to income of 213%. The state ratios were virtually identical to those documented at the local level in 1970 and 1980. However, the state maintained the 213% ratio in 1990 while the Sumter ratio returned to its 1970 level. No explanation for the significant local fluctuation has been determined. Increases in the number of local housing units were almost identical during both decades. The greater increase in MFI occurred in the 70s while the greater increase in value was experienced in the 80s.

Georgia's rate of population growth has been among the ten fastest in the nation (1980 - 1990). This growth, in conjunction with the trend toward smaller size households, has placed increasing demand on housing in metropolitan and suburban areas. This market demand has resulted in increasing construction costs and higher resale values causing a faster rate of appreciation in statewide housing values than has been experienced in rural communities such as Sumter.

Between 1970 and 1990 Sumter County recorded a drastic reduction in the median age of housing. At the time of the 1970 Census the median age was reportedly 27 years, compared to the state median of 18 years. By the time of the '80 Census median ages were almost identical, 18 and 17, respectively. Median ages were documented at 20 and 18, respectively, in the 1990 Census.

**TABLE 7**  
**AGE OF HOUSING**  
**1990**

| <b>YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION</b> | <b>SUMTER</b> |     | <b>RURAL</b> |     | <b>GEORGIA</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-----|--------------|-----|----------------|
| 1980 - March 1990           | 3,085         | 26% | 1,641        | 35% | 32%            |
| 1970 - 1979                 | 3,146         | 27% | 1,474        | 31% | 24%            |
| 1960 - 1969                 | 1,704         | 15% | 707          | 15% | 17%            |
| 1950 - 1959                 | 1,596         | 14% | 409          | 9%  | 12%            |
| 1940 - 1949                 | 665           | 6%  | 152          | 3%  | 6%             |
| Before 1940                 | 1,530         | 13% | 371          | 8%  | 8%             |

Source: U.S. Census

In 1980 and 1990 the county's unincorporated area recorded median ages of 14 and 16, respectively. This low median age was driven by the surge in manufactured housing, a relatively recent type of housing development, and "conventional" residential development pressures which found relief just beyond the perimeter of the Americus corporate limits.

Sumter County maintains a significantly larger proportion of housing a half century old or older; 13% vs. 8% for the state. Many of these structures are located in an existing historic preservation district and a potential historic district in Americus.

Presented in Table 8 is the rural area's projected demand for housing through the year 2015. The demand countywide is not projected because any effort to impact housing in the incorporated areas will most probably be initiated by the appropriate city government. In addition, annexation by the City of Americus would affect rural housing demand.

**TABLE 8**  
**FUTURE HOUSING DEMAND**  
**RURAL SUMTER COUNTY**  
**1990 - 2015**

| YEAR | PROJECTED POPULATION | TOTAL HOUSING DEMAND | UNITS OF CHANGE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1990 | 12,020               | 4,754                | -               |
| 1995 | 12,777               | 5,098                | 344             |
| 2000 | 13,534               | 5,400                | 302             |
| 2005 | 13,924               | 5,762                | 362             |
| 2010 | 14,314               | 6,150                | 388             |
| 2015 | 14,729               | 6,582                | 432             |

Source: Middle Flint RDC

The housing demand was projected as follows. The projected rural population was reduced by 2% to account for the unincorporated population which does not reside in households. Throughout Sumter the rate is 5%, but the correctional institute is the only "institution" in the rural area housing this segment of the population. The adjusted population was divided by the projected average household size yielding an occupied housing sub-total. This sub-total was then increased by 14%, the historic vacancy rate for the rural area of the county. These projections indicate an annual average increase of 65 housing units during the last decade of this century, and 75 housing units during the first decade of the next century.



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The quality and availability of community facilities and services, both publicly and privately operated, are critical to attracting and maintaining residential, commercial and industrial development. As a result, planning for the expansion and improvement of community facilities is an important element of the comprehensive planning process. The following section provides a description of existing community facilities and services in Sumter County.

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## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### TRANSPORTATION

Sumter County is crisscrossed by 787 miles of roads, 75% of which are paved. This inventory of roads is presented below in three categories: state routes, county roads, and city streets.

| TYPE ROUTE  | PAVED MILEAGE | UNPAVED MILEAGE | TOTAL MILEAGE |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| State Route | 168.94        | 0               | 168.94        |
| County Road | 330.60        | 196.05          | 526.65        |
| City Street | 89.17         | 1.99            | 91.16         |
| Total       | 588.71        | 198.04          | 786.75        |

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation DPP441-DIS; 12/31/91

The Public Works department is comprised of twelve full-time employees whose primary responsibility is maintenance of a 526 mile network of (primarily) county roadways, some of which extend into the Cities of Andersonville, DeSoto, Leslie and Plains. Thirty-seven percent of this mileage is unpaved.

More specifically, the department maintains dirt roadbeds, repairs potholes in paved county routes, and prepares county roadbeds for contract paving. Mechanized equipment and inmate labor from the Sumter County Correctional Institute are utilized to maintain drainage channels, and control vegetative growth around highway signs and culverts within public rights-of-way. Four inmate road crews from the correctional institute, comprised of 8-10 men guarded by one correctional officer, are used year round. After successful test trials in 1992, the county is now treating the county's grassed rights-of-way twice each summer with a growth retardant which reduces significantly the cost of roadway maintenance.

The department assists the county's small jurisdictions with roadway projects which are beyond their capabilities, e.g. installing drainage pipe, patching potholes, but these communities mow street shoulders within their respective jurisdictions.

Repair and replacement of the county's wooden bridges and repair of concrete bridges also fall within the responsibility of the department. The Georgia Department of Transportation replaces concrete bridges as needed.

The county plans road projects one year at the time. For calendar year 1994 approximately eight miles of paving improvements are proposed for at least portions of Small Piece Road, Brady Road, Five Points Road and Beauchamp Road.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has five projects scheduled for the period 1994 - 1995: (1) Reconstruct and widen from two lanes to three S.R. 27 from U.S. 280 to east of Southland Drive in 1994, (2) Minor widening and resurfacing along S.R. 27 from Southland Drive to S.R. 195 in 1994, (3) Reconstruct and widen from two to four lanes U.S. 280 from Felder Street to Sun Valley Drive in 1995, (4) Relocate entrance road to Andersonville National Historic Site from Sumter County to Macon County in 1995, (5) Construct two lane route (Americus north by-pass) between U.S. 19 and Southerfield Road in 1996.

The state also has the following projects planned for Sumter's rural area in 1997 and beyond: (1) rehabilitation of the existing bridge at the intersection of U.S. 19 and the Georgia Southwestern Railroad from two lanes to four, (2) rehabilitation of the bridge at Muckaloochee Creek on U.S. 19 from two lanes to four, (3) rehabilitation of the bridge at Bear Branch on U.S. 19 from two lanes to four, (4) addition of passing lane on U.S. 280 west of Americus.

The Public Works department has an inventory of 45 motorized vehicles for use in maintaining county roads. None of this equipment is on a replacement schedule. All of it is maintained and repaired by a shop mechanic with assistance from two inmates of the Sumter County Correctional Institute. Although the county has in previous years leased some equipment, the local custom is to purchase out-right heavy equipment and road vehicles. Replacement is governed primarily by funding availability.

An inventory (as of 12/8/93) of departmental equipment with acquisition costs of \$5,000 or higher is presented below:

|                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1993 FORD F-SUPERDUTY 1 1/2T     | 1986 HESSTON TRACTOR W/MOWER          |
| 1993 FORD DUMP TRUCK (2)         | 1986 CHEV. 1 TON                      |
| 1993 FORD F-150 PICK UP          | 1984 JOHN DEERE 644C LOADER           |
| 1993 INTERNATIONAL SERVICE TRUCK | 1984 JOHN DEERE 410 LOAD/BACK         |
| 1992 FORD F-SUPERDUTY PICK UP    | 1984 FORD 1/2 TON PICK UP             |
| 1992 FORD F-150 1/2 TON PICK UP  | 1983 FORD F600 2 1/2 TON TRUCK        |
| 1992 JOHN DEERE CRAWLER/LOADER   | 1983 ALLIS CHL. TRACTOR 6080          |
| 1991 FORD TRACTOR                | 1981 GALION GRADER W/SLOPER/TOWGRADER |
| 1991 CAS-INT. TRACTOR            | 1981 JOHN DEERE 670 MOTOR GRADER      |
| 1991 INT. MDL 4600               | 1981 CHEVROLET 1 TON TRUCK            |
| 1990 WOODCHUCK CHIPPER           | 1979 INTL. DUMP TRUCK                 |
| 1990 INT. TRACTOR 8100           | 1978 CAT. MOTOR GRADER W/TOWGRADER    |
| 1990 HESSTON TRACTOR             | 1978 CAT. MOTOR GRADER W/BUSH CUTTER  |
| 1990 CHEV. CAPRICE-4 DOOR        | 1978 DODGE 3/4 TON PICK UP            |
| 1989 CASE IH TRACTOR W/MOWER     | 1976 CHAUSSEE TPD-255                 |
| 1989 HESSTON TRACTOR             | 1973 CHEVROLET TRACTOR                |
| 1989 WALLACE LOWBOY              | 1968 GALION ROLLER                    |
| 1989 CAT. MRE. GRADER            | 1967 FORD 5000 TRACTOR                |
| 1988 INT. DUMP TRUCK             | 1956 FORD TRACTOR 640                 |
| 1987 INT. DUMP TRUCK (2)         | 1953 INTERNATIONAL TRACTOR-TRAILER    |
| 1987 BELSHE T8-2AP TRAILER       | LOW BOY-BIRMINGHAM                    |
| 1986 INTL. DUMP TRUCK (2)        | DROTT EXCAVATOR 40 YD.                |

There are two railroad systems serving Sumter County. Georgia Southwestern Railroad (GSWR) is an independent rail line established in 1989 with purchase of abandoned track from CSX Railroad. GSWR is the largest (254 miles) of the three divisions which collectively comprise the South Carolina Central Railroad (378 miles). On average, one train a day transports freight across 34 miles of track traversing the county from Lake Blackshear through Americus and Plains. The railroad presently services five customers in the county; one receives freight by rail and the other four ship by rail.

The Norfolk-Southern Rail Line owns and operates 28 miles of track running north-south. North of Americus this line branches into two separate routes; one running to Columbus and one to Macon. The Macon route accounts for the majority of the annual freight volume (approximately twelve gross ton-miles per mile) transported through the county. Norfolk-Southern presently has a customer base of eight industries. Of the total freight volume (both railroads) in Sumter County, approximately half originates with local industry and half is destined for local customers.

Souther Field is a general aviation airport located on a 279 acre tract northeast of the City of Americus, 466 feet above sea level. This facility is one of Georgia's 103 publicly-owned airports. Originally established as a flight training base for World War I Army Air Corps pilots, the facility was deeded to the Sumter County Board of Commissioners in 1930. Presently, the facility is managed by a fixed base operator under the direction of a five member airport authority.

The airport has two runways, 3787 linear feet (LF), and 5021 LF, hangars for two corporate and ten small aircraft, and thirty tie-down spaces. Only forty-three of the state's publicly-owned airports have runways of 5,000 L.F. or longer. Two multi-engine and twenty-one single-engine aircraft are locally based. General aviation fuel and jet fuel are available and flight lessons are offered. The 4,000 square feet terminal was built in 1991 and is staffed during most daylight hours. Take-offs and landings, collectively, average approximately 30,000 per year. Taxiway improvements near the terminal totalling \$58,000 (5% local cash) were completed in 1993. Souther Field has the distinction of being the site of Charles Lindbergh's first solo flight in 1923.

In the late 1970s the Coastal Plains Regional Commission funded a demonstration grant intended to determine the feasibility of commuter air service at Souther Field. For a twelve month period flight operations of Air South were subsidized by program funds in an effort to determine whether local demand was sufficient for a private carrier to include the local airport on a commuter route. During the test period use of the service never reached the level necessary to maintain operations.

The Georgia Statewide Aviation System Plan, being prepared by the Georgia Department of Transportation at the same time as the county's current planning effort, identified airports which, by the year 2012, would have associated air travel passenger originations projections that could support scheduled commercial service. Sumter and nine surrounding counties were identified

as one of five potential market areas for scheduled commercial service.

It was assumed that a minimum of 20,000 annual enplanements would be required for such service. Souther Field projections indicated 22,925 potential enplanements, second lowest of the five market areas investigated. Local site enhancements necessary to provide commercial service would include runway extension, additional taxiway, apron expansion, electronic flight aids, lighting, larger terminal, additional parking, access road and 110 additional acres. Estimated cost of enhancements totaled \$5 million, second highest of the five sites considered.

The referenced Plan also suggests that redistribution of demand to the new service locations would result in a diminished market for the larger airports currently competing in each of the five market areas. According to estimates for 1992, of the 10,233 commercial passengers from Sumter County, 40% boarded airplanes in Columbus and 60% flew out of Atlanta. Therefore, as demand is assigned to accommodate new points of service, ground access patterns to the aviation system would change. This change will be the result of varying volumes of people driving to both the old and the new service points to access the state's commercial airport system.

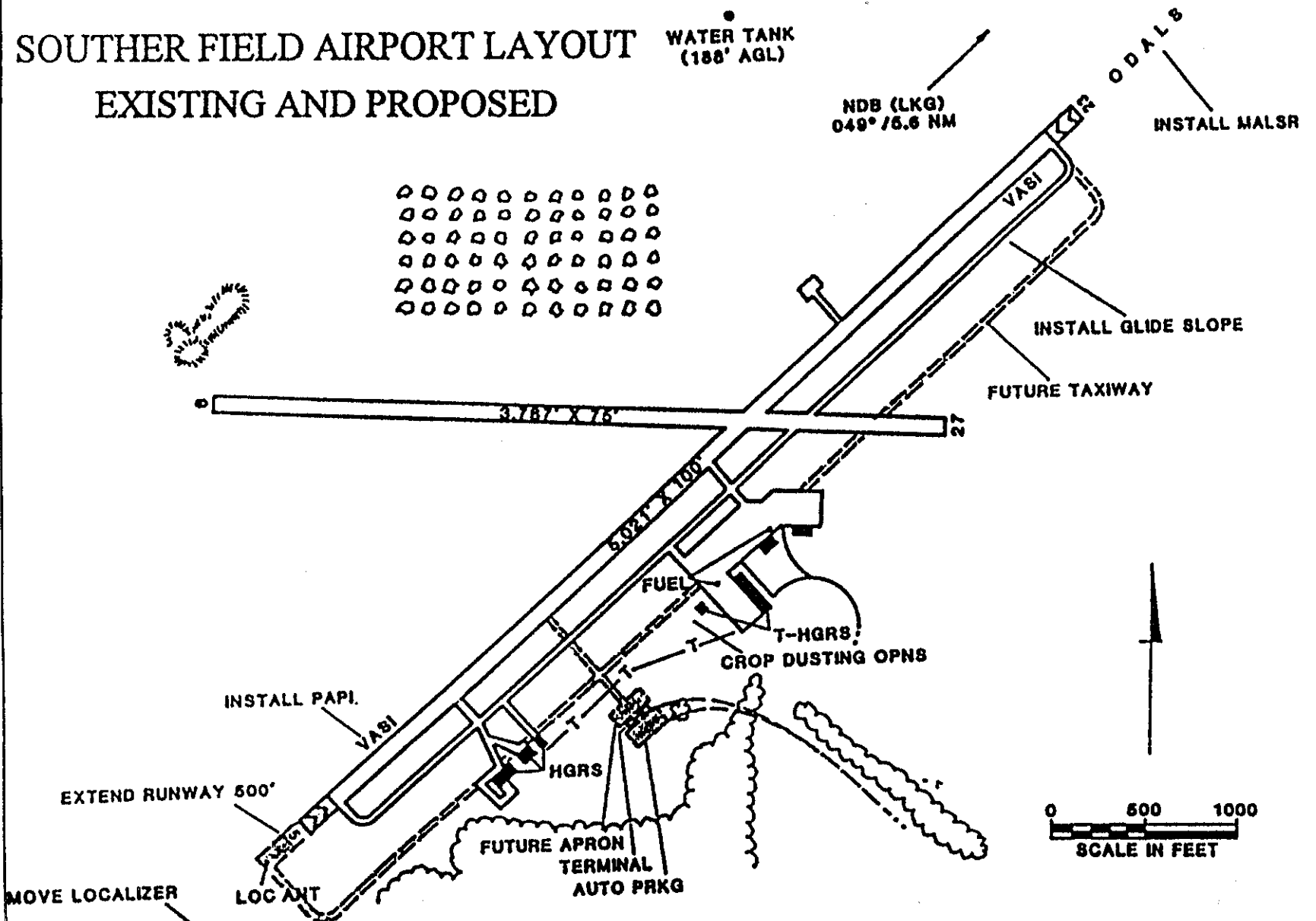
A new market area for the counties contiguous to Sumter County will result in fewer air travel consumers driving long distances to Columbus and Atlanta. New air service via Americus could effectively serve a modestly sized market area, changing the travel patterns required to access the airport system for the new market. User/Access costs with new commercial service at Americus would generate an estimated system saving of \$3,165,000. This savings is the direct result of fewer air travel consumers driving outside of their local market area to access the state's commercial airport system. Only one of the five potential market areas studied generated a higher (by \$218,000) projected system savings.<sup>1</sup>

Inter-city bus service is provided by Greyhound. Six buses, with an average seating capacity of 45 passengers, pass through Sumter County every twenty-four hours. Three of the vehicles are northbound to Atlanta traveling along U.S. 19 or I-75. All three southbound buses travel through Albany to Tallahassee. Local ridership has been relatively steady over the past 2 - 3 years (1991 - 1993) with approximately 60% of local traffic northbound. The station also provides package express service and Western Union wire transfer. The station has one full-time employee.

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<sup>1</sup> Georgia Statewide Aviation System Plan, Draft

# SOUTHER FIELD AIRPORT LAYOUT EXISTING AND PROPOSED



Source: Georgia Statewide Aviation System Plan

**Assessment:** Compared to Georgia's other 158 counties, Sumter has a good system of highways. Of the 526 miles of county roads (in the unincorporated area, exclusive of city, state, and federal routes), 63% are paved. Across Georgia, 57% of the county road network is paved. Countywide, the paved percentage is 75% compared to 68% throughout Georgia. This is even more impressive when one considers there are only 29 Georgia counties with a larger land area.

Sumter County has not only applied locally generated revenue to road development, but has maintained a good working relationship with the Georgia Department of Transportation making it possible to achieve such a highly developed transportation network. Confronted with increasing costs of paving, and decreasing levels of state road assistance, the Public Works Department recently returned to the earlier practice of preparing roadbeds for paving by private contractors. By using heavy construction equipment already in the county's inventory to prepare roadbeds, the contract price is reduced, freeing more tax dollars for paving local roads.

At current work levels the Director of Public Works expresses satisfaction with the quality and quantity of equipment in the department's inventory, and with the current staffing level. It must be noted, however, that the labor of this small department is supplemented, both on county roadways and in the county shop, by inmates of the correctional institution.

Over the past thirty years railroads have abandoned 950 miles of trackage in Georgia because they were unprofitable for the owner. A similar amount was acquired/leased by shortline railroads before being abandoned by the large railroads. Shortline operations are often an intermediate step to abandonment because trackage profitability is often more a function of line location than ownership/management.

An evaluation of Georgia's rail system performed for the Georgia Department of Transportation suggests many of these light density lines will no longer exist after the turn of the century. The evaluation stated further that the costs to Georgia's economy of abandoning some of these lines would be greater than the cost of providing public assistance at a level which would help maintain operation of the line.

According to the Department of Transportation, the 121 miles of Georgia Southwestern Railroad between Columbus and Rochelle was among 544 miles of the state's light density trackage where expenditure of public funds for rehabilitation of rail could be justified. Approximately 25% of GSWR track is in Sumter County. In closing, the evaluation stated "acquisition of selected rail lines will assure the long-term preservation of the essential rail system for the State and the continuation of vital transportation services to Georgia communities." The GSWR trackage referenced above was included among the "selected rail lines" identified for acquisition.

In consideration of the local tax dollars invested in economic development, it is imperative the community pursue appropriate actions to maintain at least the current level of rail service. While it is encouraging to see the state recognize the economic value of this particular shortline railroad, providing the incentive necessary to maintain private sector operation is preferable to public subsidization. Americus and Sumter County must maintain diligence in expanding the

manufacturing base, and especially east-west rail useage. An important ingredient in this effort may be further development of the Existing Industry Program.

The working draft of the Georgia Statewide Aviation System Plan suggests Souther Field has good market potential for development (early next century) of scheduled commercial service. This potential would be affected; however, by development of a "second Atlanta", or Mid-South airport. It is important for the community to maneuver into position to be able to capitalize on the potential at the appropriate time. One important way of doing this is establishment of land use controls around the airport to facilitate runway extension needs. Because of its rural market area and small population base, scheduled commercial air service, when and if offered, will likely be a marginally profitable enterprise. The public expense associated with overcoming the negative impacts of development adjacent to Souther Field could yield a negative cost-benefit ratio sufficient to prevent introduction of scheduled commercial air service. Sumter County should not allow the kinds of physical development which can effectively limit passenger aircraft access to Souther Field.

Because of the community's rural location, it is especially important the current level of inter-city bus service not be reduced.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

**Water Supply and Treatment:** The county does not operate a public water system. All five incorporated governments within Sumter County do, however. In addition, there are currently twenty-one water systems in the unincorporated area serving customer bases of a size requiring a state permit, i.e., fifteen or more service connections, or service to twenty-five or more people for sixty or more days. These systems are identified below.

A B C Mobile Home Park  
Arlington Park Mobile Home Park  
Briar Patch Mobile Home Park  
Dozier Farms  
Fletcher Farms Camp  
Gay Farm Camp  
King's Academy, Inc.  
Koinonia Partners Main Farm  
Koinonia Village  
Koinonia-Forest Park  
Mobile Village

Pine Level Mobile Home Park  
SW Georgia Experiment Station  
Shady Acres Campground  
Restaurant at Lake Blackshear  
South Georgia Technical Institute  
South Ridges Mobile Home Park  
Southern Hills Subdivision  
Southland Academy  
TTT Mobile Home Park  
Triple H Farms

**Assessment:** There is no current interest in developing a county water system. However, the density of residential development along portions of Lake Blackshear, and depth of private wells there have caused residents of these areas to question the safety of the water supply.



Concentration of wells in any area increases the likelihood of groundwater contamination, and wells drilled into relatively shallow aquifers increase the chances of drawing from a contaminated water supply. Increased farm irrigation during a recent period of intermittent drought (1977 - 1991) lowered the water level and left many area wells dry, necessitating additional well construction, further increasing the chances of groundwater contamination. The present level of lakefront development is probably sufficient to justify construction of a public water supply system to provide a safe water supply and for natural resource protection. The county should investigate the need for a public water system to serve this area.

**Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment:** Sumter County does not operate a public sanitary sewer system. The Cities of Americus, Andersonville and Plains, and the South Georgia Technical Institute operate the only systems in the county, and the latter is attempting to close its outdated system and tie into the Americus system. Sewage disposal for the balance of the county is provided by individual septic tanks.

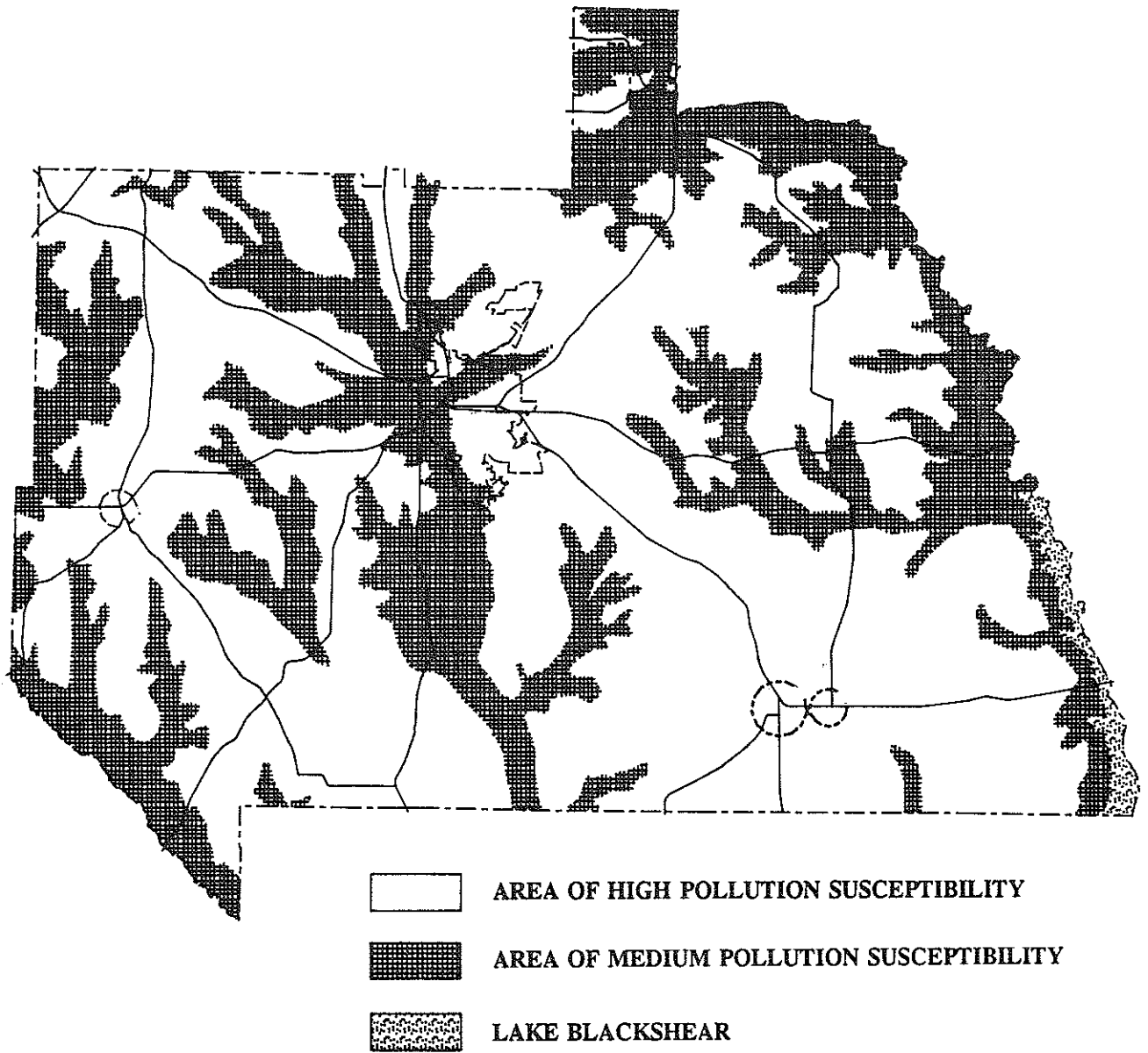
**Assessment:** At least three-quarters of the county's total land area is either well-suited for a properly constructed and functioning septic tank, or with relatively minor modifications to the typical septic system design can safely assimilate the raw sewage. (The Tifton soil series, which constitutes one third of the county's total land area, necessitates system modifications because of moderate percolation rates.) This finding of suitability is based on an assessment of the subsurface stratum between the depths of eighteen inches and six feet. However, there must be unsaturated soil material of sufficient depth beneath the absorption field to effectively filter the effluent.

Recent scientific evaluation of the interrelationship of seven surface and subsurface features: depth to water, net recharge, aquifer media, soils, slope, vadose zone and hydraulic conductivity, have led scientists to conclude that approximately 60% of Sumter County's total land area has a high susceptibility to pollution resulting from the surface and near surface activities of man (see next page). From the same scientific evaluation it was determined that the balance of the county has a medium susceptibility to pollution.

In response to the findings from these scientific evaluations performed throughout the state, the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has adopted more stringent regulations governing septic tank installation. The Sumter County Health Department must continue to do its part to help reduce the potential for pollution from septic tank absorption fields by enforcing state environmental planning criteria found in the Department of Human Resource's Manual for On-Site Sewage Management Systems.

As is the case with water supply and treatment, the level of residential development along Lake Blackshear is expected to require a public wastewater treatment system in the future.

# GROUNDWATER POLLUTION SUSCEPTIBILITY



Source: Reproduced from digital data of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the United States Geological Survey, 1989.

**Solid Waste Management:** Solid waste collection in unincorporated Sumter County is provided by way of eleven, unmanned, satellite stations distributed throughout the county. Each station has a forty cubic yard metal roll-on/roll-off container which is wenched onto a large, flat-bed transfer truck for transport to the landfill each week. As rural residents bring solid waste to these stations they can also deposit recyclables into other properly marked containers the county maintains on site. DeSoto is the only incorporated jurisdiction in the county which does not provide any kind of solid waste collection. A county satellite station is available for these residents. Presently, there are two local companies providing door-to-door collection services in densely developed, unincorporated areas.

There is reportedly very limited acreage in Sumter County suitable for use as a sanitary landfill (see next page). The county landfill is located on a 619 acre tract on McMath Mill Road approximately two miles west of Americus. The 55 acre parcel designated Phase I was opened in 1982, filled to capacity, and closed in 1987. Groundwater is monitored down gradient from this site twice each year to detect any pollution which might be released from the facility.

Phase II is an expansion of the original landfill site and consists of 45 acres. The county ceased the trench method of disposal in October, 1993, due to the liner and leachate collection system requirements contained in Subtitle "D" of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The state permitting agency has approved areal disposal over the previously filled trenches in Phase II. This method of disposal is expected to extend the useful life of Phase II through 1994.

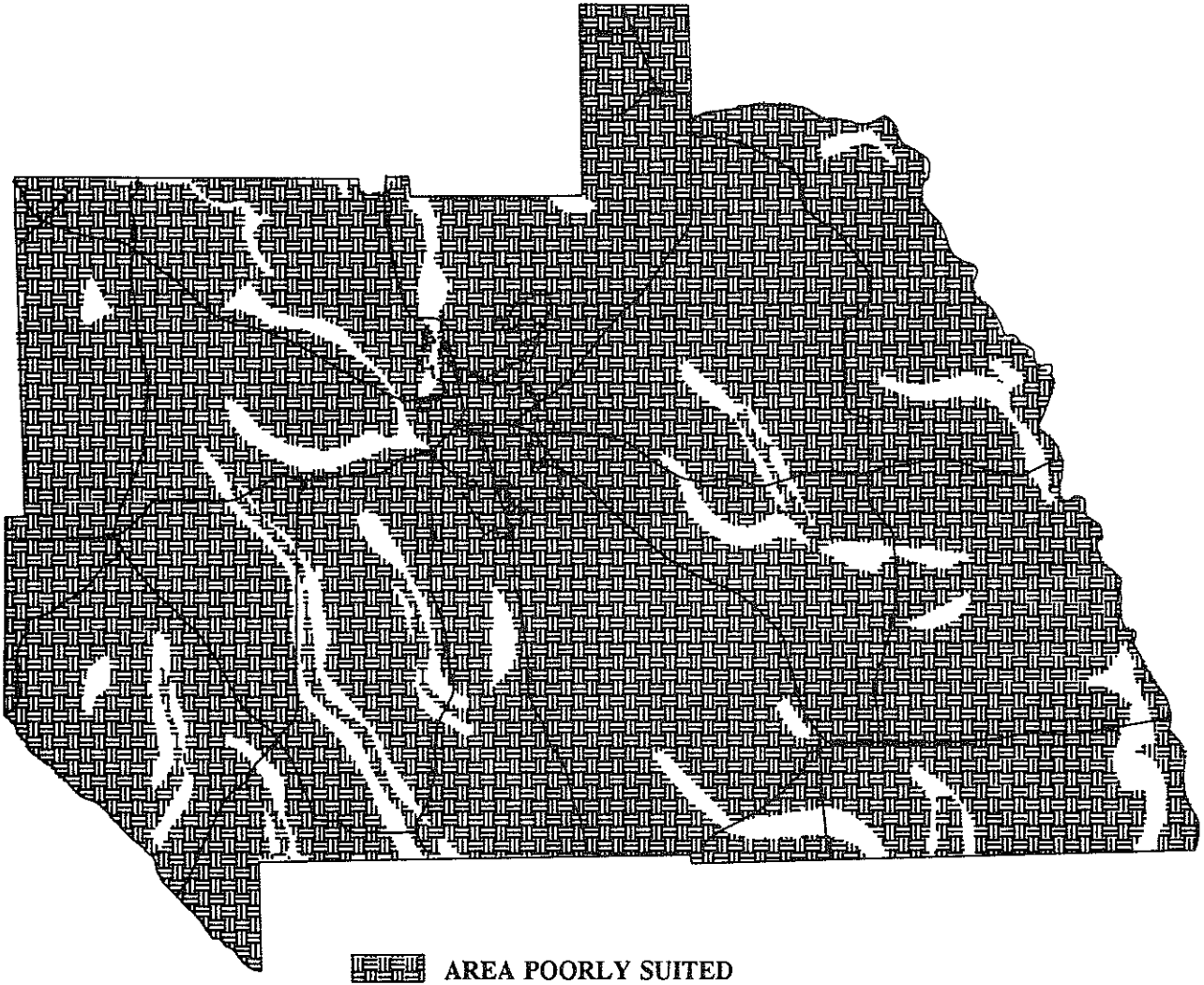
The county has considered opening a 45 acre site designated Phase III adjacent to the previous disposal sites. Twenty-five acres would be developed pursuant to requirements of Subtitle "D" for trench fill and area fill methods of disposal. Estimated life of the facility using conventional methods of disposal would be 12.5 years. However, baling the waste prior to disposal in the facility is projected to extend useful life of the same facility by an additional 18 years. Whether or not a landfill is constructed to satisfy requirements of Subtitle "D", the county is pursuing the state permit necessary for such a facility. For more detailed information please refer to the county's solid waste management plan adopted in March, 1994.

An inventory (as of 12/8/93) of departmental equipment with acquisition costs of \$5,000 or higher is presented below:

|                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1994 INT. GARBAGE TRUCK        | 1983 CAT 613B SCRAPER  |
| 1993 NORKOT MAXIGRIND          | 1981 GMC GARBAGE TRUCK |
| 1990 CAT. 816-B COMPACTOR      | 1980 CAT 955 L LOADER  |
| 1990 CAT. 613C TRACTOR/SCRAPER | 1980 SELCO BALER VS-50 |
| 1988 INT. GARBAGE TRUCK        | 1977 DODGE D600        |
| 1988 DODGE RAM 1/2 TON PICKUP  | 1972 CLARKE PAN        |
| 1987 AIR CURTAIN DESTRUCTOR    | 1969 CAT. 830MB        |
| 1985 CAT. 816B COMPACTOR       |                        |

Sumter County is presently using eleven pieces of heavy equipment, excluding three road vehicles, in daily collection and disposal activities. If conventional disposal methods continue, at least half of these will need replacement by 1998.

**AREA GEOTECHNICALLY POORLY SUITED  
FOR SANITARY LANDFILL**



As of the fall of 1993, there are three inert landfills operating in Sumter County under the state's permit by rule. These are deposit sites for materials not likely to produce leachate of environmental concern, e.g., concrete, cured asphalt, rock, bricks, yard trash, stumps, limbs, leaves, etc. Because of lower potential for pollution these facilities are not as strictly regulated and monitored as sanitary landfills. Nevertheless, operators must place a minimum, specified soil cover over the debris at least monthly and at closure. The City of Andersonville operates an inert landfill near its western corporate limit, and the Mullite Corporation of America (Mulcoa) operates a facility near Plant No. 2 on the north side of Georgia Highway 195. Sumter County's inert landfill is located near the sanitary landfill. Con-Art has applied for a permit to open and operate an inert landfill at its industrial site on U.S. Highway 280 E., east of Cobb.

**Assessment:** Based on the projected costs of complying with federal and state solid waste mandates, it does not appear small, rural counties can independently own and operate landfills. Consequently, the Sumter County Commission is investigating opportunities for regional/out-of-county solid waste disposal. The Board of Commissioners intends to use a portion of the sales tax proceeds approved in a March, 1994, referendum to construct a solid waste transfer station. Solid waste collected in the county will be loaded onto transfer trucks in this facility for transport to a solid waste landfill out-of-county. Sumter County will, however, pursue a landfill disposal permit in the event such facility is needed in the future.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Sheriff's Department:** The Sumter County Sheriff's Department is staffed by 33 people, 30 full-time and 3 part-time; 23 sworn officers, 6 jail personnel, 4 dispatchers. Operations of the department are currently housed in the Sumter County courthouse (built in 1959). The staff is divided into four divisions; patrol (traffic enforcement and first responders), government or civil, investigation (drug division and public education), and records (bookkeeping and dispatch). The sheriff expressed the need for at least five additional sworn officers.

An inventory (as of 12/8/93) of departmental equipment with acquisition costs of \$5,000 or higher is presented below:

|                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1993 FORD CROWN VICTORIA (5)     | 1983 CHEV. SPORT VAN C-30  |
| 1990 CHEV. CAPRICE (3)           | 1977 CHEVROLET PICKUP      |
| 1989 FORD CROWN VICTORIA (3)     | 1977 DODGE PICKUP          |
| 1987 FORD LTD CROWN VICTORIA (2) | 1976 DODGE PICKUP          |
| 1986 FORD LTD CROWN VICTORIA (2) | 1975 FORD ECONO. SUPER VAN |
| 1985 FORD LTD CROWN VICTORIA (2) | 1963 DODGE VAN             |
| 1983 FORD CUSTOM                 |                            |

The department has a fleet of 21 vehicles, 15 of which are for patrol. Five patrol vehicles were replaced early in 1993. The other ten patrol vehicles in the fleet all have odometer readings in excess of 100,000 miles. Vehicle maintenance is done commercially. At the current staffing level there are not any immediate vehicle needs, except that with more new pursuit vehicles there would be greater reliability of departmental response to emergency calls.

Communications equipment needs to be improved/updated. Equipment is dissimilar and the department needs additional transmission frequencies and range. The department also dispatches for the three volunteer fire departments in the rural area and volunteer departments in Andersonville, Leslie and Plains.

The county jail is also housed in the courthouse. The physical condition of the facility is fair, despite constant maintenance and sanitation problems resulting, primarily, from overcrowding. Although the jail has a design capacity of 55 beds, the average daily census has been as high as 100.

**Assessment:** For the past several years the single greatest need in the Sheriff's Department has been a new/expanded jail. Local government officials placed the issue of renovating the original Sumter County Correctional Institute (vacated in 1989) with sales tax proceeds before the electorate in November, 1992. The referendum failed, leaving government officials with the difficult task of finding another funding source.

In March, 1993, the county was sued by two inmates who filed a class action suit claiming their civil rights had been violated as a result of overcrowded conditions. The federal court hearing the case placed the county under court order to construct a new county jail. In March, 1994, Sumter County voters approved a sales tax referendum which, among other activities, provided funding for construction of a county jail. A \$5.8 million construction contract was awarded in late April, 1994. Plans to erect the new facility adjacent to the correctional institute offer numerous operational savings because of the ability for the two operations to share medical, food preparation and laundry costs.

The department's communications system should also be enhanced.

**Sumter County Correctional Institute:** The Sumter County Correctional Institute (SCCI) was built in 1988 - 89, adjacent to the previous 50 year old facility on a 619-acre tract west of Americus. The state bore 95%+ of the facility's \$2.5 million construction cost. In fiscal year 1992 the operating budget was \$1,253,954. The SCCI contains 360 certified beds, 280 of which are reserved for state prisoners. The average daily census (county and state prisoners) is 315 (88% occupancy). The State of Georgia pays Sumter County \$10 per-day, per-prisoner for housing state inmates. With an average state prisoner census of 100%+, the state reimbursed Sumter County for at least 82% of the C.I. 1992 operating budget.

The SCCI is a work camp with all prisoners, both county and state, participating. Inmate labor is used in the county landfill, maintenance shop, on road crews and on a forty acre farm raising

livestock and growing row crops and vegetable crops for inmate consumption.

There are 66 employees, 58 full-time and 8 part-time. Forty are certified correctional officers. In 1990, the state conducted a staffing survey and determined the SCCI needed 27 more security personnel. The Georgia Department of Corrections has approved the county's long-term plan to add an additional 2-3 certified correctional officers annually.

The SCCI has 8 vehicles: 4 cars, 3 vans, and 1 pick-up truck. Two of the cars were purchased in 1992. All are maintained by the county shop, staffed with one employee and two inmates. The warden expressed the need for a new van. The county provides and maintains the warden's residence.

An inventory (as of 12/8/93) of departmental equipment with acquisition costs of \$5,000 or higher is presented below:

|                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1993 FORD CROWN VICTORIA (2)     | 1981 FORD LTD                 |
| 1992 CHEVROLET 1/2 TON PICKUP    | 1977 DODGE VAN B30 SPORT      |
| 1991 FORD F 150 1/2 T. PICKUP    | 1935 PIRSCH FIRE TRUCK        |
| 1988 GMC JIMMY                   | 1981 INTL. TRACTOR MDL. 884   |
| 1987 DODGE RAM 1/2 TON PICKUP    | 1978 INTL. 1700 LOADSTAR DUMP |
| 1986 FORD LTD CROWN VICTORIA (2) | 1978 M.F. TRACTOR 320 DSL.    |
| 1984 FORD 1/2 TON PICKUP         | 1969 BULLDOZER-RUBBER TIRE    |
| 1982 FORD LTD                    |                               |

**Assessment:** There are 27 county-operated correctional institutions in the state, with the greatest concentration in west-central Georgia. Only Fulton County has a higher state inmate capacity (300 beds) than Sumter. In the absence of full cost accounting it appears the county is experiencing a net benefit from operating this facility. Among those counties with a population similar to Sumter (25,000 - 35,000), those with significantly smaller "roads and bridges" departments all have CIs. In addition, this labor pool makes it possible to offer services (repair/renovation, office relocation, etc.) to local public agencies at cost savings which otherwise would not be available. To comply with applicable standards additional security personnel need to be employed.

**Fire Protection:** There are three organized and active volunteer fire departments in the south half of the county (see page 47). The electorates in these three areas voted upon themselves a special property tax assessment to pay the capital and operating expenses of their respective fire departments. The fire rating in all three districts is 9, compared to a rating of 10 in the rest of the unincorporated area (with exceptions to be explained later). Ten is the highest (worst) fire insurance classification, and communities with no fire protection receive this rating.

The Southwest district has a 1958 model, 1200 gallon tanker, and 1972 and 1973 model fire knockers, each with an 800 gallon capacity. The tanker and one fire knocker are housed in a heated fire station constructed with proceeds from the special assessment near the intersection of State Routes 49 and 308. The second fire knocker is housed near Sumter City. Although

none of these vehicles have failed to respond to a fire call, their condition is such that all three are generally considered to be unreliable. Additional fire hose is needed, but otherwise these trucks are generally will equipped. The department has 12 pagers and eight donated air packs. Slightly over half of the 28 volunteer fire fighters are employed within the fire service area. The department receives approximately 25 fire calls a year. The greatest needs are for fire trucks and pagers.

The DeSoto department has a 1978 model fire knocker with two-way radio housed in a heated building located under the municipal water tank in DeSoto. The department does not presently have housing for the 1986 model fire knocker it placed in service early in 1994. All twelve volunteers have pagers. In early 1993, approximately \$13,000 was expended for four air packs and two extra bottles, a fire nozzle, large flashlights, a ladder, axe, hose, etc. Half of the volunteers work in the fire service district, most in Leslie and DeSoto. The department receives 15 - 20 calls annually, mostly house fires.

The Lake Blackshear service area is in the southeast corner of the county. A 1976 model fire knocker, with a 950 gallon capacity, and a 1975 model tanker, with a 1200 gallon capacity, are housed in a heated fire station on Pecan Road near its intersection with U.S. 280. There are four air packs and 10 pagers available for use by the 18 volunteer firefighters. All but two of the current volunteers are employed in the service area. The department receives approximately 15 calls a year. The greatest need is for an improved communications system. Volunteers often must resort to using the telephone because of inconsistencies in radio communications.

In addition, the City of Andersonville volunteer fire department responds to fire calls within five miles of the city limit. No fee or assessment is levied on rural residents for this service. Since the department responds automatically to rural properties within this five mile area, owners of the properties located therein benefit from an insurance rating of 9. Plains' volunteer fire department responds to fire calls within five miles of the fire station. To receive this service owners of property which is located in this "service area" must pay an annual \$35 service fee. Only those rural property owners who subscribe for this service are eligible for a reduced (9) fire insurance rating. Likewise, the City of Americus fire department responds to calls within five miles of the base station, but rural residents within this area must pay a subscription fee based on a sliding scale applied to the value of improvements on the property. Here again, only those who subscribe for the service are eligible for the favorable insurance rating. The rural "service areas" of these three municipal departments are also depicted on the accompanying Fire Service Districts map.

According to the accompanying Fire Service Districts map (see page 47), approximately one-third of Sumter's unincorporated area has no fire protection service available. Improvements to properties in these unserved areas total approximately 550 residences of conventional construction, 240 mobile homes, 13 commercial establishments and 23 public/semi-public land uses, primarily churches. Subtotals in each of these three geographical areas are as follows:



**STRUCTURES LOCATED BEYOND  
FIRE SERVICE DISTRICTS  
1992**

| <b>RURAL AREA</b>                   | <b>CONVENTIONAL HOUSING</b> | <b>MOBILE HOME</b> | <b>CHURCH</b> | <b>STORE</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Northwest                           | 200                         | 90                 | 11            | 6            |
| Claude Harvey/<br>Dawson/Pa's Roads | 30                          | 25                 | 0             | 2            |
| East Central and<br>South Central   | 320                         | 125                | 12            | 5            |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>550</b>                  | <b>240</b>         | <b>23</b>     | <b>13</b>    |

Source: Middle Flint RDC

**Assessment:** DeSoto is the best equipped of the three rural fire departments. Consequently, there are numerous equipment needs in the other departments that should be given priority. Sumter County can not legally expend general funds in any of the three rural volunteer fire departments. It can, however, help the departments pursue funding assistance from other sources.

Over half of the rural population lies within the combined response areas of the six different fire departments in Sumter County. A public education initiative is needed to apprise rural residents of the benefits of a county wide system.

Sumter County should pursue development of a rural, dry hydrant system. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service has funds available with which to purchase the necessary hardware. Such structures provide access, much as a municipal fire hydrant, to the surface water available in ponds, lakes and streams. Thirty-two site accessible locations with sufficient water volumes have been identified throughout the county. Sumter County's investment would consist of construction and subsequent maintenance of the hydrants. Such a water supply would greatly enhance rural fire fighting capability. Absence of same seriously compromises the fire fighting capabilities of rural departments.

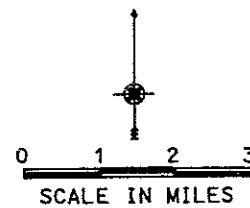
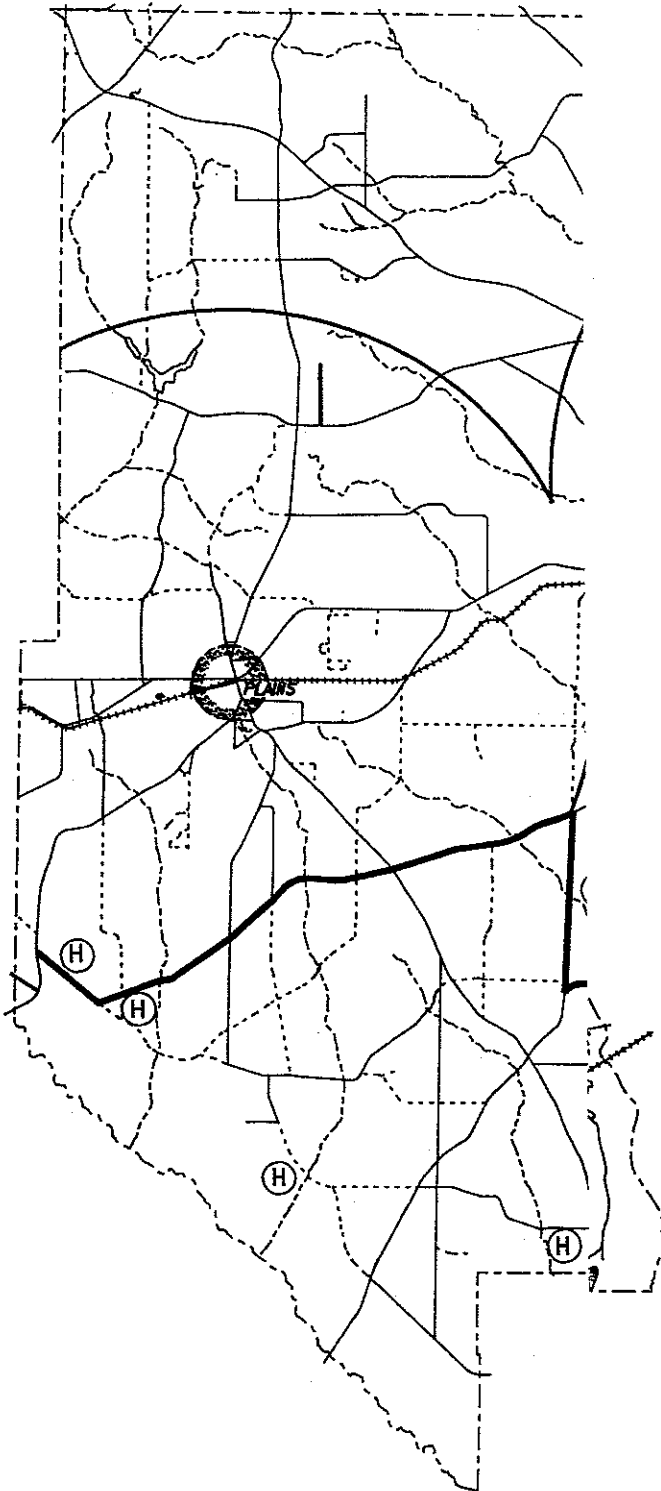
**Emergency Management:** The Sheriff is serving as the county's Emergency Management Director. The county's only rescue vehicle is housed at the Russell Thomas, Jr., Public Safety Building in Americus, and is operated by Americus Fire Department personnel in response to emergency calls countywide. This service is operating under a state approved Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), a prerequisite, under state law, to receive state financial assistance in the event of local disaster. Federal disaster assistance is not, however, predicated on the existence of such a plan.

# SUMTER COUNTY FIRE SERVICE DISTRICTS 1992

## LEGEND

LARGE CIRCLES DEPICT RURAL  
RESPONSE AREAS OF MUNICIPAL  
FIRE DEPARTMENTS

- 1    SOUTHWEST DISTRICT
- 2    DESOTO DISTRICT
- 3    LAKE BLACKSHEAR DISTRICT
- Ⓜ   32 PROPOSED DRY HYDRANT  
     LOCATIONS



**Assessment:** Although development of a full-fledged hazardous materials team is cost-prohibitive, a higher level of emergency preparedness should be pursued. In accordance with state law the Emergency Operations Plan must be updated every four years. The next scheduled update is in 1995. Sumter County should consummate current plans to implement a 911 emergency system in the rural area.

## HEALTH

**Medical Facilities:** The Americus - Sumter County Hospital relocated from a Dodson street address in Americus to a new facility on Wheatley Drive in 1953. Almost four decades later the name was changed to Sumter Regional in recognition of its service to the multi-county area. On an average day in the early 1990s half of the hospital bed patients are residents of Sumter County, and virtually all of the balance are residents of eleven nearby counties.

Sumter Regional is a major contributor to the economy of Sumter County. In fiscal year 1993 the hospital had a staff of 432 full-time equivalent employees which generated a \$9.7 million payroll. Ninety percent of hospital employees reside in Sumter County.

Nursing staff comprises 54% of hospital employees. There is an active medical staff of 42 doctors representing 19 specialties ranging from anesthesiology to urology. In addition, there is a courtesy/consulting staff of one dozen medical doctors, all of whom have their respective practices out of county. Several medical specialties have been targeted for an on-going physician recruitment program.

The hospital is completing plans for a three-phased, \$18 million expansion to be developed in the near future. Although the development is not expected to generate any additional full-time equivalent employment or new services, it will enhance delivery of twenty-five services currently offered.

Sumter Regional is classified as a general hospital licensed for 165 beds, although presently operating at the 130 bed level. The not-for-profit facility is governed by a ten member board, six appointed by the Sumter County Board of Commissioners and four appointed by the Mayor and City Council of Americus.

**Assessment:** The County strongly supports continued expansion of high level health care at Sumter Regional Hospital. Such a service is an invaluable resource to the residents of the community, a major, positive contributor to the economy, and essential to growth in the larger rural setting.

In recent years the community has witnessed an improvement in management of the local hospital. Efficient management of a hospital where up to 70% of services are reimbursed by medicaid is a significant achievement. However, expressions of concern over responsiveness of medical personnel, and the quality of services they provide are common. The hospital should

canvass the community to determine the cause of the problems(s), or misconceptions, and respond appropriately.

**Emergency Medical Service:** Emergency medical services are currently (11/10/93) provided by a 19 member contingent of the Sumter Regional Hospital staff. Of the ten full-time employees seven are paramedics, the highest of the state's three licensure classifications for Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), and three are basic EMTs. Four of the part-time employees are paramedics while the other five are basic EMTs. Oversight is provided by a Board of Directors consisting of hospital administrative personnel and one citizen at-large. The EMS currently has 1988, 1990, and 1993 model diesel-powered ambulances. These emergency response vehicles have historically been rotated out of service at 6 years and/or 150,000 miles. The current aggressive preventive maintenance program is expected to extend the useful lives of these vehicles, however.

The EMS is housed on the grounds of Sumter Regional Hospital. The county does not provide any financial support or oversight of this service.

During the report period 10/1/92 - 9/30/93, EMS responded to 2,451 calls for emergency, non-emergency, non-transport and out-of-county transfers. Response times to these calls averaged 4.88 minutes within the City of Americus, and 12.9 minutes beyond the city, despite the fact that much of Americus and none of the rural areas in Sumter and surrounding counties have addresses visible from public roadways.

**Assessment:** The community is well pleased with the quality and level of service provided by the local EMS.

## OTHER

**Recreation:** Public recreation is funded jointly by Americus and Sumter County. The chief elected officials of both governments each appoint four members to the Recreation Commission. Departmental staff consists of six full-time employees and, during summer months up to 200 part-time employees. The office, a converted residence with approximately 1400 square feet, is located on Oak Avenue in Americus.

The department offers 18 different programs providing active and passive recreational opportunities for all ages, and maintains 12 parks, 3 swimming pools, 6 ball fields, 6 tennis courts, and the horse arena on Southerfield Road. With the exception of one ball field near DeSoto, and the horse arena, all recreation facilities are in Americus.

A 1990 - 1991 survey of city and county recreation services compared Sumter County with 20 comparably sized communities (25,000 - 50,000 population). The local recreation program had lower operating expenditures per capita (\$10.82 vs. \$16.15), fewer full-time employees (5 vs. 13) but considerably more part-time employees (180 vs. 36).

**Assessment:** The recreation department is finding it more difficult to meet the needs of residents of Americus and Sumter County because of lack of facilities. The most pressing need is to add field space. During the spring and summer months there are 20 youth and 20 adult teams with only 3 fields available for each of the two leagues. At this writing the Recreation Commission is making plans for development of a multi-field recreation complex in an unincorporated area of the county.

Over the years the local recreation program has made a positive contribution to development of youth in the community, some of whom went on to earn national prominence as athletes and coaches. Because of the level of use and increased demand, renovation and expansion of facilities were proposed as part of a special use local option sales tax referendum in November, 1992. A \$2.9 million, two-phased improvement program was proposed which included reconstruction of the Oak Street ball field complex, and construction of a basketball gymnasium and new recreation office. The referendum failed, but the level of opposition to the recreation improvements is not known because of the wide variety of projects included in the referendum. However, a similar slate of recreation activities were approved in a March, 1994, sales tax referendum.

**General Government:** The county's Chief Administrative Officer, serving at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners, oversees implementation of local government policies enacted by the five member Board of Commissioners and a \$7 million operating budget. The county has 151 employees and the following inventory of 38 buildings:

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <u>Courthouse</u><br>103 S. Dudley St.            | <u>State Patrol Office</u><br>506 West Lamar        | <u>Mapped on page 55</u><br>Concord Community Polling Place |
| <u>Courthouse Annex</u><br>S. Dudley St.          | <u>Human Society</u><br>702 Magnolia St.            | Highway 49 Fire House                                       |
| <u>Garden Club Bldg.</u><br>601 Spring St.        | <u>Health Department</u><br>208 Rucker Street       | Chappell's Store Polling Place                              |
| <u>Juvenile Services</u><br>601 Spring St. (rear) | <u>County Agent's Office</u><br>350 Rucker Street   | Sumter City Polling Place                                   |
| <u>DUI - Driver School</u><br>711 Spring St.      | <u>20 Bldg. Complex at SCCI</u><br>McMath Mill Road | Huntington Community Polling Place                          |
|   | <u>Livestock Pavilion</u><br>186 Southerfield Road  | Highway 280 Fire House                                      |
|   |   | Chambliss Community Polling Place                           |
|   |   | Concord Community Polling Place                             |
|   |   | Plains Polling Place (not mapped)                           |

The number and level of services offered in the courthouse since its construction in 1959 have increased to the extent that a significant office space expansion is needed. Funding for this expansion was approved in a March, 1994, sales tax referendum. Approval of construction of a county jail in the same referendum makes it possible to relocate the Sheriff and current county jail to a new jail facility, giving the remaining courthouse offices an additional 5,200 square feet. Converting this area to useable office space is estimated to cost approximately \$1 million.

The combination of design and age have caused the courthouse roof to leak. The county is planning an architectural study in 1994 to assess whether courthouse walls can withstand the additional weight of a pitched roof. This should be followed by a major courthouse renovation in 1995.

**Assessment:** Georgia law has historically fragmented the authority of county government. The county governing authority has policy making and budgeting responsibility, but other constitutional officers of the county are not answerable to the Board of Commissioners, despite the fact that the latter party is financially liable for the actions of the former. The county supports the recommendation of the Governor's Local Governance Commission; to wit, by the general election in the year 2000, the county governing authority should have sole and exclusive control over revenues, expenditures, and personnel policies and practices of county government, including the authority to develop procedures for the appointment and removal of all county department heads.

**Education:** The six elected members of the Sumter County Board of Education are accountable to the rural population for operation of the three county schools which comprise the Sumter County Educational Complex. Located on approximately 125 acres on Americus' north city limits, the grades are grouped K-4 in the elementary school, 5-8 in the middle school, and 9-12 in the high school. Between school years 1985/86 - 1992/93 total system enrollment increased by over 100 each year, sufficient to make it the ninth fastest growing system in the state.

Of the 155 certificated personnel, approximately 51% have Masters Degrees or higher. Economic conditions in the county are such that the total enrollment is entitled to participate in the state funded free meal program. The system has approximately 2,660 students enrolled (May, 1994). School operations depend on a support staff of 74. The system's 34 buses are maintained by system employees.

Americus is one of 28 Georgia cities with independent city school systems, and only six have larger student enrollments. The Americus Board of Education is comprised of nine members responsible for operation of the four-school system. Grades are grouped K-2 at Cherokee Elementary, 3-5 at Sarah Cobb Elementary, 6-8 at Staley Middle School, and 9-12 at Americus High School. Both Staley Middle School and Americus High School have been recognized as Georgia School of Excellence winners.

The system employs 222 certificated personnel, 128 (58%) of whom have Master's Degrees or higher. School operations depend on a support staff of 193. The system operates a fleet of fourteen school buses. All school buildings currently in use are in excellent condition with most having been recently renovated.

System enrollment for the 1993-94 school year is approximately 3200 (May, 1994). Economic conditions in the city are such that 72% of the total enrollment is eligible to participate in the state funded free meal program.

Southland Academy is the largest of three private schools in the county. First opened for school year 1967-68, the eight building, 52-acre campus is located east of Americus. The school has an enrollment of over a thousand in grades K4 - 12 with a faculty and support staff of 85. There is a branch located in Montezuma which is composed of grades K4 - 5. Children transfer to the Americus campus when they begin sixth grade. Students commute from neighboring counties as well as the Americus area. There is no bus system provided by the school. College preparatory is the only high school curriculum offered.

There are two christian schools operating locally, both offering grades K-12. Brooklyn Heights Christian School is the older of the two and is located on the church grounds in west Americus. Kings Academy operates from a previously vacated county school facility in east-central Sumter County.

There are 34 units of the University System of Georgia. Georgia Southwestern College (GSW), founded in 1906, has one of the smaller enrollments (2,500 Spring '94) of the University System's fifteen Senior Colleges. The institution offers five undergraduate degrees in forty fields of study, two graduate degrees in fifteen fields of study, and one specialist degree in education. GSW has earned the designation as the University System's Center for Asian Studies. Highest degrees held by faculty are equivalent to the average among the state's senior colleges.

The budget for the 1993 - 94 school year was \$15 million, \$8 million of which is provided by the State of Georgia. This is exclusive of approximately \$1.2 million received annually from various organizations for research. The school has approximately 250 full-time employees (95 faculty), and 35 buildings distributed across the 187 acre campus. GSW is one of ten residential institutions among the fifteen Senior Colleges. It has been estimated that over the course of a school year, each student spends approximately \$1,000 in Sumter County, exclusive of rent.

South Georgia Technical Institute is one of the state's 32 vocational-technical schools. The school was established in 1948 with the mission of directly relating formal instruction to specific occupational goals. Consequently, school curriculum is designed to meet demands of business and industry by preparing students to enter jobs in technical, skilled, business, health and related occupations. Twenty-four fields of study are presently offered, the current most popular being aircraft maintenance, business and nursing. The 1993 Georgia General Assembly approved a \$6.1 million capital appropriation to enhance the aviation program.

Steep increases in enrollment in recent years made it necessary to offer evening classes and open a satellite facility in Cordele. Current enrollment for the 1993 - 1994 term is 1,005 full-time day students pursuing diplomas. South Georgia Tech is one of only two state vocational-technical schools with dormitories. Occupancy of the 200 available bed spaces ranges from 40% to 50% during the school year.

South Georgia Technical Institute has an operating budget (1993 - 1994) of \$6.1 million, 75 employees, 39 of whom are instructors, and fourteen buildings on its 250 acre campus on Southerfield Road. The eleven member governing board is appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Technical and Adult Education. The state designated service area consists of Macon, Schley, Webster, Sumter and Crisp Counties.

**Assessment:** The Sumter County Educational Complex is a modern facility in the sense that all buildings are of recent construction, and all schools are on one large campus. After years of planning and construction, unanticipated increases in enrollment are already placing a strain on facilities. In addition, the county is confronted with absorbing the Americus City Schools with an enrollment of 3200. In a November, 1993, referendum the Americus electorate voted to abandon the municipal school charter in favor of a countywide school system. This is perceived by leadership of both systems to be a positive, constructive change, but one which will necessitate a significant capital investment to accommodate the new system. However, both systems have a significant bonded indebtedness outstanding.

Sumter County is very fortunate to have two post-secondary education institutions. Georgia Southwestern College and South Georgia Technical Institute provide important educational opportunities of great value to the community, to the region, and to the state. The numerous resources they each possess should be incorporated more often into addressing community needs.

**Library and Cultural Facilities:** Americus is the headquarters of the Lake Blackshear Regional Library System, part of the organizational structure through which the Georgia Department of Education dispenses state funds for public library development and operations. Each county in this region's system, Crisp, Dooly, Schley, and Sumter, has a library.

The local facility was constructed in 1976, and after completion of a \$782,000 renovation in 1993 has 24,500 square feet. A four person staff assists patrons, as needed, with access to 100,000 volumes of library material (80% of which are books) as well as to 250,000 volumes available throughout the regional library system. There are five American Library Association certified librarians to serve the area on a rotating basis. The library offers services to Magnolia Manor, the Senior Citizens Center, and the Plains Nursing Home. The book mobile serves the area twice a week on a rotating basis. Library programs are available to civic groups on request. Annual circulation totals approximately 120,000 volumes. Sumter County budgets approximately \$85,000 annually to partially fund library operations. The City of Americus budgets \$75,000, while the State of Georgia budgets approximately \$150,000.

The local Exchange Club sponsors Lindbergh Days - A Festival of Flight. This annual observance is an air show in commemoration of Charles Lindbergh's first solo flight which occurred at Souther Field in 1923. Relatively recent in origin, this event has great potential as a major state tourist attraction.

**Assessment:** The community is well pleased with the library facility and the quality and level of service. Sumter County should support further development of Lindbergh Days.



**Sumter Livestock Association:** Sumter is the only county in Georgia which owns and operates a livestock sale barn. As were most sale barns across the state, the local facility was established (in 1937) through efforts of the county agent with the financial backing of county government as a service to local livestock producers. Today, there are only 59 livestock auction markets in the state.

The Sumter Livestock Association, Inc., has a nine member Board of Directors appointed by the Sumter County Board of Commissioners. Five full-time and 27 part-time employees help record gross sales of \$12 - \$18 million annually, and regularly receive hogs and cows from as far away as Smiths Station, Eufaula and Seale, Alabama. The Association has a vehicle inventory consisting of one 2 ton truck and two pick-up trucks.

**Assessment:** Livestock grounds, facilities and equipment are well maintained. No needs were identified other than replacing one truck in 1995 - 96. This need will be satisfied with the association's revenues. The Sumter Livestock Association provides a valuable and profitable service to the community. It is important this self-sustaining facility remain in operation.

# SUMTER COUNTY ROAD CLASSIFICATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES 1994

LEGEND

**ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS**

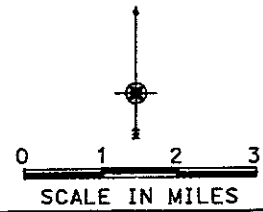
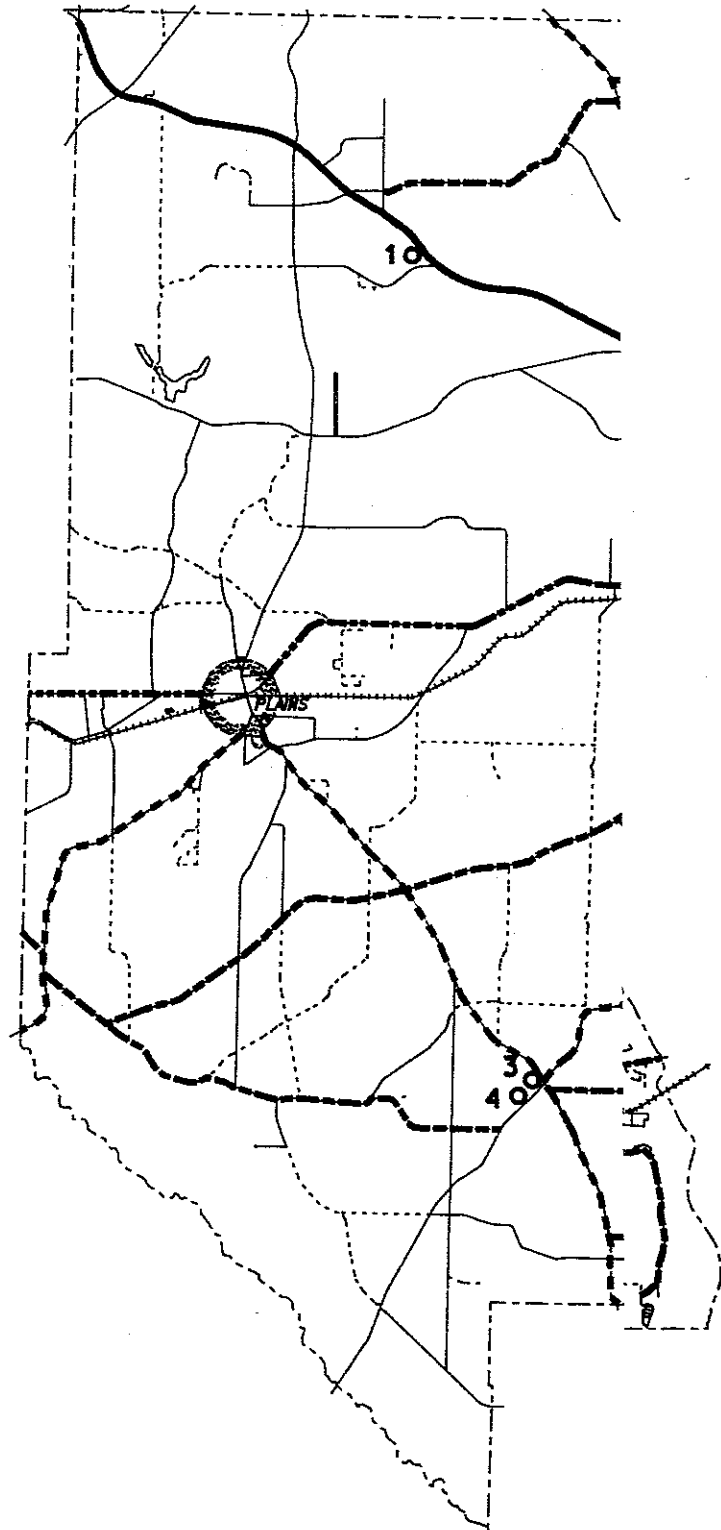
- PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL
- MINOR ARTERIAL
- MAJOR COLLECTOR
- MINOR COLLECTOR
- LOCAL PAVED
- LOCAL UNPAVED

SOURCE: GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

- ① CONCORD COMMUNITY POLLING PLACE
- ② SUMTER COUNTY CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE
- ③ GA. HIGHWAY 49 FIRE HOUSE
- ④ CHAPPELL'S STORE POLLING PLACE
- ⑤ SUMTER CITY POLLING PLACE
- ⑥ HUNTINGTON COMMUNITY POLLING PLACE
- ⑦ GA. HIGHWAY 280 FIRE HOUSE
- ⑧ CHAMBLISS COMMUNITY POLLING PLACE
- ⑨ LIVESTOCK PAVILION

BECAUSE OF SCALE LIMITATIONS  
COUNTY OWNED BUILDINGS IN  
AMERICUS (9) AND PLAINS (1)  
ARE NOT PLOTTED ON THIS MAP.



## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The economic development element provides an inventory and assessment of the economic base and labor force of the community. It provides the basis for setting policies about future economic development and for making informed decisions regarding maintenance and enhancement of a high quality of life for residents and the business community.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Analysis of the average of the percentages of persons employed by industry (Table 1) over the three most recent census periods reveals few significant differences between local and state employment distributions. The two greatest differences are found in Manufacturing, and in Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Mining.

For these three periods an average of 26% of local workers were employed in Manufacturing, compared to 23% statewide. Both jurisdictions recorded a declining reliance on this economic sector, but by 1990 a significantly lower proportion of workers statewide (19% v 25%) were employed in manufacturing. Throughout this period the local economy displayed a much greater dependence on the manufacture of durable goods (rubber, concrete, fabricated metal, electrical equipment, etc.) than the state.<sup>1</sup> While local employment distribution in the manufacture of nondurable goods (food, textiles, apparel, lumber, furniture, paper, etc.) changed little in the 1970 - 1990 timeframe, employment statewide decreased to the point of being almost identical to Sumter County by 1990.

Agriculture comprises the bulk (89%) of employment in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Mining sector (1990). The recent (1977 - 1991) depressed state of the agricultural economy has hastened the historic trend of decreasing agricultural employment at both local and state levels. Between 1980 and 1990, the number employed in Agriculture reportedly decreased from 807 to 652, a 19% reduction. But, because of its strong agricultural base Sumter County has maintained an employment level in this sector which is twice the state rate.

During this twenty year period Sumter County's single greatest change in employment distribution (expressed as a percentage) was in Personal, Entertainment and Recreation Services. Between 1970 and 1990 workers in this sub-sector decreased from 10% to 3% of all workers, with the greatest share of this decrease occurring 1970 - 1980. The vast majority of this loss results from greatly reduced employment of domestics working in private households. These workers reportedly decreased by 387 between 1970 and 1980, accounting for 96% of the loss recorded in this sub-sector. The greatest change in employment distribution at the state level occurred in the decrease in the percentage of workers engaged in the manufacture of nondurable goods. This loss was balanced, however, by an equal percentage increase in the Services sector.

By far the single greatest numerical increase in local employment was recorded in Health Services. The number of employees reportedly increased by 694, for an annual average increase of 35. This growth is indicative of the county's increasing stature as a sub-regional health care center. Thirty-seven percent of this increase is credited to hospital employment. The other 63% is the result of increased employment in the offices of medical doctors and dentists, therapists, nursing homes and personal care facilities, visiting nurses, dialysis centers, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> The two largest employers in the county have work forces equivalent to 55% and 35% of total employment in this subcategory.

Sumter County recorded a 30% increase in total employment over the two decades. The only sectors which did not exceed this level of growth were Agriculture...; Manufacturing; Communication...; and the Personal, Entertainment & Recreation sub-category of the Services sector.

**TABLE 1**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**  
**1970, 1980, 1990**

| INDUSTRY                                    | 1970         |                  | 1980          |                  | 1990          |                |
|---|--------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
|   | Sumter       | Sumter/GA        | Sumter        | Sumter/GA        | Sumter        | Sumter/GA      |
|   | #            | %                | #             | %                | #             | %              |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Mining | 869          | 9 - 5            | 855           | 7 - 3            | 735           | 6 - 3          |
| Construction                                | 425          | 4 - 7            | 864           | 7 - 6            | 763           | 6 - 7          |
| Manufacturing                               | 2,648        | 28 - 27          | 3,123         | 26 - 24          | 3,033         | 25 - 19        |
| Durable Goods                               | 1,595        | 17 - 10          | 1,671         | 14 - 9           | 1,804         | 15 - 8         |
| Nondurable Goods                            | 1,053        | 11 - 17          | 1,452         | 12 - 15          | 1,229         | 10 - 11        |
| Transportation                              | 303          | 3 - 4            | 293           | 2 - 5            | 431           | 3 - 5          |
| Communication and Other Public Utilities    | 340          | 4 - 3            | 320           | 3 - 3            | 260           | 2 - 3          |
| Wholesale Trade                             | 258          | 3 - 4            | 617           | 5 - 5            | 511           | 4 - 5          |
| Retail Trade                                | 1,369        | 14 - 15          | 1,695         | 14 - 15          | 1,868         | 15 - 16        |
| Finance, Insurance and Real Estate          | 316          | 3 - 5            | 497           | 4 - 6            | 490           | 4 - 7          |
| Services                                    | 2,718        | 29 - 24          | 3,453         | 28 - 27          | 3,754         | 30 - 29        |
| Business and Repair                         | 155          | 2 - 3            | 276           | 2 - 4            | 374           | 3 - 5          |
| Personal, Entertainment & Recreation        | 947          | 10 - 7           | 542           | 4 - 5            | 389           | 3 - 4          |
| Health                                      | 433          | 5 - 4            | 987           | 8 - 7            | 1,127         | 9 - 7          |
| Education                                   | 926          | 10 - 7           | 1,263         | 10 - 8           | 1,280         | 10 - 8         |
| Professional and Related                    | 257          | 3 - 3            | 385           | 3 - 4            | 584           | 5 - 5          |
| Public Administration                       | 259          | 3 - 6            | 490           | 4 - 6            | 530           | 4 - 5          |
| <b>TOTAL EMPLOYMENT</b>                     | <b>9,505</b> | <b>101 - 100</b> | <b>12,207</b> | <b>100 - 100</b> | <b>12,375</b> | <b>99 - 99</b> |

Source: U.S. Census

Employed persons 16 years of age or older

Some percentages do not total 100 due to separate rounding

In 1980, Sumter County's average weekly industrial wage (All Industries) was equivalent to 82% of the wages paid statewide. By 1990, it had fallen to 78% of the statewide wage. The only sector in which local workers were reportedly paid higher weekly wages than their counterparts throughout the state was in 1990, in the Agriculture.... sector. Local (mostly) farm workers drew weekly wages apparently 11% higher than the average statewide.

Between 1980 and 1990 the greatest percentage increases in local wages were in Agriculture.... (105%) and Manufacturing (88%). Statewide the greatest increases were recorded in Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (107%) and Services (105%). The lowest paid sector in both jurisdictions, Retail Trade, recorded wage increases of 36% at the local level and 49% statewide. The Department of Labor documented local and state average industrial wage (All Industries) increases of 72% and 79%, respectively.

**TABLE 2**  
**AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES BY INDUSTRY**  
**1980, 1985, 1990**

| INDUSTRY                          | 1980   |         | 1985   |         | 1990   |         |
|-----------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                   | SUMTER | GEORGIA | SUMTER | GEORGIA | SUMTER | GEORGIA |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries  | \$153  | \$179   | \$164  | \$225   | \$314  | \$284   |
| Construction                      | \$213  | \$264   | \$271  | \$361   | \$368  | \$439   |
| Manufacturing                     | \$208  | \$261   | \$298  | \$366   | \$392  | \$473   |
| Transportation & Public Utilities | \$302  | \$372   | \$410  | \$517   | \$483  | \$635   |
| Wholesale Trade                   | \$238  | \$337   | \$288  | \$473   | \$339  | \$632   |
| Retail Trade                      | \$148  | \$164   | \$174  | \$208   | \$201  | \$244   |
| Finance, Insurance, Real Estate   | \$228  | \$274   | \$331  | \$423   | \$363  | \$568   |
| Services*                         | \$186  | \$214   | \$272  | \$310   | \$310  | \$438   |
| Federal, State, Local Government* | \$223  | \$287   | \$309  | \$374   | \$376  | \$451   |
| All Industries                    | \$203  | \$248   | \$276  | \$344   | \$349  | \$445   |

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

\* Reflects a major shift of job classification between Services and Government between 1980 and 1990. Consequently, data in the Services and Government categories are not directly comparable between years.

Presented in Table 3 is a twenty-five year projection of Industrial employment and earnings. The source differs from that of the accompanying industrial data, so the 1990 employment distribution in Table 3 is not comparable to other tables herein.

The greatest projected percentage changes in local employment distribution are a two percentile increase in Retail Trade, and a two percentile decrease in Services and Government. While an increase in the former suggests an improvement in the community's subregional trade stature and sales tax revenues, it does not indicate any improvement in local income because Retail Trade is the lowest paying industrial sector. In fact, the earnings projection suggests this sector's share of total industrial income will remain constant throughout the period despite a projected proportional increase in employment. The largest proportional changes in employment at the state level are a projected three percentile decrease in one of the highest paying sectors (Government), and a three percentile increase in one of the lowest paying sectors (Services).

The greatest local change in projected earnings is a five percentile increase in the total personal income attributed to Manufacturing. Because Manufacturing employment is projected to increase only one percentile, the disproportionate increase in earnings is credited to an improved skill level of the labor force. The share of aggregate earnings attributed to Services and Government is projected to decrease by three percentiles for each. The greatest earnings change projected at the state level is a three percentile decrease in the Government sector. This parallels the projected three percentile decrease in employment.

Occupational data is presented in Table 4. In 1980, local and state employment distributions differed by 1% or less in eleven of thirteen occupational categories. The greatest difference was in Sumter's higher employment level (four percentiles) in Farming, Forestry, and Fishing; indicative of the county's strong agricultural heritage and an example of local employment exceeding the state rate in one of the lower skilled/lower paying occupations.

The 1990 Census documented a difference of 1% or less in eight of the same thirteen occupational categories. The greatest differences were Sumter lagged Georgia's level of participation in higher skilled occupations (Executive, Administrative and Managerial; and Administrative Support), and exceeded statewide participation in lower skilled occupations (Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors; and Farming, Forestry, and Fishing).

Sumter County has significantly less in common with the occupational distribution nationwide. The distributions differ by 1% or less in only six occupations (1990). The local and national distributions differ the most in the Machine Operators, Assemblers and Handlers category. The local economy has a significantly higher employment level (six percentiles) in this category, primarily due to greater reliance on manufacturing. Sumter County has a lower level of participation in the higher skilled occupations.

Between 1980 and 1990, Sales recorded the greatest increase in the number of workers in the local economy; not surprising for a community which is a subregional retail trade center. The greatest occupational loser (178 jobs) during the '80s was Farming, Forestry and Fishing. Despite a strong agricultural base, a decade (1979 - 1991) of intermittent drought made it impossible for many farm operations to continue.

TABLE 3

**PROJECTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY  
1990 - 2015**

| PROJECTED<br>EMPLOMENT      | 1990   |     | 1995   |     | 2000   |     | 2005   |     | 2010   |     | 2015   |     |
|-----------------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|--------|-----|--------|-----|--------|-----|--------|-----|
|                             | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  |
| Farming                     | 4%     | 2%  | 4%     | 2%  | 4%     | 1%  | 3%     | 1%  | 3%     | 1%  | 3%     | 1%  |
| Agricultural Svcs.          | 2%     | 1%  | 2%     | 1%  | 2%     | 1%  | 2%     | 1%  | 2%     | 1%  | 2%     | 1%  |
| Mining                      | 1%     | <1% | 1%     | <1% | 2%     | <1% | 2%     | <1% | 2%     | <1% | 2%     | <1% |
| Construction                | 4%     | 6%  | 4%     | 6%  | 4%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  |
| Manufacturing               | 23%    | 16% | 23%    | 15% | 23%    | 15% | 24%    | 15% | 24%    | 15% | 24%    | 15% |
| Trans, Comm, & Public Utils | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  |
| Wholesale Trade             | 5%     | 7%  | 5%     | 7%  | 5%     | 7%  | 5%     | 8%  | 4%     | 8%  | 4%     | 8%  |
| Retail Trade                | 17%    | 17% | 17%    | 17% | 18%    | 17% | 19%    | 17% | 19%    | 17% | 19%    | 17% |
| Fin, Ins & Real Estate      | 4%     | 7%  | 4%     | 7%  | 5%     | 7%  | 5%     | 7%  | 5%     | 7%  | 5%     | 7%  |
| Services                    | 16%    | 23% | 15%    | 23% | 15%    | 24% | 14%    | 24% | 14%    | 25% | 14%    | 26% |
| Government                  | 19%    | 17% | 19%    | 17% | 19%    | 16% | 19%    | 15% | 18%    | 15% | 17%    | 14% |
| PROJECTED<br>EARNINGS       | 1990   |     | 1995   |     | 2000   |     | 2005   |     | 2010   |     | 2015   |     |
|                             | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  | SUMTER | GA  |
| Farming                     | 5%     | 2%  | 5%     | 2%  | 5%     | 2%  | 5%     | 2%  | 5%     | 1%  | 5%     | 1%  |
| Agricultural Svcs.          | 1%     | <1% | 1%     | <1% | 1%     | <1% | 1%     | <1% | 1%     | <1% | 1%     | 1%  |
| Mining                      | 2%     | <1% | 2%     | <1% | 2%     | <1% | 3%     | <1% | 3%     | <1% | 3%     | <1% |
| Construction                | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  | 5%     | 6%  |
| Manufacturing               | 28%    | 18% | 29%    | 18% | 30%    | 19% | 31%    | 19% | 32%    | 19% | 33%    | 19% |
| Trans, Comm, & Public Utils | 8%     | 9%  | 8%     | 10% | 8%     | 10% | 8%     | 10% | 8%     | 10% | 8%     | 10% |
| Wholesale Trade             | 5%     | 9%  | 5%     | 10% | 5%     | 10% | 5%     | 11% | 5%     | 10% | 5%     | 10% |
| Retail Trade                | 10%    | 10% | 10%    | 10% | 10%    | 10% | 10%    | 10% | 10%    | 10% | 10%    | 9%  |
| Fin, Ins. & Real Estate     | 2%     | 7%  | 2%     | 6%  | 3%     | 6%  | 3%     | 7%  | 3%     | 7%  | 3%     | 7%  |
| Services                    | 15%    | 22% | 14%    | 22% | 13%    | 23% | 12%    | 23% | 12%    | 23% | 12%    | 24% |
| Government                  | 19%    | 16% | 18%    | 15% | 17%    | 15% | 17%    | 14% | 16%    | 14% | 16%    | 13% |

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. 1991

Percentage conversions by Middle Flint RDC

Some percentages do not total 100 due to separate rounding.



**TABLE 4**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION**  
**1980, 1990**

| OCCUPATION  | 1980          |            |            | 1990          |            |               |             |
|---|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
|   | SUMTER        |            | GA         | SUMTER        |            | GA            | U. S.*      |
|   | #             | %          | %          | #             | %          | %             | %           |
| Executive, Administrative, and Managerial           | 1,093         | 9          | 10         | 1,156         | 9          | 12            | 13          |
| Professional  | 1,498         | 12         | 11         | 1,649         | 12         | 12            | 14          |
| Technicians and Related Support                     | 299           | 2          | 3          | 438           | 3          | 4             | 3           |
| Sales   | 855           | 7          | 10         | 1,320         | 10         | 12            | 12          |
| Administrative Support (including Clerical)         | 1,807         | 15         | 16         | 1,643         | 12         | 16            | 16          |
| Services - Private Household                        | 247           | 2          | 1          | 155           | 1          | 1             | 1           |
| Services - Protective                               | 133           | 1          | 1          | 220           | 2          | 2             | 2           |
| Services - Other                                    | 1,187         | 10         | 10         | 1,432         | 11         | 10            | 11          |
| Farming, Forestry, and Fishing                      | 821           | 7          | 3          | 643           | 5          | 2             | 3           |
| Precision Production, Craft, and Repair             | 1,541         | 13         | 13         | 1,638         | 12         | 12            | 11          |
| Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors       | 1,569         | 13         | 12         | 1,534         | 12         | 9             | 6           |
| Transportation and Material Moving                  | 559           | 5          | 5          | 830           | 6          | 5             | 4           |
| Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers | 598           | 5          | 5          | 679           | 5          | 4             | 4           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>12,207</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>13,334</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>101%**</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: U. S. Census

\*U.S. data is for 1991, from Statistical Abstract of the United States 1992.

Employed persons 16 years of age or older

\*\*Does not total 100 due to separate rounding.

**TABLE 5**  
**EMPLOYMENT BY CLASS OF WORKER**  
**1970, 1980, 1990**

| CLASS OF WORKER         | 1970   |         | 1980   |         | 1990   |    |         |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|----|---------|
|                         | SUMTER | GEORGIA | SUMTER | GEORGIA | SUMTER |    | GEORGIA |
|                         | %      | %       | %      | %       | #      | %  | %       |
| Private Wage and Salary | 74     | 76      | 72     | 75      | 9,141  | 74 | 77      |
| Government Workers      | 17     | 16      | 20     | 18      | 2,289  | 18 | 16      |
| Federal & State         | 9      | 9       | 10     | 10      | 1,377  | 11 | 9       |
| Local                   | 8      | 7       | 9      | 8       | 912    | 7  | 7       |
| Self-Employed           | 9      | 7       | 8      | 6       | 877    | 7  | 6       |
| In Agriculture          | -      | -       | 3      | 1       | 210    | -  | -       |
| Unpaid Family Workers   | .7     | .4      | 1      | .5      | 68     | .5 | .4      |
| In Agriculture          | -      | -       | .3     | .1      | -      | -  | -       |
| Total Employment #      | 9,505  | -       | 12,207 | -       | 12,375 | -  | -       |

Source: U. S. Census  
Employed persons 16 years of age or older

In a comparison of local and state labor forces (Table 5), the U.S. Census reports a slightly higher proportion of workers across Georgia are on private payrolls, while slightly higher proportions of the local labor force are employed in the public sector or self-employed. Statistics show Sumter lags the state in the proportion of private wage and salary workers by 2-3 percentage points. Numerous state government agencies have a regional office in Americus contributing to higher (2 percentage points) government employment at the local level in 1990. The slightly higher local self-employment level is attributed in large part, to the number of owner-operated farms.

The following table (Table 6) reveals the compilation of labor force data collected for one day (census day) in 1980 and 1990. Consequently, the information is not as valuable, and in fact may actually conflict with similar data collected throughout the two respective years. Nevertheless, it indicates a 4% (555 persons) expansion of the civilian labor force. This particular expansion was not a positive development, however, because it was comprised of 168 additional workers and 387 additional unemployed individuals who were looking for work. For every worker added to the labor force, there were 2.3 additional job seekers above and beyond the number previously (1980) unemployed.

Females comprised the only positive impact in the expansion as the number working increased by 397 (7%) and the number of unemployed females increased by only 79 (16%). On the other

hand, there were 229 (-3%) fewer working males and a 308 (108%) person increase in the number of unemployed males. In the local economy females constituted 86% of the expanded civilian labor force. The census also recorded significant percentage increases in female participation in the armed forces, although total participation decreased, and the total number of persons involved were quite small.

Statewide, the civilian labor force expanded by 74% with females accounting for 53% of this increase. The number of males employed increased by 58%, employed females increased by 89%. This state data was also collected on the two census days referenced above.

**TABLE 6**  
**LABOR FORCE STATUS**  
**1980, 1990**

| STATUS                   | 1980  |        |        | 1990  |        |        |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
|                          | MALE  | FEMALE | TOTAL  | MALE  | FEMALE | TOTAL  |
| Civilian Labor Force     | 6,999 | 5,992  | 12,991 | 7,078 | 6,468  | 13,546 |
| Employed                 | 6,714 | 5,493  | 12,207 | 6,485 | 5,890  | 12,375 |
| Unemployed               | 285   | 499    | 784    | 593   | 578    | 1,171  |
| Rate                     | 4.1%  | 8.3%   | 6.0%   | 8.4%  | 8.9%   | 8.6%   |
| Armed Forces             | 28    | 0      | 28     | 4     | 13     | 17     |
| Total Labor Force        | 7,027 | 5,992  | 13,019 | 7,082 | 6,481  | 13,563 |
| Not In Labor Force       | 2,432 | 5,845  | 8,277  | 2,750 | 5,950  | 8,700  |
| Persons 16 Yrs. or older | 9,459 | 11,837 | 21,296 | 9,832 | 12,431 | 22,263 |

Source: U. S. Census

Compared to larger jurisdictions, "working age" females in Sumter County are entering the civilian labor force at a significantly lower rate. Between 1980 and 1990 the proportion of local females 16 years of age or older in the labor force increased from 51% to 52%. Statewide, participation increased from 52% to 60%; similar to the 52% and 58% recorded across the U.S.<sup>1</sup>. These higher female entry rates coincide with dynamic growth in the more highly developed economies.

<sup>1</sup> Sumter and Georgia data as of census day 1980 and 1990. U.S. data is annual average of monthly figures; Statistical Abstract of the United States 1992.

Sumter County actually has a higher proportion of females among the 16+ age group than the state and nation (Table 7). The proportions changed very little for these jurisdictions during the 1970 - 1990 time frame; Sumter was the only one to record an increase (one percentile). However, females commanded a significantly increased share of the civilian labor force in all three jurisdictions. By 1990, almost half the local and statewide labor forces were female. This was part of the nationwide trend where the female proportion of the civilian labor force reportedly increased from 38% to 45% between 1970 and 1990. While more highly developed and dynamic economies may be the driving forces behind greater percentages of females across the state and nation participating in the civilian labor force, a less desirable factor is generating increased female participation in the local labor force. Between 1980 and 1990 the number of males added to the working-age population (here defined as 16-49 years of age) in Sumter County was one half the net increase recorded by females. Both sexes recorded population decreases in the 16-29 age grouping, especially males, and although increases were recorded in the 30 - 49 age grouping, the male increase was approximately 75% of the increase recorded by females.

**TABLE 7**  
**LABOR FORCE STATUS OF FEMALES**  
**1970, 1980, 1990**

| FEMALE               | SUMTER |      |      | GEORGIA |      |      | U.S. |      |      |
|----------------------|--------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                      | 1970   | 1980 | 1990 | 1970    | 1980 | 1990 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 |
| 16 Years Old or Over | 55%    | 56%  | 56%  | 53%     | 53%  | 52%  | 52%  | 52%  | 52%  |
| Civilian Labor Force | 41%    | 46%  | 48%  | 40%     | 44%  | 47%  | 38%  | 43%  | 45%  |

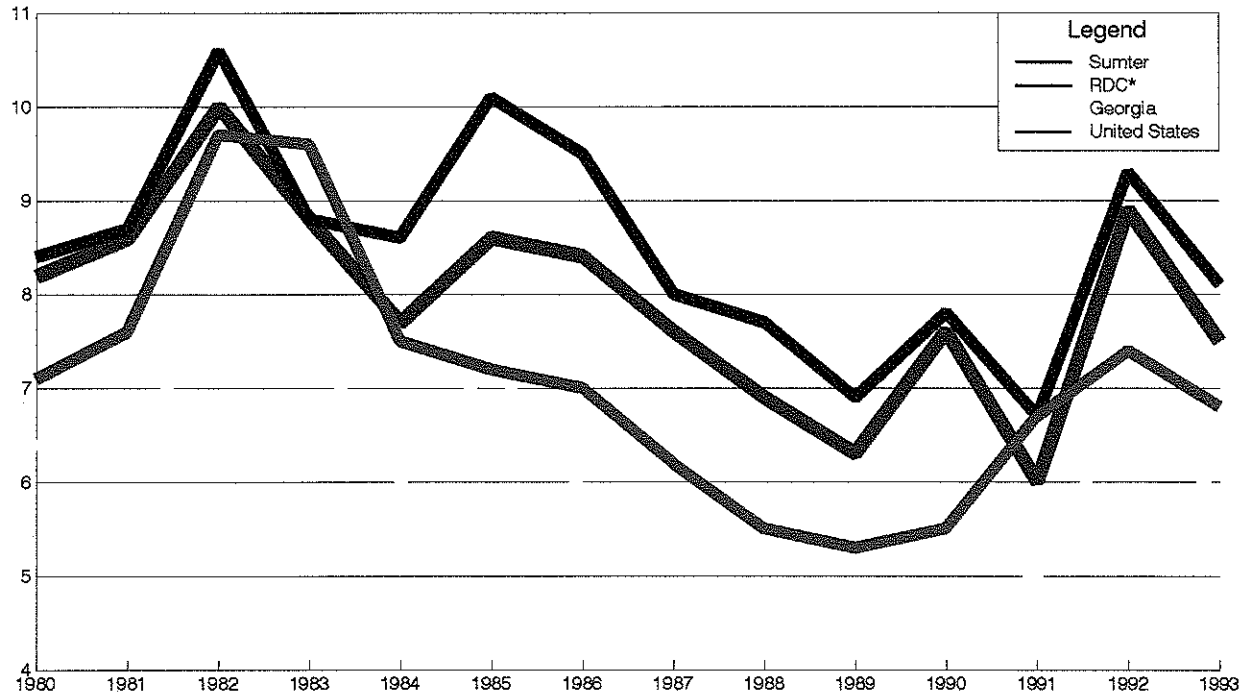
Source: Sumter and Georgia data from U. S. Census  
U.S. data from Statistical Abstract of the United States 1992

With rare exception, all five jurisdictions represented in the following graphic have recorded lower rates of unemployment with each successive year since 1982. Nevertheless, throughout the reported period local rates were consistently higher than those documented at the state level; on average, 1.7 percentage points higher.

As was seen in Table 4, Sumter County has an occupational mix similar to that of the state. That fact, plus local and state unemployment trends suggest Sumter County is affected by many of the same economic factors as the larger state economy, and perhaps more sensitive to economic influences because of a much smaller employment base. In 1990, a loss of 140 jobs would have increased the local unemployment rate by 1%. Statewide it would have taken the loss of 31,000 jobs to have the same negative impact on the unemployment rate.

**TABLE 8**

**ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 1980 - 1993**



Source: Georgia Department of Labor  
 United States rates from Statistical Abstract  
 \*Middle Flint Regional Development Center Counties-Crisp, Dooley, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, Taylor and Webster

**SUMTER COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATES**

8.2    8.6    10.0    8.8    7.7    8.6    8.4    7.6    6.9    6.3    7.6    6.0    8.9    7.5

**TABLE 9**  
**COMMUTING PATTERNS**  
**1970, 1980**

|                                    | 1970  | 1980   |
|------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Workers 16 years of age or over    | 9,357 | 11,882 |
| Place of Work Reported             | 8,357 | 10,457 |
| Worked in County of Residence      | 7,742 | 9,308  |
| Worked Outside County of Residence | 615   | 1,149  |
| Place of Work not Reported         | 1,000 | 1,425  |

Source: U. S. Census

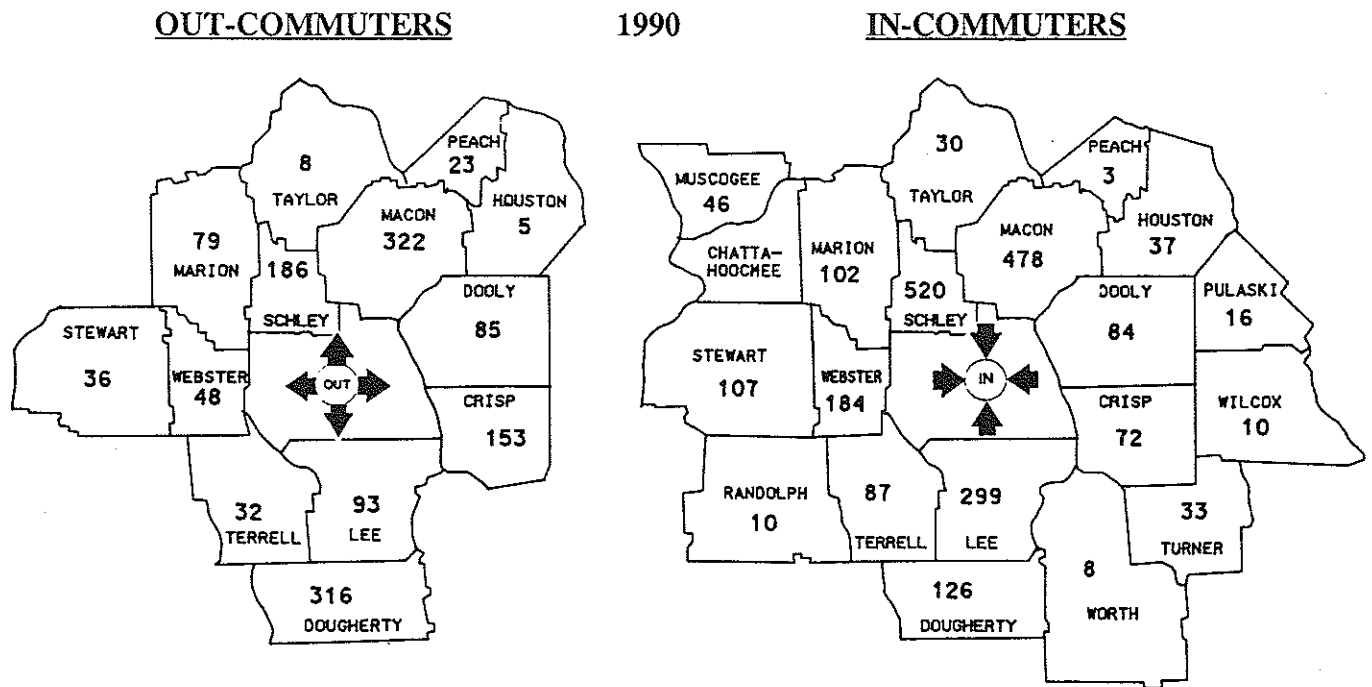
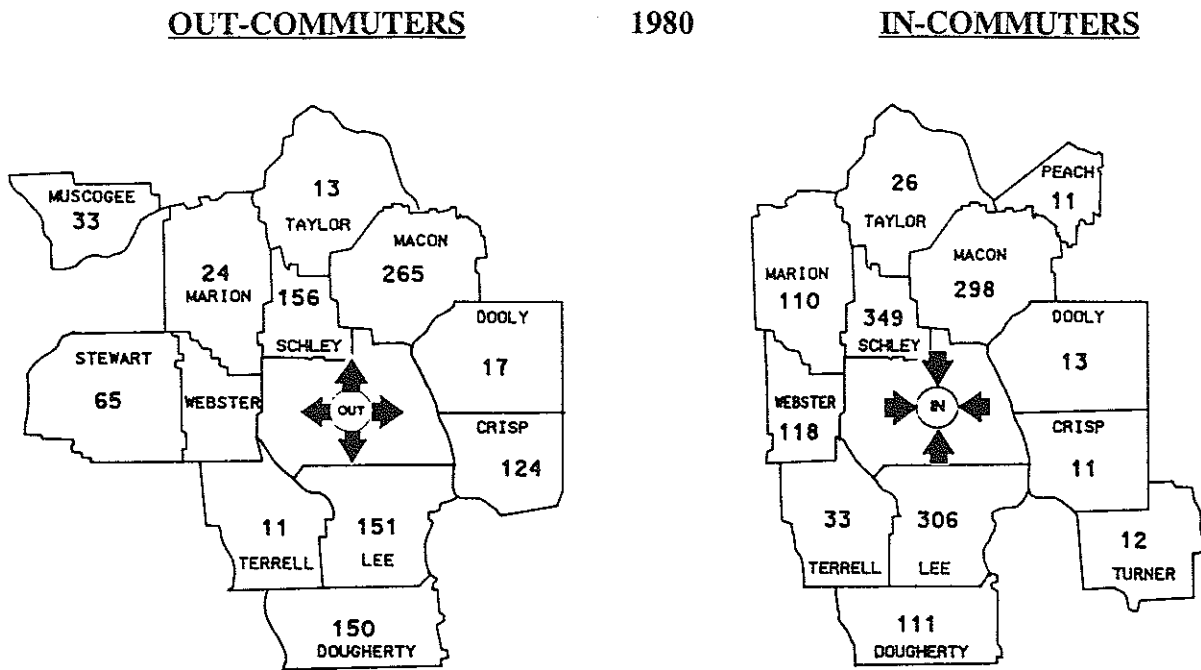
According to the 1970 Census 6.6% (615) of working Sumter County residents 16 years of age or over commuted to their place of employment outside the county. By the time of the 1980 Census 9.7% (1,149) were commuting out-of-county to work. Despite this increase, only fifteen counties had lower out-commuter rates in 1980. The average among Georgia's 159 counties was 27%. Low out-commuter rates are indicative of the community's position as a sub-regional employment and trade center.

Presented on the next page is a graphic representation of commuting patterns recorded on census day in 1980 and 1990. The 1980 Census reported that in-commuting and out-commuting was confined to approximately twelve counties around Sumter. More recent data presents a completely different picture, however.

The 1990 Census reported out-commuting to 39 counties throughout the state; to counties as far away as Cobb, Oglethorpe, Lowndes and Pierce. Ninety-five residents were reportedly commuting to work in six states, and Washington D.C.

In-commuters were coming from 45 counties, traveling from as far away as Floyd, Habersham and Glynn Counties. Ninety workers were reportedly traveling from seven states to work in Sumter County. Accuracy of the 1990 data is highly suspect in the minds of local residents. Nevertheless, the reported 1990 commuting pattern in nearby counties is presented in Table 10.

**TABLE 10**  
**COMMUTING PATTERNS**



Source: 1980 commuting pattern is from Issues Facing Georgia, Douglas C. Bachtel, et.al., University of Georgia, Cooperative Extension Service, Vol. 2, No. 2, April, 1985  
 1990 commuting pattern is from 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File S-5.

The Census Bureau redefined some of the "unearned" income categories between the 1980 and 1990 Censuses (Table 11). Consequently, all of the data collected for the two periods are not directly comparable. Of the five income categories which were documented in both census periods, three earned and two "unearned", only Wage or Salary recorded a proportional increase; from 74% to 78% of Sumter's aggregate household income. Georgia Wage or Salary income recorded a proportional increase from 78% to 84%. Increases recorded in other income types, at both state and local levels, were less than one percentage point.

Farm Self-Employment is the only income type (for Sumter) which recorded a decrease (37%) in the number of households receiving income, indicating the volatility of agricultural incomes. For instance, an especially bad crop year in 1979 was the major factor contributing to the 214% increase in mean household income documented a decade later.

The census recorded a relative deterioration between 1980 and 1990 in Sumter's mean household income derived from Wage or Salary. The earlier census documented a local income equivalent to 81% of the state level; by 1990 this had fallen to 75%. This is similar to the four percentile decrease in average weekly wages (All-Industries) reported in the accompanying Table 2. Nonfarm Self-Employment recorded a two percentile increase (84% - 86%) relative to the state, while Farm Self-Employment increased from 83% to 148% of state levels. Collectively, these local Earnings accounted for 82% of aggregate household income in 1980, and 87% in 1990. Statewide, Earnings accounted for 85% and 91% of aggregate household income, respectively. Local household income derived from Social Security maintained its relative position vis-a-vis the state (93% - 92%), while Public Assistance income increased from 97% to 101% of the state level.

This data is accompanied by income projections (Table 12). Data in Tables 11 and 12 are not directly comparable because the different sources make use of different income classifications. The latter table suggests a declining reliance on Earnings income, especially at the state level. The most significant decline is projected for statewide wage or salary; from 60% of aggregate household income in 1990 to 55% by the year 2015. Passive incomes are projected to increase as a proportion of the total.



**TABLE 11**

**INCOME BY TYPE, BY HOUSEHOLD  
1980, 1990**

| Income Type                       | 1980       |              |                  | 1985             | 1990       |              |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|
|                                   | Households | Hhld Income* | Mean Hhld Income | Mean Hhld Income | Households | Hhld Income* | Mean Hhld Income |
| <b>Earnings</b>                   |            |              |                  |                  |            |              |                  |
| Wage or Salary                    | 7,247      | \$105.8      | \$14,599         | \$20,678         | 7,659      | \$204.9      | \$26,757         |
| Non-Farm Self-Employment          | 894        | \$ 9.5       | \$10,612         | \$13,680         | 1,042      | \$ 17.5      | \$16,748         |
| Farm Self-Employment              | 505        | \$ 2.3       | \$ 4,519         | \$ 9,358         | 316        | \$ 4.5       | \$14,196         |
| Social Security                   | 2,719      | \$ 9.3       | \$ 3,406         | \$ 4,896         | 2,929      | \$ 18.7      | \$ 6,387         |
| Public Assistance                 | 1,228      | \$ 2.3       | \$ 1,904         | \$ 2,570         | 1,675      | \$ 5.4       | \$ 3,236         |
| Retirement                        | -          | -            | -                | -                | 1,390      | \$ 11.1      | \$ 7,965         |
| Interest, Dividend, Rental        | 2,531      | \$ 7.5       | \$ 2,954         | -                | 2,472      | \$ 15.2      | \$ 6,140         |
| All Other                         | 2,024      | \$ 6.7       | \$ 3,317         | -                | 1,314      | \$ 4.8       | \$ 3,681         |
| <b>Aggregate Household Income</b> |            | \$143.4      |                  |                  |            | \$282.1      |                  |

Source: U.S. Census, 1980 and 1990 - incomes are for 1979 and 1989

1985 data are straight-line estimates of Middle Flint RDC

\* Incomes are in millions of current dollars.

Households receiving more than one type of income are counted in each.

**TABLE 12**

**INCOME PROJECTIONS BY TYPE  
(Percentage Distribution)  
1990 - 2015**

| INCOME TYPE                             | 1990 |    | 1995 |    | 2000 |    | 2005 |    | 2010 |    | 2015 |    |
|---|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|
|   | SUM  | GA | SUM  | GA | SUM  | GA | SUM  | GA | SUM  | GA | SUM  | GA |
|   | %    | %  | %    | %  | %    | %  | %    | %  | %    | %  | %    | %  |
| <b>Earnings</b>                         |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |
| Wage or Salary                          | 52   | 60 | 52   | 59 | 51   | 59 | 51   | 57 | 50   | 56 | 49   | 55 |
| Other Labor                             | 5    | 6  | 5    | 6  | 5    | 5  | 5    | 5  | 5    | 5  | 5    | 5  |
| Proprietor's Income                     | 10   | 8  | 9    | 7  | 9    | 7  | 9    | 7  | 9    | 6  | 9    | 6  |
| Dividend, Investment, Rent and Interest | 16   | 14 | 16   | 14 | 17   | 15 | 17   | 16 | 18   | 16 | 19   | 17 |
| Transfer Payments                       | 17   | 13 | 18   | 14 | 18   | 14 | 18   | 15 | 18   | 16 | 19   | 17 |

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 1991

Sumter County/Americus has historically been a retail trade center at the sub-regional level; Albany, Columbus and Macon being the nearest regional trade centers. While the community maintains this reputation, some recent economic census data suggests a softening of economic vitality.

**TABLE 13**  
**RETAIL SALES**  
**1977, 1982, 1987**

|  | 1977   |          |               | 1982    |          |               | 1987    |          |             |
|--|--------|----------|---------------|---------|----------|---------------|---------|----------|-------------|
|  | SUMTER | AMERICUS | GEORGIA       | SUMTER  | AMERICUS | GEORGIA       | SUMTER  | AMERICUS | GEORGIA     |
| Retail Establishments (1)              | 264    | 216      | 30,954        | 199     | 172      | 32,203        | 221     | 186      | 39,782      |
| Sales (\$1,000 current dollars)        | 86,947 | 82,304   | 15.27 Billion | 125,660 | 120,516  | 23.75 Billion | 171,728 | 164,243  | 40 Billion  |
| Annual Payroll (\$1,000)               | 8,911  | 8,469    | 1.8 Billion   | 14,386  | 13,809   | 2.7 Billion   | 19,743  | 18,866   | 4.8 Billion |
| Paid Employees                         | 1,532  | 1,429    | 284,973       | 1,797   | 1,708    | 331,487       | 2,192   | 2,080    | 486,992     |
| Sales Per Capita (2)                   | 2,961  | 3,106    | 2,796         | 4,171   | 7,368    | 4,349         | 5,681   | 9,946    | 6,174       |
| Building Materials and Garden Supplies | (D)    | 267      | 162           | 472     | (D)      | 236           | 299     | (D)      | 391         |
| General Merchandise                    | 111    | 202      | 407           | (D)     | (D)      | 503           | (D)     | (D)      | 760         |
| Food Stores                            | 693    | 1,196    | 628           | 949     | 1,587    | 995           | 1,192   | 1,991    | 1,190       |
| Automotive Dealers                     | 510    | (D)      | 654           | 458     | (D)      | 833           | 646     | 1,088    | 1,453       |
| Gasoline Service Stations              | 248    | 424      | 241           | 274     | 474      | 436           | 298     | (D)      | 461         |
| Apparel and Accessory                  | 220    | (D)      | 139           | 347     | 634      | 227           | 401     | 734      | 287         |
| Furniture and Home Furnishing          | 91     | 165      | 123           | 105     | 192      | 184           | 144     | (D)      | 312         |
| Eating and Drinking Places             | 145    | 248      | 235           | 298     | (D)      | 410           | 388     | 686      | 614         |
| Drug and Proprietary                   | 115    | (D)      | 97            | 178     | (D)      | 146           | 197     | (D)      | 213         |
| Miscellaneous Retail                   | (D)    | 1,142    | 252           | (D)     | (D)      | 378           | (D)     | (D)      | 492         |

Source: Census of Retail Trade

Sumter data are countywide totals

(1) With Payroll

(2) 1977 and 1982 sales per capita determined by using 1980 Census of Population

1987 sales per capita determined by using 1990 Census of Population

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual companies

Despite a 16% loss in the number of local retail establishments 1977 - 1987 (Table 13), Americus recorded increases in sales (100%), annual payroll (123%), and employees (46%). These rates of growth were significantly lower than the rates recorded statewide, however. Furthermore, relative to state level data, Americus' retail sales per capita are decreasing precipitously. In 1977, Americus' sales per capita were 83% higher than the state level; in 1982 and 1987, 74% and 61% higher, respectively.

Between 1982 and 1987 Sumter fell in rank from 34 to 38 in volume of sales among Georgia's 159 counties, despite a 37% increase in sales (Table 14). Americus fell in rank from 37 to 40 among communities with 2,500 or more population, even with a 35% increase in sales. However, it is worth noting that in almost all cases those communities which moved ahead of Sumter and Americus in rank are located in Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

Furthermore, recent data indicates local increases in retail activity have lagged increases recorded in collective rural Georgia. Despite its position as a trade center, Sumter recorded lower level increases in retail sales, annual payroll and number of retail employees than the state's 125 non-metropolitan counties (1980 MSA definition). Sumter lagged even further behind the increases of the state and its eight Metropolitan Statistical Areas (34 counties).

**TABLE 14**  
**PERCENTAGE INCREASES IN RETAIL ACTIVITY**  
**1982 - 1987**

|          | NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS | RETAIL SALES | ANNUAL PAYROLL | NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES |
|----------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Sumter   | 11%                      | 37%          | 37%            | 22%                 |
| Non-MSA* | 9%                       | 46%          | 48%            | 28%                 |
| MSA **   | 31%                      | 75%          | 82%            | 53%                 |
| Georgia  | 24%                      | 68%          | 78%            | 47%                 |

Source: Census of Retail Trade 1982 and 1987

Establishments with payroll

\* Non-MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Areas - 1980 definition) 125 counties

\*\*MSA (1980 definition) data includes five counties in neighboring states

Among the factors contributing to this relative decline in retail sales activity; parking congestion in downtown Americus; limited retail selection which is made all the more significant by expanding retail selection within local shoppers' commute, e.g. Albany, Columbus, Cordele and Macon. Weaker sales volumes are anticipated in the 1992 Census of Retail Trade because of the closing of several large volume retail establishments in downtown Americus.

While this may prove to be true, city officials report numerous indicators of a retail economy on the rebound. Sales tax revenues have increased significantly each year since 1990. Opening of the Jameson Inn contributed to a 100% increase in the hotel/motel tax. Business license revenue, which in Americus is based on gross receipts, has been increasing steadily. Several retail establishments have opened in the central business district, taking up some of the economic slack caused by the closure of Sumner Furniture, Americus Hardware, etc. These new establishments are anchored by the Windsor. At this writing there are two large scale commercial developments soon to get underway; a new shopping center to be anchored by Winn Dixie and a Wal-Mart larger than the existing store. Collectively, these projects are expected to increase the city's strength vis-a-vis other areas of the state.

Despite statistical indicators of relative retail decline, Table 15 reveals healthy per capita sales. The county has a per capita sales level in excess of the state non-metropolitan area, and the City of Americus has per capita sales significantly higher than the state and the state's metropolitan community. The following per capita sales levels for 1987 are presented for comparison: Albany - \$9,065, Dougherty County - \$7,560, Macon - \$11,019, Bibb County - \$8,203, Columbus/Muscogee County - \$7,504.

**TABLE 15**

**1987 PER CAPITA RETAIL SALES**

| <b>SUMTER</b>  | <b>AMERICUS</b> | <b>NON-MSA</b> | <b>MSA</b>     | <b>GEORGIA</b> |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>\$5,681</b> | <b>\$9,946</b>  | <b>\$4,368</b> | <b>\$7,974</b> | <b>\$6,174</b> |

Establishments with payroll

Sources: 1987 Census of Retail Trade and 1990 Census of Population

Non-MSA - based on 1990 population of the 125 counties which in 1980 were not in Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

MSA - based on 1990 population of the 34 counties which in 1980 comprised the state's eight Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

During the first fifteen years of local shopping center development, a new complex was constructed, on average, every four years. Although technically not a shopping center, Wal-Mart is included in Table 16 because of the major role it plays in local retail activity. Appearance of this discount retailer seemed to interrupt the short-lived trend of shopping center development. Madison Square was not a new development but rather an existing, vacant facility which was renovated and gradually occupied by existing businesses relocating from within the City of Americus. The community has now gone almost fifteen years since the last true shopping center development.

**TABLE 16**  
**SHOPPING CENTERS**  
**1992**

| SHOPPING CENTER  | YEAR OPENED | GROSS LEASABLE AREA IN SQ. FT. | NUMBER OF STORES | NAME & TYPE OF ANCHOR STORE(S)                  | NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---|---------------------|
| Wheatley Plaza   | 1965        | 60,600                         | 4                | Big "B" Drugs                                   | 35                  |
| Belair Plaza     | 1969        | 48,000                         | 6                | Harvey's  | 65                  |
| Perlis Plaza     | 1975        | 166,300                        | 31               | Belk's<br>Piggly Wiggly                         |                     |
| Americus Village | 1978        | 78,500                         | 20               | Theater<br>Shoney's Restaurant<br>Wall's Sports | 70                  |
| Eastgate         | 1980        | 44,400                         | 4                | Winn Dixie                                      | 100                 |
| Wal-Mart         | 1984        | 62,900                         | 1                | Discount  | 210                 |
| Madison Square   | 1990        | 8,300                          | 4                | Dill's Florist and Gifts                        | 17                  |
| Totals           | -           | 469,000                        | 70               | -   |                     |

Source: Americus - Sumter County Chamber of Commerce 1992

Even counties with a strong agricultural heritage have recorded some degree of agricultural decline in recent years, and Sumter is no exception (Table 17). Over the thirteen-year study period (1974 - 1987) the county lost 22% of its farms, little different from the 21% loss recorded statewide. This amounts to an average loss of seven local farms each year. (The reader should be aware the census definition of farm was changed during this period to a larger acreage and higher sales volume, possibly influencing this loss.)

**TABLE 17**  
**AGRICULTURE**

|  | 1974    |              | 1978    |              | 1982    |              | 1987    |              |
|--|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|
|  | SUMTER  | GA           | SUMTER  | GA           | SUMTER  | GA           | SUMTER  | GA           |
| Number of Farms                        | 404     | 54,911       | 364     | 51,405       | 360     | 49,360       | 314     | 43,552       |
| Acreage in Farms                       | 201,841 | 13.9 million | 187,446 | 13.4 million | 193,611 | 12.3 million | 175,496 | 10.7 million |
| Average Size (acres)                   | 500     | 253          | 515     | 261          | 538     | 248          | 559     | 247          |
| Average Market Value of Sales          | 79,382  | 33,869       | 111,885 | 45,531       | 110,885 | 55,766       | 112,617 | 64,626       |
| Average Value Land & Bldgs. - Per Acre | 450     | 474          | 873     | 768          | 1,021   | 929          | 715     | 920          |
| Average Age of Operator                | 50.7    | 52.6         | 48.9    | 51.1         | 50.2    | 51.7         | 51.1    | 53.2         |
| Operator's Principal Occupation:       |         |              |         |              |         |              |         |              |
| Farming                                | 66%     | 56%          | 66%     | 49%          | 69%     | 46%          | 61%     | 45%          |
| Payroll (\$1,000)                      | -       | -            | 2,212   | 138,769      | 2,838   | 149,524      | 3,447   | 209,647      |

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Both jurisdictions recorded decreases in acreage in farms during the report period. However, Sumter recorded a significantly lesser percentage loss (13% vs, 23%). Consequently, the average size of local farm units increased by 12%. The state recorded losses in both categories; 23% and 21%, respectively. In 1987, Sumter was 51st in number of farms, 11th in average farm size and 14th in proportion of land in farms.

One of the strongest indicators of Sumter County's contribution to the state's agricultural economy is revealed in the average market value of sales per farm. During the study period they ranged from 74% higher (1987) to 146% higher (1978) than the state average. Because of this economic strength a greater proportion of local operators are able to claim farming as their principal occupation.

The gross value of Sumter County's agricultural commodities in 1992 was estimated to have been \$69.3 million. All commodities with gross values estimated to have been \$1 million or higher are presented in Table 18. The 1991 estimated values of each commodity are presented for comparison.

**TABLE 18**  
**GROSS FARM VALUES**

| COMMODITY   | GROSS FARM VALUE |              |
|-------------|------------------|--------------|
|             | 1992             | 1991         |
| Peanuts     | \$17,386,200     | \$27,547,900 |
| Forestry    | 12,700,050       | 7,100,000    |
| Vegetables  | 10,128,400       | 9,978,200    |
| Swine       | 5,037,550        | 4,544,800    |
| Cotton      | 4,232,200        | 3,581,850    |
| Corn        | 4,123,400        | 3,411,525    |
| Beef Cattle | 3,437,600        | 2,211,750    |
| Wheat       | 1,828,500        | 1,335,600    |
| Peaches     | 1,732,500        | 420,000      |
| Soybeans    | 1,653,050        | 963,475      |
| Dairy       | 1,408,450        | 1,398,875    |
| Pecans      | 1,305,000        | 3,500,000    |
| Turfgrass   | 1,100,000        | 880,000      |
| Greenhouse  | 1,050,000        | 900,000      |
| Other       | 2,208,520        | 3,176,065    |
| Total       | \$69,331,420     | \$70,950,040 |

Source: Sumter County Extension Service

Despite the presence of irrigation, agricultural productivity is still greatly influenced by the timing and amount of rainfall which can vary drastically from year to year. Consequently, the study of yields and income for any single crop year can grossly distort an analysis of the health of an agricultural economy. Table 19 shows income trends based on five separate years over an eighteen year period. Farm personal income is constituting less and less of total personal income at both the local and state level.

**TABLE 19**  
**FARM PERSONAL INCOME**  
**AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME**  
(millions of current dollars)

|           | 1969   | 1974   | 1978   | 1982  | 1987   | Rank in 1987 |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------------|
| SUMTER \$ | \$10.7 | \$13.2 | \$11.2 | \$7.6 | \$12.8 | 23           |
| SUMTER %  | 15.1%  | 11.9%  | 7.0%   | 3.2%  | 3.7%   | 78           |
| GEORGIA % | 3.1%   | 3.0%   | 1.8%   | 1.4%  | 1.4%   | -            |

Source: *Issues Facing Georgia*, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia, Volume 2, November 10, 1990.

TABLE 20  
EXISTING MANUFACTURERS  
SUMTER COUNTY  
1993

**Americus Banc Supply Co., Inc.**

Market - Regional  
Bank/Business Forms  
Employment - 16

**Americus Polyfoam, Inc.**

Market - National  
Polyfoam  
Employment - N/A

**The Americus Shopper**

Shoppers' Guide  
Employment - N/A

**Americus Times-Recorder**

Market - District  
Newspaper Printing  
Employment - 28

**Austin Urethane, Inc.**

Market - Regional  
Flexible Polyurethane Foam  
Packaging/Seating Foam  
Automotive Seating  
Employment - 63

**Automated Metal Supply**

Market - Regional  
Heating & AC Ducts  
Draperies Hardware  
Coiled Aluminum Sheets  
Employment - 9

**Bell Vault Co.**

Market - Regional  
Burial Vaults  
Employment - 8

**Caravelle Boats, Inc.**

Market - International  
Fiberglass Boats  
Employment - 55

**Cooper Lighting -**

**Fluorescent Oprs.**  
Market - National  
Fluorescent Lighting  
Employment - 661

**Gertrude Davenport, Inc.**

Terry Knit Sportswear  
Women's Velour Sportswear  
Employment - 39

**Davidson Exterior Trim**

Market - National  
Plastic Automotive Components  
Fascia  
Energy Absorbers  
Body Trim Panels  
Employment - 1,050

**Dell's Drapery**

Market - State  
Draperies & Curtains  
Employment - 2

**Diversified Wood Products**

Market - National  
K-D Office Chairs  
Dimension Wood Components  
Employment - 40

**Cal Duke & Associates**

Market - Regional  
Magazine Publishing  
Employment - 10

**Easom Mfg. Corp.**

Market - Regional  
Rings/Charms/Earrings  
Employment - 4

**Gailey Industries, Inc.**

Market - International  
Upholstered Furniture  
Employment - 42

**Gammage Print Shop, Inc.**

Market - District  
Offset Job Printing  
Employment - 17

**Georgia Forest Products, Inc.**

Market - Regional  
Hardwood/Pallet Lumber  
Employment - 30

**Gold Kist, Inc.**

Market - District  
Fertilizer  
Animal Feed  
Employment - 6

**Hickory Springs Mfgr.  
Company Inc.**

Market - Regional  
Polyurethane Foam  
Furniture & Bedding Springs  
Employment - N/A

**Housing Supply, Inc.**

Market - National  
Kitchen Cabinets  
Employment - 200

**IMC Fertilizer Inc.**

Market - International  
N-P-K Fertilizer  
Superphosphate  
Hydrofluosilicic Acid  
Employment - 90

**Johnson Metal Products Inc.**

Market - Local  
Machine Shop  
Employment - 5

**Kinder MFG. Co.**

Market - Regional  
Sofas, Chairs  
Mattresses  
Employment - 81

**Koinonia Products**

Market - National  
Pecans, Cakes, Candy  
Employment - 50

**Lippert Components, Inc.**

Market - Regional  
Mobile Home Roofs  
Mobile Home Frames  
Employment - 37



**Mallard Coach Co., Inc.**  
Market - Regional  
Non-Motorized Rec Vehicles  
Employment - 35

**Manhattan Shirt Co., The**  
Market - National  
Men's Dress Shirts  
Employment - 528

**Martin Marietta Technical Services**  
Market - National  
Electronic Test Equipment  
Electronic Sub-assembly  
Employment - 90

**Mendustries**  
Market - Local  
Aluminum Storm Windows  
& Doors  
Carports/Patio Covers  
Security Bars  
Employment - 1

**Oakland Wood Products**  
Market - District  
Cut Timber  
Employment - 10

**Rich Marketing, Inc.**  
Market - International  
Trampolines & Bumper Pads  
Body Bldg. & Exercise Equip.  
Micro Electric Sports Medicine  
Employment - 50

**Rock-Tenn Co.**  
Market - Local  
Corrugated Cartons  
Interior Packaging  
Employment - 20

**Sanderlin Agriculture Services, Inc.**  
Market - Local  
Fertilizers  
Agricultural Chemicals  
Employment - 12

**Scott Bedding Co.**  
Market - District  
Mattresses  
Box Springs  
Upholstered Sofas, Chairs  
Employment - 108

**Shy-Aldridge Sheet Metal Shop**  
Market - Local  
Sheet Metal Fabrication  
Employment - N/A

**Simplex Nails, Inc.**  
Market - International  
Roofing Nails  
Employment - 60

**Star Cycle & Machine, Inc.**  
Market - National  
Motor Cycle Exhaust Systems  
Employment - 11

**Star Racing**  
Market - National  
Motorcycle Exhaust Systems  
Employment - 12

**Sumter Redi-Mix, Inc.**  
Market - District  
Ready-Mixed Concrete  
Employment 14

**Superior Welding**  
Market - Regional  
Welding  
Steel Fabrication  
Employment - 5

**The Times-Recorder Co., Inc.**  
Market - Local  
Newspaper Printing  
Employment - 32

**Turner Enterprises, Inc.**  
Market - Regional  
Bedroom Sets, Chests  
Electronic Centers  
TV & Micro Carts  
Employment - 61

**Valley Wood, Inc.**  
Market - Regional  
Sawmill  
Employment - N/A

**Wise Olde Pine Furniture Co.**  
Market - Regional  
Early American Reproduct. Furn  
Heart Pine Flooring  
Custom Made Furniture  
Employment - 4

**Woodgrain Millwork, Inc.**  
Market - Regional  
Prefinished Moldings  
Prestained Interior Trim  
Unfinished Solid Moldings  
Millwork Moldings/Pine Doors  
Employment - 120

**Mullite Company of America**  
Market - National  
Refined Bauxite  
Calcinated Kaolin  
Employment - N/A

**Brandt Chemical Co., Inc.**  
Market - National  
Cleaning Chemicals  
Employment - 3

**Conart, Inc.**  
Market - Regional  
Precast Concrete Products  
Employment - 20

**DeSoto Confectionery & Nut Co.**  
Market - National  
Candy  
Employment - N/A

**MAPCO, Inc.**  
Market - International  
Liquid Fertilizer, LP Gas  
Agricultural Chemicals  
Employment - 8

**Americus Sign Co.**  
Market - Local  
Signs  
Employment - 3

**Jones Piping, Inc.**  
Sprinkler System Pipe  
Employment - 25

**Plains Products, Inc.**  
Market - International  
Kitchen Cabinet Doors & Stiles  
Plywood  
Hardboard, Fiberboard  
Employment - 75

There have been several developments in recent years which significantly enhanced the community's economic development standing and potential. The most significant of which are highlighted as follows.

In the mid 1980s the Georgia General Assembly expanded the tax base available to local governments by allowing them to impose special use sales taxes for projects specifically authorized by referendum. In 1988, Sumter County became the first of Georgia's 159 counties to approve imposition of an additional 1% sales tax to raise funds specifically targeted for economic development. Over the four year life of the tax (1988 - 1992) \$8 million was collected for the purpose of enhancing the community's economic infrastructure.

Some of the physical developments made with this revenue were quite beneficial in the community's successful recruitment of Martin-Marietta, an internationally recognized aerospace and defense contractor. The jobs this industrial manufacturer adds to the community will raise the skill level of the local workforce, further increasing the chances of attracting other employers dependent on skilled and highly-skilled workers. At this writing, employment stands at approximately 90 with projections for 200.

In the summer of 1993, a second aerospace contractor announced plans to locate in the community with a long range workforce of approximately 200. As important as infrastructure is in successfully recruiting new industry, both industries indicated the single most important factor attracting them to Sumter/Americus was the strategic manpower planning performed in advance of their recruitment.

In 1992, Georgia Southwestern College and South Georgia Technical Institute jointly announced the offering of an Automated Manufacturing Technology (AMT) Program, the first of its kind in the state. This high tech program emphasizes the application of science, mathematics and computer technology, and prepares graduates to operate, maintain, service and diagnose the robotics manufacturing equipment found in today's modern plants. AMT students receive hands-on-training in modern facilities with state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment including robotics and computer-guided machinery. In addition, this post-secondary program is complemented by the Tech-Prep program offered by Americus High School. Through this cooperative effort participating high school students are placed on a fast track to earning a diploma in Automated Manufacturing Technology, or an Associate of Applied Science degree, and existing and future industry will have access to a qualified workforce supported by local training programs.

The north half of Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd. was four-laned in 1992, a necessary prerequisite for the impending four-laning of U. S. 19. Completion of this highway development project between Atlanta and the Florida state line is critical to the county's economic future. The Georgia Department of Transportation has stated that before the end of the century U.S. 19 will be four-laned the full distance between Atlanta and the Florida line.

In 1978, the once elegant Windsor Hotel was donated to the City of Americus. The local landmark had become a major eyesore in the Americus central businesses district. After a decade of continuous effort a public/private partnership finally packaged a complex matrix of resources totalling \$5.8 million with which to completely renovate the landmark hotel. After

being restored to its earlier grandeur the Windsor reopened in September, 1991, as a 53 room hotel with restaurant and chef. This renovation has been recognized as one of the state's major achievements in historic preservation and downtown revitalization, and in 1993 earned a National Preservation Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

By vote of the U. S. Congress in 1987, all of the City of Plains and some areas around the city were designated the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site and Preservation District. Restoration of properties within the designated area is expected to generate more local tourism. The most current data available at this writing credits Sumter County with receipt of 25 million tourist dollars in 1991. The only way to compare this level of expenditure with the \$10.3 billion recorded throughout the state is to convert these sales to a per capita (population) basis. Applying 1990 populations to the sales volumes yields per capita receipts of \$829 locally and \$1,600 statewide.

**TABLE 21**

**TOURIST EXPENDITURES**

|         | 1984    | 1989    | 1990     | 1991     |
|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| Sumter  | \$22.57 | \$23.43 | \$ 23.66 | \$ 25.07 |
| Georgia | \$8,802 | \$9,787 | \$10,334 | \$10,362 |

Source: Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism  
Millions of current dollars

Sumter County has numerous resources available for use in developing its economic potential. Included among these resources are the following:

**Development Agencies**

- Americus - Sumter County Chamber of Commerce
- Americus Sumter Payroll Development Authority
- Americus Downtown Development Authority
- Sumter Development Corporation
- Middle Flint Regional Development Center

**Programs, Tools and Resources**

Recently used sales tax to construct a speculative industrial building  
Aggressive industrial recruitment through Chamber of Commerce  
Chamber of Commerce Tourism Division  
Two industrial parks  
Technology Center  
Freeport Exemption

**Education/Training Opportunities**

South Georgia Technical Institute  
Georgia Southwestern College  
Adult Education/GED  
Job Training Partnership Act  
Literacy Action  
Americus/Sumter County High School Technology Center (Tech-Prep)

## NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

The natural environment offers certain opportunities and places some constraints on the way land is used. Soil characteristics, slope of the land, and flood frequency are only a few of the many factors which affect where development can safely and feasibly occur. Other areas such as wetlands, prime agricultural and forest areas, sensitive plant and animal habitats, and historic sites which are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of development should be given consideration in the planning process and provided appropriate protection. The following section examines the county's natural features and areas of environmental, ecological and historic significance.

## NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

**Aquifer, Watersheds and Wetlands:** Approximately 13,000 square miles (23%) of Georgia's land surface have been identified as the area where the most significant recharge to aquifers occurs. Aquifers are soils or rocks that will yield water to wells. Recharge is the process by which precipitation, primarily in the form of rain, infiltrates soil and rock to add to the volume of water stored in pores and other openings within them. Recharge areas are among those regions in Georgia likely to have the greatest vulnerability to pollution of groundwater from the surface and near surface activities of man. Approximately 90% of Sumter County is a significant groundwater recharge area. The only areas not included are approximately 9,600 acres in the panhandle around Andersonville, and narrow bands along the larger creeks. The natural hydrology of precipitation in these latter areas is to flow into the nearby creek, not recharge the aquifer.

Pollution from sources located in the recharge areas has the increased potential not only of polluting groundwater in the immediate vicinity of the site, but of eventually affecting a substantial portion of the aquifer down gradient. Because flow rates are relatively slow in most of these aquifers, the effects of pollution may not appear for years in wells distant from the recharge area.

No water supply watersheds are located in Sumter County, and neither is the county located in a water supply watershed. Local water needs are met by wells drilled into groundwater aquifers.

Wetlands are currently defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as "those areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas".

The U.S. Clean Water Act requires that a permit be secured by anyone interested in dredging or placing fill in a wetland, and prescribes severe penalties for anyone found guilty of violating terms and provisions of the Act. Under current law the final determination of whether an area is a wetland and whether a permit is required for the proposed action must be made by the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

Some wetlands are not easily recognized, often because they are dry during part of the year. The Corps of Engineers considers three characteristics of wetlands when making wetland determinations - vegetation, soil and hydrology. A partial listing of some 5,000 plant types common in such areas includes cattails, bulrushes, sphagnum moss, bald cypress, willows, sedges, water plantains, and tupelo gum. An incomplete listing of common soil characteristics includes predominance of decomposed plant material and an odor of rotten eggs. In addition, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service has published a list of some 2,000 (hydric) soils that commonly occur in wetlands. Hydrologic indicators of wetlands include presence of standing or flowing water on a site for seven or more consecutive days during the growing season, and

soil that is water-logged.

According to current federal definitions approximately ten percent of the county's area is wetland. Scale limitations preclude insertion of a legible wetland map. Wetland maps are on file; however, in the office(s) of the Sumter County Chief Administrative Officer and/or County Tax Assessor.

There are not any officially designated floodplains in unincorporated Sumter County. The Cities of Americus, Andersonville and Leslie are the only areas with designated floodplains.

**Assessment:** Based on the 1990 Census, there are an estimated 4600-4700 septic tanks in the unincorporated area of Sumter County. Although there is no information detailing how many of these individual systems may have been improperly constructed over the years, or how many of the systems may now be malfunctioning, these tanks would seem to be the greatest threat for aquifer contamination in Sumter County. This threat has not been quantified, however. This potential, plus the fact that approximately 90% of the county is a significant groundwater recharge area, making compliance with chapter 391-3-16-.02, Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, all the more critical. These planning criteria, enforced by the Sumter County Health Department, include minimum lot sizes for installation of septic tank/drain field systems serving new homes and mobile home parks. The lot sizes are based on the site's pollution susceptibility.

Because of pollution susceptibility findings the State's Environmental Planning Criteria also regulate synthetic liners and leachate collection systems in sanitary landfills, prohibits land disposal of hazardous wastes, regulate treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste and handling of same, above-ground chemical or petroleum storage tanks, new agricultural waste impoundments, spray irrigation of wastewater and land application of wastewater sludges.

Since agriculture is the county's predominant land use, underground fuel storage tanks are common throughout the unincorporated area. Such underground facilities, regardless of use, are regulated by the Georgia Underground Storage Act. Farm advocacy organizations educate members and aerial applicators of proper farm chemical mixing and application procedures.

The agriculture community is also a major user of Sumter's groundwater supply. Irrigation systems which draw 100,000 gallons of water or more on any day are already regulated to prevent negative system pressure from introducing agriculture chemicals into the aquifer.

Generators of industrial wastewater usually seek plant sites from which raw sewage can be discharged into a municipal treatment system. Presently, there are not any industrial wastewater generators in unincorporated Sumter. The only known wastewater flow is classified as domestic and is "treated" by septic tank. At this writing local investors have plans of constructing a vegetable processing plant in the southern half of the county. Disposal of wastewater from any such facility will be regulated by Environmental Planning Criteria.

A relatively small proportion of the county's land area is currently classified as wetland. Any inquiries made of the county concerning wetlands will be referred to existing regulatory authorities. Sumter County lacks the technical resources to assist developers with wetland delineation.

**Steep Slopes:** Sumter County is located in the Southern Coastal Plain Province. Ninety-two percent of the county's land area has a slope of 8% or less, while the balance ranges between 8% and 17%. There are no significant steep slopes in the county.

**Assessment:** Regardless of slope, the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act requires permits be issued for land-disturbing activities affecting 1.1 acres or more. Land disturbing activities are defined as any activity which may result in soil erosion from water or wind and the movement of sediments onto lands within the state, including, but not limited to clearing, dredging, grading, excavating, transporting, and filling of land. There are exceptions, including farming and mining, both of which are affected by other similar statutes or regulations.

In the absence of a local erosion and sedimentation control ordinance any person planning a land-disturbing activity must, in accordance with current state law, apply to the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for the required permit. In the summer of 1993 the Board of Commissioners adopted an appropriate local ordinance, thereby reserving for itself the authority to issue the state mandated permit. Local issuing authority can facilitate appropriate development in the unincorporated area of the county.

**Prime Agricultural and Forest Land:** Prime farmland is defined by the U. S. Department of Agriculture as being that land best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It produces the highest yields with minimum inputs of energy and money, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime farmland is of major importance in satisfying the nation's short- and long-range needs for food and fiber.

Approximately 51% (159,210 acres) of the county is classified as prime farmland (reference map on page 87). This natural resource is relatively evenly distributed throughout the county with the exception of the north section of the Andersonville census division. By comparison, only 21% of Georgia's and 15% of the nation's total land areas are classified as prime agricultural land.

Forty-one percent of the county area is in commercial timber production, compared to 64% statewide. Of these 128,000 acres, approximately 45% is Pine, 42% is Hardwood, and 13% is Oak-Pine. Less than 1% of this forest land is owned by the federal, state, or local governments, 18% is owned by the forest industry, and 81% is owned by private individuals.

**Assessment:** Prime agricultural land is not defined by land use, but by the soil's characteristics and capabilities. The soil characteristics which are so conducive to efficient food and fiber production are the same features which make this resource attractive for residential, commercial, industrial and other land uses. Consequently, there is competition among the various economic



sectors for prime agricultural land. The agricultural sector rarely wins in such head-to-head competition because virtually all other land uses yield a much higher and immediate financial return to the investor/owner. It is very rare for any land converted to a nonagricultural use to revert to agricultural production.

A major strength of this nation has been agricultural self-sufficiency, and it is in large part due to this agricultural wealth that the U.S. has been able to develop the world's strongest and largest economy. There is great potential for irony in that the physical and economic development supported by the nation's agricultural base could consume (by land use conversion) the very foundation upon which such development depends. The level of development nationwide has reached the point that it threatens preservation of the 15% of the land area that is prime agricultural farmland. The fact that half of Sumter County's land area is prime agricultural farmland makes it more, not less, incumbent upon the community to develop some level of regulation on local development. This is an important and immediate local need.

Although forest land is important to the local, state and national economies, there is sufficient economic incentive to preserve this renewable resource. Commercial timberland acreage in Sumter County increased by approximately 9% during the 1980s. Maintenance of this local resource is not believed to be threatened by the activities of man. Furthermore, forest land makes a significant, positive contribution to the quality of life in Sumter County.

**Plant and Animal Habitats:** The National Heritage Inventory currently includes seven plants and twelve animals species classified as threatened or endangered with habitats in, or migratory ranges through, Sumter County. The plant and animal species are identified below. Plant habitats for which information was available are mapped on page 88.

**Canby Dropwort** (*Oxypolis Canbyi*): found in peat muck of shallow cypress ponds, and adjacent drainage ditches associated with wet pine savannahs.

**Harper Fimbristylis** (*Fimbristylis Perpusilla*): found on muddy bottoms and silty margins of drying pine barren ponds. Also appears around margins of farm ponds and is apparently dispersed by birds.

**Hirst Panic Grass** (*Panicum Hirstii*): Found rooted in peaty, grass-sedge mats in the sunny margins of both cypress-gum swamps and ponds bordered by red maple and various pines.

**White Trumpet, Whitetop Pitcherplant** (*Sarracenia Leucophyllia*): Found in acid soils of open bogs, and on sphagnum mats in light gaps of red maple-gum swamps.







**Hooded Pitcherplant** (*Sarracenia Minor*): found in acid soils of open bogs, wet savannahs, pond margins, low areas in pine flatwoods, and sphagnum seeps of red maple-gum swamps.

**Small-Flowered Obediant Plant, False Dragon Head** (*Physostegia Veroniciformis*): found in wet muck or in shallow water of river swamps and sloughs.

**Harper's Wild Ginger** (*Hexastylis Shuttleworthii* Var *Harperi*): Habitat not known.

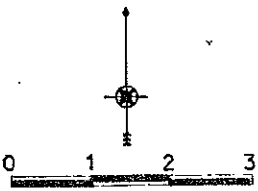
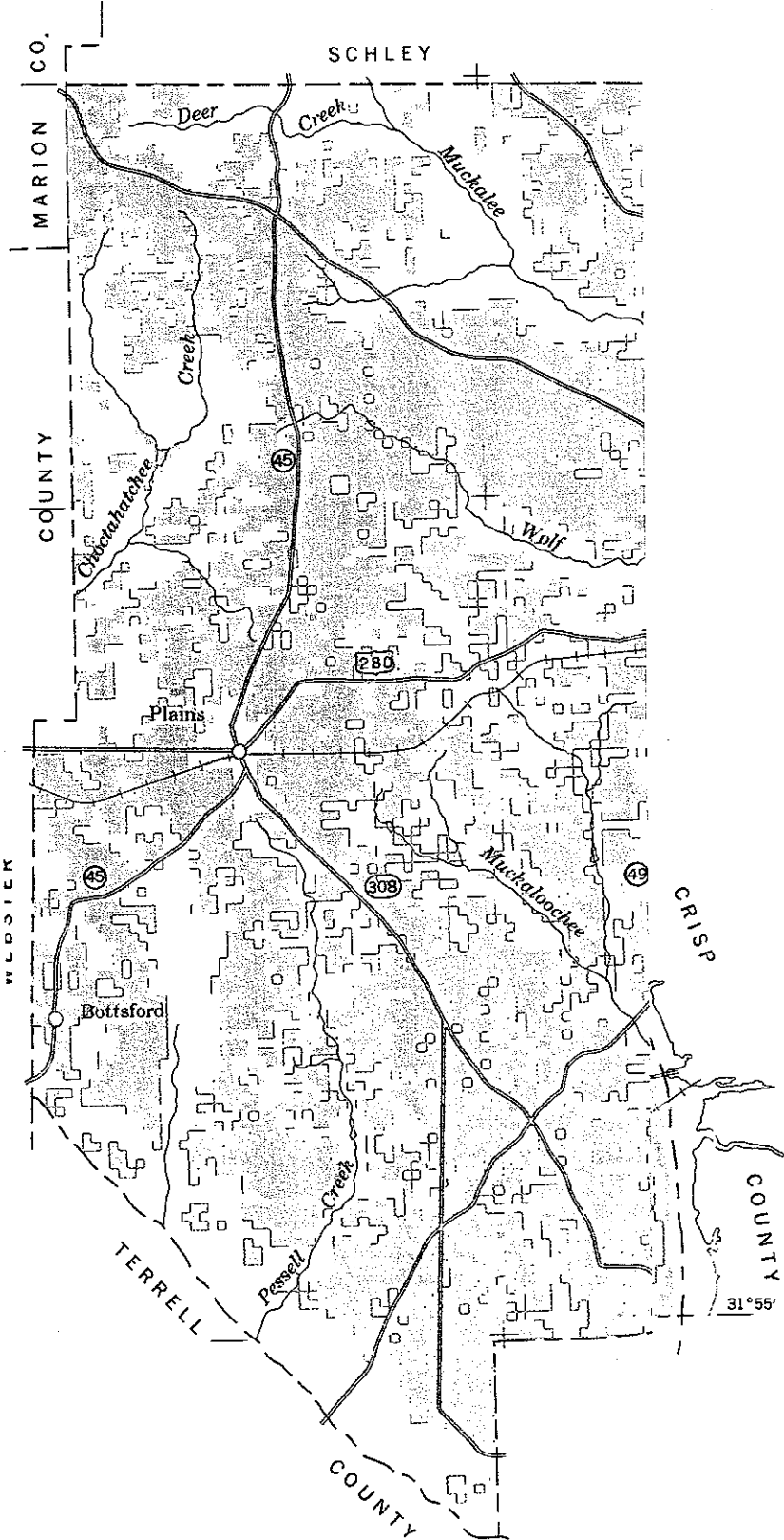
# SUMTER COUNTY IMPORTANT FARMLANDS

## LEGEND

-  Prime Farmland  
Total Acres 159210
-  Additional Farmland of  
Statewide Importance  
Total Acres 44796
-  Other Land
-  Water Areas
-  Intermittent Water
-  Approximate Limits Of  
Urban Growth

Because of the limitations of map scale, some delineations may contain inclusions of soils that do not meet the definition of that category.

Source: Soil Conservation Service

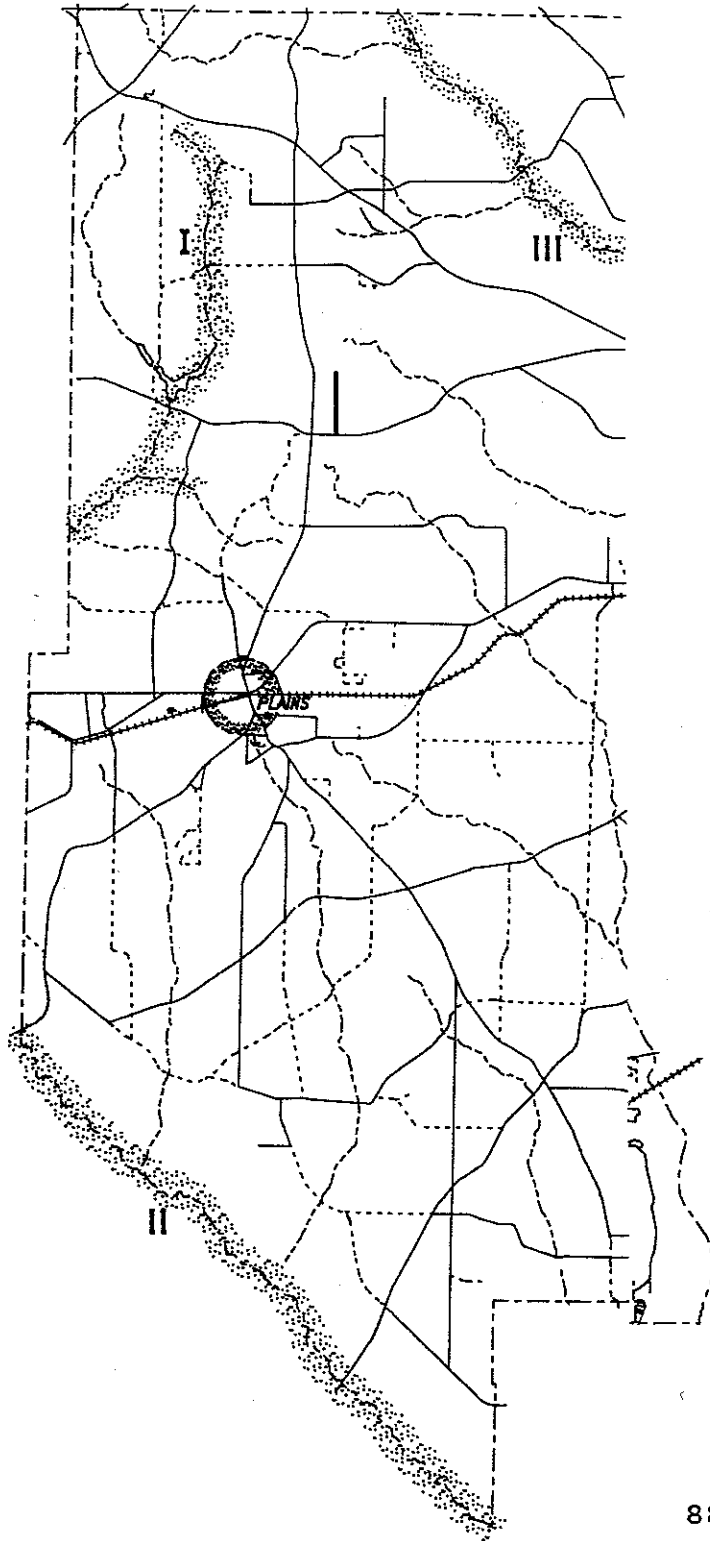


SCALE IN MILES

PREPARED BY: MIDDLE FLINT RDC

# SUMTER COUNTY

## ENDANGERED PLANT HABITATS AND SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS 1993



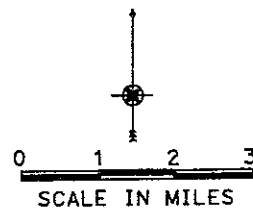
### LEGEND

#### ENDANGERED PLANT LIFE

- A White Trumpet or Whitetop Pitcherplant  
(*Sarracenia leucophylla*)
- B Harper's Wild Ginger  
(*Hexastylis shuttleworthii* Var *harperi*)
- C Canby Dropwort  
(*Oxypolis canbyi*)  
Harper Fimbristylis  
(*Fimbristylis perpusilla*)

#### NATURAL AREAS

- I Choctahatchee Creek & Magnolia Springs
- II Kinchafoonee Creek
- III Muckalee Creek
- IV Bailey Branch
- V Flint River



**Parrot Pitcherplant** (*Saracenia Psittacina*): found in acid soils of open bogs, wet savannahs, and low areas in pine flatwoods.

**Sweey Pitcherplant/Red Pitcherplant** (*Sarracenia Rubra*): found in acid soils of open bogs, sandfill seeps, wet savannahs, and low areas in pine flatwoods.

Occurrences of the following wildlife have not been documented in Sumter County, but based on their migratory patterns it is believed likely that each specie does at least travel through the area at some time of the year.

**Bachman's Sparrow** (*Aimophila aestivalis*)

**Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

**Wood Stork** (*Mycteria americana*)

**Red-cockaded Woodpecker** (*Picoides borealis*)

**Bewick's Wren** (*Thryomunus bewickii*)

**Gopher Tortoise** (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

**Barbour's Map Turtle** (*Graptemys barbouri*)

**Alligator Snapper** (*Macroclermys temminckii*)

**Bluestripe Shiner** (*Cyprinella callitaenia*)

**Goldstripe Darter** (*Etheostoma parvipinne*)

**Bluestripe Shiner** (*Pteronotropis welaka*)

**Alabama Shad** (*Alosa alabamae*)

**Assessment:** Development and enforcement of land use/development regulations would provide a good mechanism to help preserve habitats of threatened plant and animal species, and to limit civil liability of owners/developers who might otherwise damage these habitats. In the absence of such a mechanism; however, Sumter County will rely on the intergovernmental review of publicly assisted projects to help protect these natural resources.

**Parks and Recreation Areas:** Lake Blackshear was created as a reservoir for hydroelectric power generation by the Crisp County Power Commission. Acquisition of land was initiated in 1928 and hydroelectric generation commenced in Crisp County in August, 1930.

Water in the 8,500 acre impoundment at any given time either drained from approximately 5,000 square miles of river basin upstream or lateral to Lake Blackshear, or seeped into the Flint River from groundwater sources. This drainage and groundwater seepage combine to make the Flint one of Georgia's five major water courses, and the main channel of the lake. At 265 miles, the

Flint is Georgia's third longest river.

Although monitoring data reveals good water quality, this is not critical for hydroelectric generation. It is critical, however, for the lake's secondary use, i.e., recreation. Swimming, fishing, boating and skiing (water- and jet-) opportunities have made Lake Blackshear an important regional recreation facility. The Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park on the Crisp County side of the lake is a major factor contributing to lake popularity.

In a recent water quality study the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources reported Lake Blackshear had few pollution problems, especially when compared with other state water bodies. The EPD report did credit Lake Blackshear with the highest nutrient content of any lake in the state. Although this particular reading was the result of a one-day test, the findings are in agreement with research performed in previous years. The high phosphate and nitrate content is believed to be from agricultural run-off and municipal wastewater.

Surface hydrology in Sumter County is controlled by a ridge located in the vicinity of DeSoto Seed Farm Road, U.S. 280, District Line Road and extending northwest to the west base of the Andersonville panhandle. Creeks and streams east of this line flow into the Flint River or Lake Blackshear. This means precipitation from approximately 30% of the county's 485 square miles drains into these streams carrying agricultural chemicals which probably contribute to the lake's high nutrient content. This is exclusive of agricultural run-off from approximately 5,000 square miles upstream of the lake.

The nearby Cities of Cordele, Montezuma and Oglethorpe all discharge treated municipal wastewater into Lake Blackshear indirectly, all in accordance with their respective National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits. This is also suspected of contributing to the high nutrient content of the lake. Water quality is helped significantly by the absence of major metropolitan communities discharging treated wastewater into the Flint River upstream of Lake Blackshear. Other lakes in the state have been adversely affected by the proximity of metropolitan communities.

In addition, as of March 1992, there were approximately 420 residential structures in Sumter County fronting the lake and 375 piers or docks protruding from these lots over the lake. Each residence is believed to be served by an individual septic tank which is, of course, also near the lake and the groundwater supply which helps recharge the Flint River and Lake Blackshear.

This large number of septic tanks (an even larger number are on the lake's east shore) in such proximity to a body of surface water is also suspected of contributing to the lake's high nutrient content despite the fact that, with relatively few exceptions, existing soils and topography are well suited for assimilation of wastewater from properly constructed septic systems. Nevertheless, this one possible source of lake pollution deserves study especially in light of continued residential development pressures around the lake.

Most people familiar with the Andersonville National Historic Site associate it with Sumter County, probably because it was named after the City of Andersonville, which is on Sumter's northern boundary. However, while a portion of National Park property is within Andersonville's city limit, and hence Sumter County, fronting Georgia highway 49, the Park, i.e., cemetery, former prison site, buffer area, are all in Macon County. Hence, for purposes of this plan the site is not addressed as a local resource.

There is a park of national significance near the county's west-central boundary, however. By Congressional Act, the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site and Preservation District has been established in and around the City of Plains. The designated district extends northeast of the city limits encompassing the welcome center, and southwest of Plains to include the boyhood home and environs of the thirty-ninth President of the United States. This native son continues to bring attention to his hometown by virtue of the many major, positive contributions he makes to world affairs.

**Assessment:** Undoubtedly, activities in Sumter County affect the water quality of Lake Blackshear. While there are certain unilateral actions which could reduce the negative impacts, e.g., land use regulations, Lake Blackshear is part of a much larger (regional) environment in which too little attention is given to the off-site consequences of development. A clean Lake Blackshear is a major positive contributor to the quality of life in Sumter and surrounding counties. Sumter County supports the efforts of the Lake Blackshear Watershed Association and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and their research efforts on the lake. The county supports efforts of the City of Plains to preserve local properties and sites which were important to the growth and development of Jimmy Carter.

**Scenic Views and Sites:** Sumter County is blessed with an aesthetically pleasing environment; vast expanses of productive farmland, Lake Blackshear, historic homes, etc.

**Assessment:** Though perhaps not of a nature in and of themselves to constitute the foundation for local tourism, these resources do contribute positively to the tourism base and to the local quality of life. None of these resources are believed to warrant protection solely for their scenic value, however.

**Soil Types:** In descending order, the most common soil series in Sumter County are Tifton, Orangeburg, Greenville, Kinston/Bibb, Faceville, and Red Bay. Collectively, they account for 79% of the county's land area. Sandy Loam is the predominant soil type comprising 74% of the aggregate acreage of these six series.

**Assessment:** These soils, with the exception of Kinston/Bibb, have slight to moderate limitations for development. With careful planning, design and use of mitigative measures these soils can usually accommodate most kinds of physical development. Kinston/Bibb soils (approximately 24,000 acres) have severe wetness limitations.

**Historic Resources:** In a 1991 preliminary survey of historic resources commissioned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 2603 potentially historic resources were identified throughout Sumter County: 1804 in incorporated areas and 799 in the rural area.

The variety of architecturally significant house types range from the single pen, shotgun, (single and double) to the larger Georgians, Queen Anne, and American Foursquare. The types of structures within the rural areas of the county are, with few exceptions, equally simplistic-Single Pens, Double Pens, Saddlebags, Central Hallways, Dogtrots, Shotguns (Single and Double). This simplicity is characteristic even of the larger Gabled Ell Cottages, Queen Anne Cottages, and Pyramid Cottages. A small number of Extended Hall-Parlors and Bungalows were found but mainly in the smaller incorporated areas. The incorporated areas retain the more ornate house styles and greater variation in house types.

Styles range from Second Empire, Queen Anne, High Victorian Eclectic, to Neoclassical Revival, Folk Victorian and Craftsman, with the latter two being the most common. Folk Victorian and Craftsman were the "affordable housing" of their respective periods. In the rural and smaller incorporated areas Folk Victorian structures are the most common.

Of the few resources which date back to the antebellum period the majority are in incorporated areas and are well maintained. Few of the smaller antebellum building types such as single pens, shotguns and log structures survive.

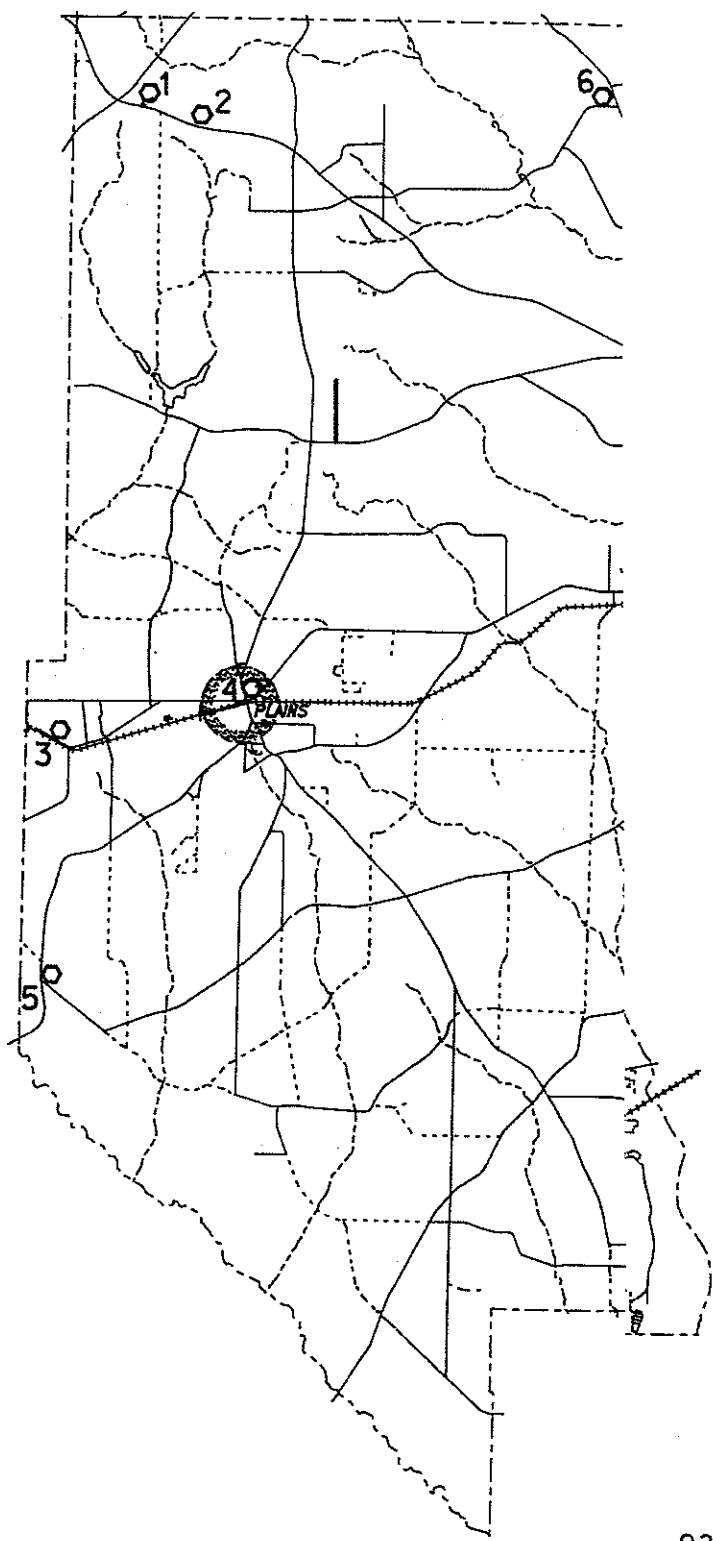
In the unincorporated area of the county the majority (65%) of potentially historic resources retain a moderately high degree of architectural integrity, 25% still have a fair amount of integrity, e.g., need some major repair or have been extensively altered, and 10% have lost all historic integrity.

There is a high correlation between the physical condition of potentially historic structures and their current use. Approximately 60% of the structures used as primary residences are in good to excellent condition. However, as the structures are vacated and taken out of regular, daily use, routine maintenance is often deferred until minor deficiencies deteriorate into major defects. At that point owners usually lose interest in expending the funds needed to preserve the property. Hence, the county's irreplaceable historic resources are gradually lost through neglect.

There are currently seven properties in Sumter County listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Three of these properties are in the unincorporated area, identified below, and mapped on page 93.

- Liberty Hall on U.S. 19 South, (Reference Number 80001236)
- McBain-Newman House on U.S. 19 South (Reference Number 80001237)
- Webb Family Farm, on U.S. 19 South, (Reference Number 85001968)

# SUMTER COUNTY BETTER KNOWN HISTORIC RESOURCES 1993



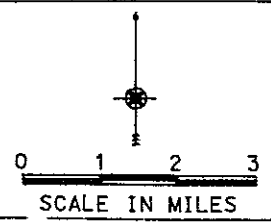
### LEGEND

- 1 Friendship Baptist Church & Association Campground
- 2 Fair Oaks Plantation (Gaston Farm)
- 3 Jimmy Carter Boyhood Home
- 4 Jimmy Carter National Historic Site
- 5 St. Mark's Lutheran Church
- 6 Shiloh Baptist Church
- 7 Airport Hangars at South Georgia Technical Institute
- 8 Site of Charles Lindbergh's First Solo Flight
- 9 Council Farm
- 10 Camp Sumter \*
- 11 Andersonville National Historic Site
- 12 New Era Community
- 13 Salem Methodist Church
- 14 Brown's Mill
- 15 First Solar Battery\*
- 16 Bagley House
- 17 Luther Story Bridge\*

\* Historic Marker Placed On-Site  
By Worker's Progress Administration

Properties listed on the State  
and National Registers of  
Historic Places:

- A. McBain-Newman House
- B. Webb Family Farm
- C. Liberty Hall





The 1991 survey revealed seven properties in unincorporated Sumter County which architecturally or thematically meet the eligibility requirements for individual nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. These are identified and described as follows, and mapped on page 93.

1. **New Era Community** - In its heyday New Era was a prosperous, agriculturally oriented community. Houses, barns, outbuildings, stores (vacant), and the school are all intact. Many of the original families' descendants are still in residence with the school adaptively rehabilitated into a residence. (Map Legend - 12)
2. **Bagley House** - The Bagley House, located on State Highway 195, has been submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office for a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. With the provision of minimal additional information, the appropriate signatures would give Sumter County an additional listing on the State and National Registers. (Map Legend - 16)
3. **Friendship Baptist Church** - Friendship Baptist Church, located on State Highway 30 W), is considered to be the oldest church building in Sumter County. The original church was constructed on 15 December, 1839. The existing structure, circa 1855, is the second built on the original church grounds and has been the site of weekly church services for the past 117 years. A complete copy of the minutes of Friendship Baptist Church from 1839 through 1872 are on microfilm at the Lake Blackshear Regional Library in Americus. The Friendship Baptist Association Campgrounds are located on the adjacent property east of the church. (Map Legend - 1)
4. **The Council Farm** - The Council Farm is located between Lamar Rd. and U.S. Highway 280 E. (Map Legend - 9)
5. **Salem Methodist Church** - Salem Methodist Church was built in 1895 on Upper River Road. (Map Legend - 13)
6. **Brown's Mill** - Brown's Mill, with related house and structures is located on State Highway 27 E. (Map Legend - 14)
7. **Airplane Hangars** - South Georgia Technical Institute, three hangars originally part of Souther Field. (Map Legend - 7)

Survey results indicate a large number of potentially historic structures have been retained in both the incorporated and rural areas, and that the majority have been maintained in good condition. In the incorporated areas the structures that have been retained seem to be in good to excellent condition.

"Sentimental preservation" accounts for the retention of many sources in the rural area of Sumter County. These structures are generally used only for storage. Maintenance is not of great

concern to the owner. Hence, they are generally in poorer condition than the other resources surveyed. They are not being retained for historic preservation sake, but as a sentimental link between the land, the ancestors, and the descendants. Often, the current owner is a direct descendent of the original landowner.

### Assessment

A comprehensive historic resources survey of all incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county is currently underway. After completion of this survey the community will have the data necessary to identify and pursue individual and/or district State and National Register nominations. The State and/or National Register listings open avenues for rehabilitation of the resources and help maintain these structures on the community's tax rolls.

## RIVER CORRIDOR

As a result of the Georgia Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act of 1991, there are recommended minimum protective criteria for buffer areas along Georgia's protected rivers. A protected river is defined as a river with a water flow rate of at least 400 cubic feet per second. Approximately thirty of Georgia's rivers and streams have water flow rates at this level along at least a portion of their watercourse, including that portion of the Flint River south of Spalding County. The buffer area, or river corridor, is that area on both sides of the protected river within 100 feet, measured horizontally, from the uppermost part of the river bank, usually marked by a break in slope. Although not within the measured 100 feet corridor, the area between the top of the bank and the edge of the water shall be treated in the same manner as the river corridor. The recommended minimum protective criteria as established by the referenced law are as follows:

### PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

Construction of single-family dwellings including the usual appurtenances, provided:

dwelling is situated on a tract of land with a minimum of two acres, exclusive of any acreage which may be located within the river corridor, between the river corridor and water level, or comprise part of the river bed, and

residential density shall not exceed one single family dwelling per tract, regardless of how large the tract of land within the river corridor may be, and

a septic tank(s) serving said dwelling may be located within the river corridor; however neither the drain field(s) nor any portion thereof shall be located within the river corridor, and

the dwelling shall be in compliance with any and all applicable zoning regulations, and

the land disturbing activity shall comply, at a minimum, with provisions of the Georgia Erosion and

Sedimentation Act of 1975, as amended.

Industrial and commercial activities existing at the time of adoption of this regulation, provided said activities:

shall not impair the drinking quality of the river water, and

shall meet all applicable state and federal environmental rules and regulations.

Construction of road and utility crossings of river corridors, provided said land disturbing activity is in compliance, at a minimum, with provisions of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975, as amended.

Timber production and harvesting, provided said activities:

shall be consistent with best management practices established by the Georgia Forestry Commission, and

shall not impair the drinking quality of the river water as defined by the federal Clean Water Act, as amended.

Wildlife and fisheries management activities consistent with the purposes of O.C.G.A. 12-2-8.

#### Wastewater Treatment

Recreational usage consistent either with maintenance of a natural vegetative buffer, or with river-dependent recreation, e.g., unpaved paths and walkways, boat ramp.

Natural water quality treatment or purification

Agricultural production and management, provided said activities:

shall be consistent with best management practices established by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and

shall not impair the drinking quality of the river water as defined by the federal Clean Water Act, as amended, and

shall be consistent with all applicable state and federal laws, and all regulations promulgated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

Other uses permitted by the Department of Natural Resources or under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

### PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Construction of septic tank(s) and septic tank drain fields, except as otherwise allowed herein.

Areas for receiving, storing and otherwise handling hazardous waste.

Hazardous waste landfills and solid waste landfills.

All other activities not expressly permitted herein are hereby prohibited within the river corridor, thereby maintaining the existing, natural, vegetative buffer.

## INVENTORY

Protected rivers constitute 25 miles of Sumter County's corporate boundary. The county line coincides with a 14 mile segment of the Flint River on Sumter's northeast side, while an 11 mile segment of Kinchafoonee Creek constitutes a portion of the county's southwest boundary. (For the purpose of this inventory the southern end of the Flint River corridor is considered to be the Georgia Highway 27 bridge.) Under the current state definition there are approximately 300 acres of river corridor in Sumter County; 170 acres along the Flint and 130 acres along the Kinchafoonee. This is exclusive of the area between the water's edge and uppermost part of the river bank.

Wetlands are common along the Flint and Kinchafoonee. Determining what portion of the county's 25 mile river corridor is wetland is impossible without very time-consuming and expensive site investigations. However, using National Wetlands Inventory maps prepared by the U.S. Department of Interior, and mean sea level elevations of 250 feet along the Flint and 300 feet along the Kinchafoonee, approximately 14 miles (56%) of the river corridor are wetland: 6.5 miles on the Flint and 7.5 miles on the Kinchafoonee. Development in wetlands is already strictly regulated by federal law.

Rural Sumter County has not been mapped for floodplains.

## DETERMINATION OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE

Both waterways and their adjoining corridors are considered important natural resources by the resident population, due in large part to their pristine state. The only intrusions are state highways; GA 27 crossing the Flint near the north end of Lake Blackshear, and GA 49 crossing Kinchafoonee Creek. The South Georgia Natural Gas transmission line is beneath the Flint River approximately 1,000 feet south of the GA 27 bridge and the Kinchafoonee approximately 3/4 mile west of the GA 49 highway bridge.

There are no protected plant or animal species known to the resident population to have habitats along either waterway.

No historic resources (or ruins) are believed to exist within either of the two corridors. However, this region of Georgia has a rich Native American history. Although finds of archaeological sites occupied by earlier cultures may not have been made in or near either of the corridors, there is the possibility that such resources do exist along these waterways.

## LIKELIHOOD OF ADVERSE IMPACT

Sumter County is not recording any growth or development pressures in the vicinity of the river corridors, and none is anticipated. Other than the state highways identified above, there is not

a developed road system providing access to either waterway. Currently, the only public access is Reeves Landing, an undeveloped boat launch on the Flint. There are no physical developments believed to exist anywhere in or adjacent to the Flint or Kinchafoonee corridors. There are not believed to be any current, nor anticipated, negative impacts on the health, safety, or welfare of residents of the community or downstream resulting from activity taking place within the local corridors. There are no known activities within or near the corridors which negatively impact river function, flow, water quality, erosion, shoaling or navigability.

Since neither waterway is depended upon as a local water supply for consumption, their primary local use is recreational. There are no local activities which detract from this use of the natural resources, with the possible exception of non-point source pollution. There is intensive agricultural activity throughout the county which possibly contributes some level of erosion (shoaling) and nitrate pollution. However, any such contaminants are transported to these waterways primarily via creeks and streams which meander through miles of countryside before discharging their contents into either waterway.

#### ADEQUACY OF PROTECTION

The historic and current levels of development do not warrant implementation of regulatory controls specific to river corridor protection in Sumter County. Neither is there any development anticipated within a reasonable planning horizon (5-10 years) which would indicate the need for local imposition of regulatory controls.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

For the above stated reasons, Sumter County does not need to promulgate or enforce locally established river corridor development standards at this time.

## LAND USE

The following is an inventory and assessment of existing land use in Sumter County. A windshield survey of land use, supplemented by aerial photographs, was conducted in June and July, 1992. Two primary products typically result from a land use survey: (1) a map showing existing land use, and (2) statistics describing the amount of land in each land use category. A knowledge and understanding of how land is presently being used establishes the foundation for the preparation of a future land use plan which is also included.

**TABLE 1**  
**EXISTING LAND USE**  
**RURAL SUMTER COUNTY**  
**1992**

| LAND USE                               | ACREAGE | PERCENTAGE OF<br>TOTAL AREA |
|--|---------|-----------------------------|
| Agriculture/Forest                     | 253,410 | 84%                         |
| Commercial                             | 1,515   | .5%                         |
| Industrial                             | 665     | .2%                         |
| Park/Recreation/Conservation           | 215     | .1%                         |
| Public/Institutional                   | 530     | .2%                         |
| Residential                            | 5,880   | 2%                          |
| Transportation/Communication/Utilities | 1,050   | .3%                         |
| Undeveloped/Unused                     | 37,580  | 12.5%                       |
| Total Unincorporated Acreage           | 300,845 | 99.8%                       |

Source: Middle Flint RDC Survey, June - July, 1992  
County area, including cities: 485 square miles (Georgia Department of Transportation), 310,400 acres.

**Agriculture/Forest** is by far the predominant land use in Sumter County, accounting for 84% of the total area.

There are 84 **Commercial** establishments distributed throughout the rural area, half of which are within one mile of the Americus current city limits. Commercial land use totals approximately 1,515 acres.

**Industrial** acreage totals 665. The Mullite Corporation of America (Mulcoa), near Andersonville on the county's north boundary, accounts for 79% of this total. Other sites in the category include several small industries on or near Crisp Drive behind the horse arena (20 acres), approximately 80 acres occupied by Cooper Lighting, Hickory Springs and the old Georgia Cold Storage facility all east of Southfield Industrial Park, Peterson Field (33 acres), north of Plains, a manufacturing facility where aircraft are completely renovated, and Con-Art (7 acres) east of Cobb.

**Park/Recreation/Conservation** land use includes the  $\pm$  200 acre Brickyard Plantation, (a private golf course) on U.S. Highway 280 E., a five acre recreation field in Hidden Lakes Subdivision off Georgia Highway 30 W., a four acre (public) ballfield site between Leslie and DeSoto, and a five acre sport shooting range off McMath Mill Road.

There are some 530 acres devoted to **Public/Institutional** land use scattered across sixty-one sites in the rural area. Churches and associated cemeteries account for almost half of this total. Sumter County has developed 175 acres for use as a landfill, correctional institute, maintenance barn, etc. South Georgia Tech's physical plant covers approximately 85 acres. Approximately sixteen acres of a much larger tract (in an agricultural land was) comprising the University of Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station have been developed as an office, meeting hall and small residential complex. Similarly, the University has developed only two acres of its Plant Materials Center adjacent to Lake Collins.

There are some 5,880 acres devoted to **Residential** land use. Included in this total are all residences throughout the rural county, even farmsteads. An average of 1.5 acres was applied to 3,059 housing units of conventional construction, and an average .75 acre was applied to 1,722 manufactured housing units (mobile homes).

**Transportation/Communication/Utilities** land use totals 1050 acres. Railroad right-of-way and Souther Field, collectively, account for 98% of this land use. The balance of this category consists of three trucking firms and utilities facilities which includes radio towers. With the exception of railroad right-of-way, these uses are concentrated near the City of Americus.

The **Undeveloped/Unused** land use category poses the single greatest difficulty in acreage estimation and mapping. The local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office reports 15,400 acres are currently in an agricultural set-aside, a management program designed to control production of some crops by leaving a pre-determined acreage out of cultivation. Most of this acreage looks little different from other agricultural lands which have been "vacated or abandoned", the primary definition used for this land use classification. Hence, the windshield survey so useful in determining other land uses is of little value in this assessment.

Reference was made to the Sumter County soil survey which identifies soils classified as not suitable for development. Thirty-three thousand acres (including the incorporated areas) of Bibb, Grady, Kinston and Ochlocknee soils have severe limitations for development due to flooding and wetness. This acreage does not include sites on other soils at scattered locations throughout the county which, though once developed, have since been vacated or abandoned.

Applicable land uses definitions include water surface area as an undeveloped/unused land use. Using all fourteen of the county's 7.5 minute, USGS quadrangle maps as the data source, ponds were determined to account for an estimated 1500 acres of surface area. Major streams (as plotted on the Official Road Name Map of Sumter County - July/92), at an estimated aggregate length of 233 miles and estimated average width of fifteen feet, account for approximately 425 acres; exclusive of Sweetwater Creek on the county's northeast boundary and Kinchafoonee Creek on the southwest boundary. It is estimated that 275 acres of the Flint River is in Sumter County. This was determined by multiplying half of the average width, estimated to be 300 feet, by the fifteen mile water course. The southern most point on the river was considered to be one mile south of the Georgia Highway 27 bridge. Measuring west of Lake Blackshear's main river channel between the juncture of Crisp and Dooly Counties, and the juncture of



Sumter and Lee Counties, it is estimated that approximately 2,380 acres of the Lake is in Sumter County. Based on these estimates, there are approximately 4,580 acres of water surface area in unincorporated Sumter County.

These combined acreages are presented as an approximation of undeveloped/unused land use in rural Sumter, but is not identified on the accompanying map.

**Assessment:** In 1832, shortly after the Georgia General Assembly created Sumter County from lands previously part of Lee County, a settlement was established slightly northwest of the new county's geographic center. Growth here was sufficient to attract, by mid-century, one railroad line running north-south, and before the turn of the century, a second line running east-west. This intersection of transportation routes, including the complementary road and highway system, became the center of commerce for the community.

Development continues to be attracted to this historic population center. With this concentration of development the vast majority of the unincorporated area is available to support the county's agricultural and timber industries. However, much of this "urban" development, particularly residential, has expanded beyond the City of Americus into the rural area. Since the early 1970s the majority of Sumter County's population increase has occurred in the area adjacent to the Americus city limit for two primary reasons; (1) personal preference of residents, including the effect place-of-residence had earlier on public school attendance and (2) the relative absence of construction sites for single-family housing in Americus. This is creating a land use pattern (predominantly residential) significantly different from the rest of the rural area and will make it difficult to retrofit the public infrastructure needs after private water and wastewater systems have been installed. The county does not provide public water or wastewater treatment. The City of Americus does; however, and has more available treatment capacity than the projected population within the current municipal boundary will need. Future incorporation and extension of municipal services into these developed areas at municipal service levels comparable to those elsewhere in the city would be virtually cost prohibitive. In the absence of public systems servicing these areas the county will experience increasing concentrations of private wells and septic systems.

Until 1992, there were no county regulatory provisions governing mobile home parks in rural Sumter County. Numerous residential park developments were built proximate to Americus along the southeast and southwest entrances to the city. These areas now comprise the most blighted areas in the county. With passage of a mobile home park ordinance in 1992, there should not be any substandard housing developments added to the housing inventory.

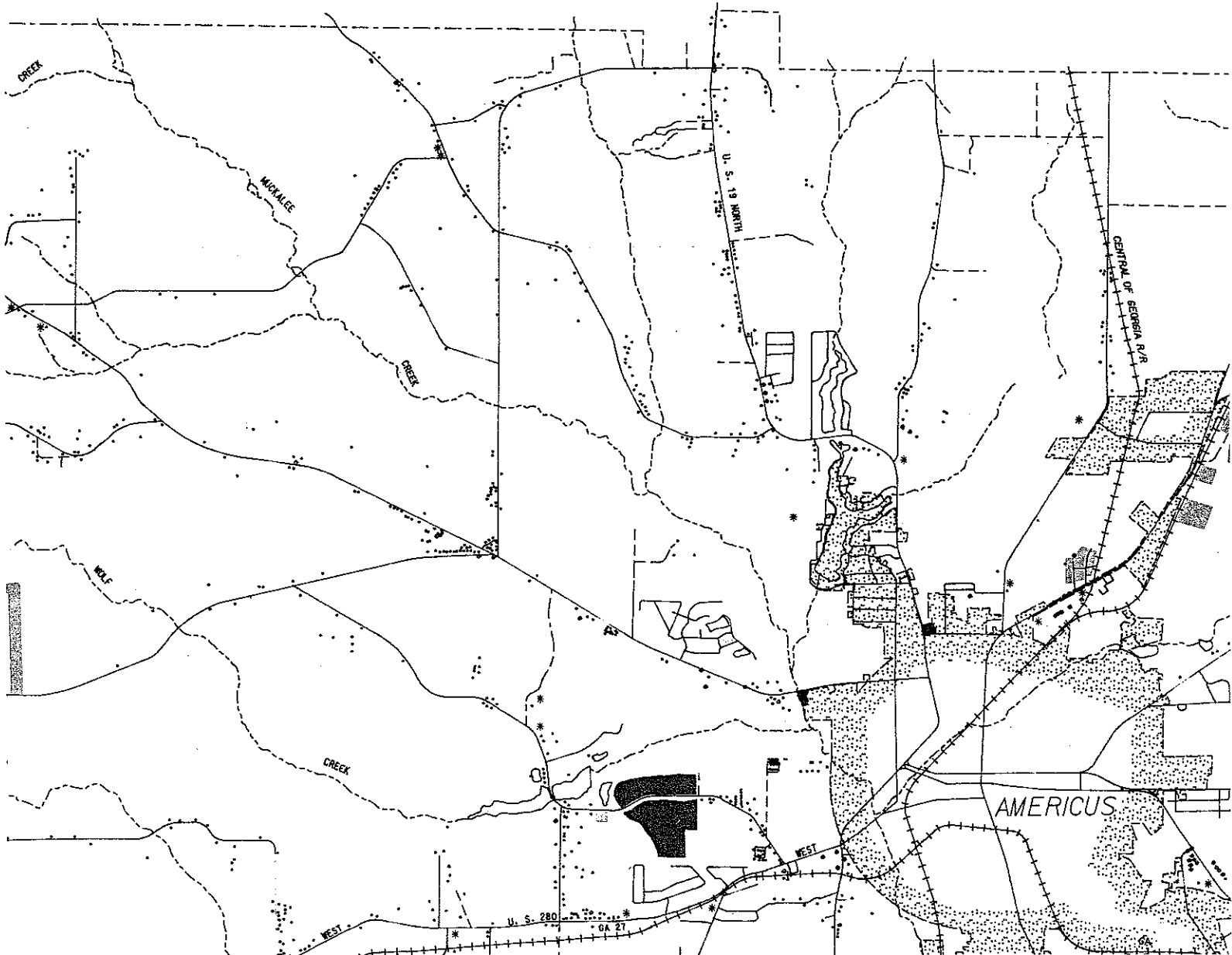
There are relatively few areas in rural Sumter County with contiguous, developed, incompatible land uses. The vast majority of conflicts which do exist are in the developed area around the City of Americus. As long as there are no land use regulations in the unincorporated portion of the county, land use conflicts will become more commonplace, especially with continued growth and development just beyond the Americus city limit. The relative absence of lands in Americus suitable for residential development will continue to force this type growth outside the

city creating even greater potential for land use conflicts. If land use regulations are ever imposed, by whatever means, conflicts which exist at that time will be "grandfathered" and protected indefinitely.

Sumter County does not currently provide public utilities to residents of the rural area, and there are not any current or long range plans to do so. Consequently, there are no county goals to direct growth patterns. In the absence of providing these services there is likely to be less of a perceived need to plan for growth and development.

# SUMTER COUNTY EXISTING LAND USE

1992



## FUTURE LAND USE

The ratio methodology has been employed here to project land use needs to the year 2010. This is done by determining current per capita land use ratios (existing land use acreages divided by current population), and applying the current ratio to the projected population for the year 2010. The ratio of population (1990) to each acre of current (1992) land use has here been used to project future land use acreage needs.

This methodology assumes that (1) development trends of the past 160 years will hold true over the next 17 years, (2) currently "developed" acreage will not be converted to other land use(s), and (3) that all future development will be on acreage currently classified as Agriculture/Forest or Undeveloped/Unused.

The current and projected populations of three geographical areas could be used in this formula; rural Sumter, Sumter all-inclusive, and the larger (multi-county) commercial/economic region. In earlier sections of this document reference was made to Sumter County's position as a sub-regional trade and employment center. From a land development standpoint most of this has manifested itself within Americus' corporate limit. Hence, the regional population base would seem to be a less appropriate factor to use in the rural land use projection.

Between the two other population bases, the rural population yields a higher per capita land use ratio and, consequently, higher acreage needs for future development in all of the applicable land use categories. However, much of the rural area's developed acreage is expected to be annexed by the City of Americus well before the year 2010. This will result in a significant reduction in developed acreage in the rural area well below what would otherwise occur, especially in the commercial and residential land use categories. Therefore, the per capita land use ratios derived from use of Sumter's all-inclusive population is used to project future land use needs. This ratio yields future acreage needs equivalent to 60% - 65% of those which result from use of the rural population. Based on this methodology it is estimated that by the year 2010 an additional 1,365 acres will have been developed. The projected development is apportioned among the various land use categories as in the following table. The reader is advised that the potential for annexation, especially by the City of Americus, is not taken into account in any of the following acreage projections.

**TABLE 2**  
**FUTURE LAND USE**  
**2010**

| LAND USE                                | ACREAGE        | CHANGE<br>FROM '90 | PERCENTAGE OF<br>TOTAL AREA |
|---|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Agriculture/Forest                      | 252,045        | -1,365             | 84%                         |
| Commercial                              | 1,695          | 180                | .6%                         |
| Industrial                              | 765            | 100                | .3%                         |
| Park/Recreation/Conservation            | 415            | 200                | .1%                         |
| Public/Institutional                    | 590            | 60                 | .2%                         |
| Residential                             | 6,580          | 700                | 2%                          |
| Transportation/Communications/Utilities | 1,175          | 125                | .4%                         |
| Undeveloped/Unused                      | 37,580         | 0                  | 12.5%                       |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>300,845</b> | <b>0</b>           | <b>100%</b>                 |

All future development is projected to be at the expense of **Agriculture/Forest**, resulting in a 1,365 acre loss from the 1992 total. Nevertheless, agriculture/forest will remain the predominant land use accounting for 84% of the rural land area in the year 2010.

Projections suggest an increase of approximately 180 **Commercial** acres. The largest share of this increase is targeted for the intersection of U.S. 280 and U.S. 19, the most heavily traveled intersection in the county's rural area. This location is comprised of prime (agricultural) soils with slight limitations for development, and on a high elevation.

A smaller (neighborhood) commercial area is projected for the triangle formed by the intersection of U.S. 19, the proposed north industrial bypass and LaCross Road. This site is comprised of the Americus soil series with slight limitations for projected development. This location is also on a higher elevation than the surrounding area, and once developed would serve the light shopping and personal care needs of nearby existing and projected residential neighborhoods.

Three small, commercial developments are foreseen. One would serve the highway traffic needs at the intersection of Souther Field Road and Georgia Highway 49. A second is projected for the U. S. 280/Brickyard Road intersection to serve needs of highway traffic, future residents of the Brickyard condominium development and surrounding rural residents. An expansion of the current development at U.S. 280 E. and Pecan Road would cater to the residential development on Spring Creek and Lake Blackshear, and secondarily to highway traffic.

Blind obedience to the projection methodology would yield an additional 80 acres for **Industrial** development. However, plans have already been made to convert 100 acres currently in agriculture/forest to this land use. The particular tract is southwest of, and adjacent to Souther

Field. Although soils on site are prime (Red Bay and Orangeburg) for agricultural production, surrounding development effectively precludes an agricultural land use at this location. A prerequisite for development at this site is expected to be annexation into the City of Americus. Because of the need to locate new industrial development proximate to supporting infrastructure currently available in two industrial parks in Americus, no additional industrial acreage is projected for rural Sumter County.

The projection methodology indicates the need for an additional 25 acres for **Park/Recreation/Conservation**. However, the collective acreage requirements of two projects currently in the planning stage will exceed that projection. The Sumter County Board of Commissioners and the Americus/Sumter County Recreation Commission are currently cooperating on development of a ballfield complex on twenty-five, county-owned acres between Souther Field and GA. Hwy 49. Secondly, a private developer is constructing a golf course on property he owns off McMath Mill Road. The golf course acreage is projected at 175.

**Public/Institutional** land use is projected to increase by approximately 60 acres, and is represented on the accompanying map as an extension to the current Sumter County Education Complex. Some new school facilities will most likely be needed if, and when, the two public school systems are consolidated. In the absence of knowing what, if any, city school facilities can be used in a combined system, it is difficult to determine how much additional acreage will be needed.

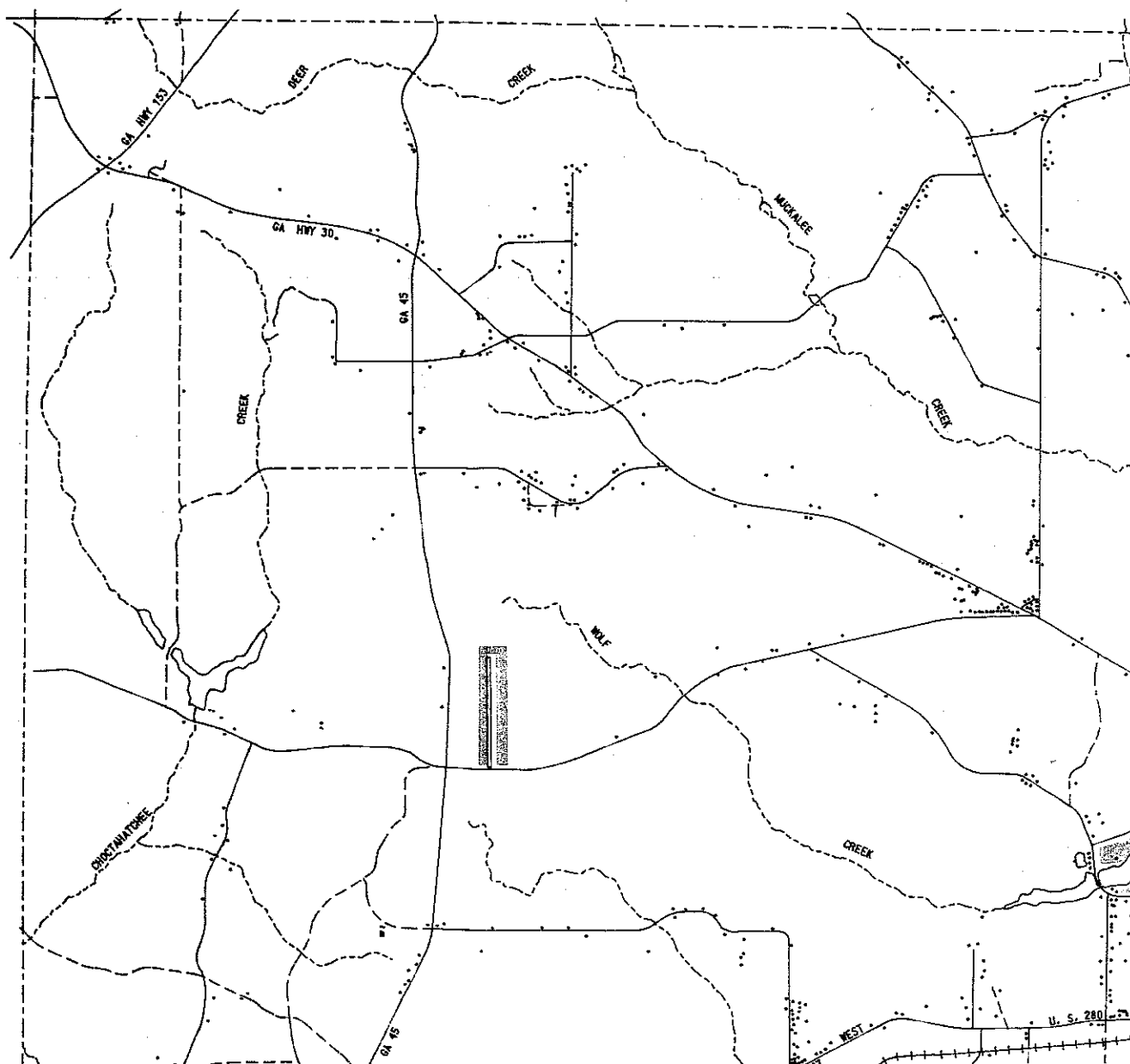
**Residential** land use is projected to increase by some 700 acres, mostly in areas adjacent to the current north, east and south corporate limits of Americus. Other small pockets are projected for the county's eastern rural area. In addition, there will be numerous, unidentified, single-lot developments throughout the county.

Projections indicate the need for an additional 125 acres in the **Transportation/Communications/Utilities** land use category. Most of this, approximately 110 acres, is represented as an expansion of Souther Field's existing acreage. This is in response to a study referenced in the transportation element identifying the potential for scheduled commercial air service and airport enhancements needed to accommodate such service. The additional fifteen acres needed to satisfy the projected need are for utility expansion along U.S. 19 South.

No change in **Undeveloped/Unused** acreage is projected.

# SUMTER C

FUTURE LAND  
1994-20



## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### POPULATION

**Five basic findings have been gleaned** from the data presented in the accompanying Population element, none of which are unique to Sumter County. Each condition described below has its origin in economic history, and economic strategy and development comprise the one common thread necessary for their resolution.

**The proportion of the county's minority population is gradually increasing.** This is an economically induced trend that has public and economic implications. Minorities characteristically have higher unemployment, higher crime rates, lower educational attainment and a lower income level than the non-minority population. Demands on public services may include additional police protection and vocational/educational job training programs. Lower income levels mean there is less money for the purchase of essential and non-essential goods and services. Consequently, the number of persons seeking public assistance may increase. The results of such a concentration are exacerbated by, (1) generally adversely higher local rates than at the state and national levels, and (2) a much greater minority concentration locally (46% - 1990) than statewide (27%) or nationwide (13%).

**Educational attainment of the resident population lags that recorded statewide.** The deficiency is found at the lower and upper attainment levels. The proportions of residents whose highest level of attainment was high school graduation were almost identical; Sumter 29% and Georgia 30%. However, the proportion of local residents which had not graduated from high school was eight percentage points higher than recorded statewide. Local participation at the post-secondary educational level (1990) is seven percentage points lower than the state. In comparison with surrounding counties, Sumter rates quite favorably, however. The County's proportionately larger elderly population is a contributing factor to a lower high school graduation rate. But the local high school dropout rate is a current-day factor which serves to maintain the educational deficiency relative to the state.

Using state data as reference, **the younger half of Sumter County's labor pool is disproportionately small.** For each 5-year subgroup between the ages of 25 and 49, Sumter consistently has a proportionately smaller population. In 1990, this amounted to approximately 375 fewer residents than might otherwise be expected. The "absence" of these residents is not for want of jobs because a significantly larger number of out-of-county residents commute to their place of employment in Sumter County. It may, at least in part, be in pursuit of more attractive employment opportunities, however, as the number of residents 18 - 20 years of age, i.e., recent high school graduates, decreased by 23% (504) between 1970 and 1990.

The younger labor pool includes most females of child-bearing age and the period of new family formation. In the absence of this group there is less likely to be an increase, or even maintenance, of the youngest segment of the population. **The 1990 Census documented a 9%**

**decrease (1,320) in the population 0-24 years of age from the 1970 total. A net in-migration of young families is needed to restore the younger population pool.**

**Again using the state as reference, Sumter County has significantly lower income levels. However, in comparison with the state's nonmetropolitan community local per capita incomes are equivalent to the rural average.**

As the economic trade center of the surrounding rural area, Sumter County has the potential for setting the pace for population growth, educational attainment, income growth, etc.. Since most of the actions needed to address the above findings are economic development activities, they are identified in the Economic Development Findings and Recommendations.

## **HOUSING**

Based on a survey performed from the public right-of-way, a "practical" **assessment of housing conditions throughout the rural area reveals a substandard housing rate of 28%.** A strict interpretation of the housing code increases the rate to 55%. A more definitive picture of conditions would require a very time-consuming and methodical interior and exterior assessment of each unit. In the absence of a more detailed and costly assessment this information is sufficient to indicate a housing deficiency in the county's rural area. **Sumter County should pursue publicly funded housing assistance programs and encourage and support private sector initiatives.**

In the public sector there are programs such as Community Development Block Grants for which local governments can compete and, if successful, make loans/grants available to low/moderate income residents. Federal funds for this program are appropriated through the Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered in Georgia by the Department of Community Affairs. The Georgia Housing Finance Authority administers the federally funded Home Investment Partnership program (HOME). This is similar to the Community Development Block Grant in that local governments must compete for funding.

There is presently a significant private sector housing initiative in the county. The goal of the Sumter County Initiative is to eliminate substandard housing in the county by the year 2000. This Initiative is not membership driven but goal oriented in that residents, business, industries, churches, civil clubs, etc. are encouraged/recruited to contribute time, talents and/or financial and material support to any kind of housing rehabilitation/development efforts they choose. Participants can contribute independently, participate with organizations already involved, or form new associations to address the goal. The Sumter County Board of Commissioners has already contributed assistance in the form of public infrastructure improvements and should continue to participate in appropriate ways.

**In the 1970s manufactured housing in Sumter County accounted for 31% of the increase in total housing units. During the 1980s the rate more than doubled as manufactured**

**housing accounted for 68% of the increase in housing.** While the total number of housing units added to the inventory each of those decades was almost identical, the number of manufactured units added increased from 517 to 1,136. The 1990 Census reported that 11% of the state's occupied housing units were mobile homes, and 75% of the units were owner-occupied. In Sumter County (all-inclusive) 17% of all housing is mobile home construction, and 69% is owner-occupied. In both jurisdictions **manufactured housing has a higher homeownership rate than does the total housing inventory.** The manufactured unit is the **"housing of choice" in Sumter County.**

In the local environment "housing of choice" and "affordable housing" are almost interchangeable terms. The manufactured unit has the lowest purchase price of new housing and the convenience of dealer financing, in some cases for up to thirty years, quick set-up; all helping make this type of housing so attractive. This is especially true in communities with historically low per capita and household incomes. However, **over the long run the problems associated with maintaining mobile homes may make it more difficult to maintain the current standard housing rate.** Typically, manufactured housing has deteriorated in value while the conventionally constructed, site-built units have historically appreciated in value. Depreciation of mobile homes can be expected to have a negative effect on the local tax digest and possibly generate land use conflicts. If manufactured housing continues to be the housing of choice for both new and replacement units, and in the current economic climate there is little doubt but that it will, the value of housing, vis-a-vis the state, may continue to decline and local housing conditions may not be as good ten-twenty years hence as they are at this writing. **County leaders should support efforts to make other forms of affordable housing available.** This could include encouraging construction of strictly managed, multi-family housing developments.

The Board of Commissioners initiated development of a **building code ordinance** prior to preparation of this Plan. This ordinance **should be finalized, adopted and rigidly enforced.** Likewise, the existing **mobile home park ordinance should be rigidly enforced.**

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Sumter County has an impressive transportation network.** True, more roads need to be paved, but the condition of the local road system compares quite favorably with other rural counties. The Board of Commissioners has aggressively pursued the expansion and maintenance of an improved road system.

There are three large scale road development projects which should be initiated/completed. The Americus north by-pass (scheduled for construction in 1995) is needed to facilitate industrial traffic access to the north industrial park. U.S. Highway 19 needs to be four-laned the entire distance between Atlanta and the Florida state line. A by-pass south and east of Americus is needed to connect U.S. Highway 19, McLittle Bridge, Mask and District Line Roads with State Route 49. Improvement of these existing routes is needed to accommodate the north-south

traffic, and truck traffic, generated by the continued eastward expansion of the city. An important component of this latter project will be diversion of industrial traffic around the Americus central business district.

Sumter County should continue the successful practice of using work crews to maintain local roads and equipment.

The county is not located on one of the state's more heavily travelled rail (freight) lines. While the north-south route is believed to have sufficient volume to sustain operation of this line, volume on the east-west route is at a level which justifies concern about long-term viability. Unrestricted rail transport is important to the county's current and future industrial development. It is important that the community stay abreast of rail service developments and **take any appropriate action necessary to maintain rail service north-south and east-west.**

Although Souther Field appears well equipped for current air traffic volumes, the community should begin positioning itself to secure scheduled commercial air service, e.g., flight aids-instrument landing system, land development standards.

Because of the county's rural setting, **it is important that a high level of intercity bus service be maintained.**

For public health and environmental reasons, development along Lake Blackshear should be closely monitored. In all likelihood, **public water and wastewater treatment facilities will be needed in the future to serve continued development in this area.**

**Local sentiment favors maintaining a sanitary landfill for local use only**, even in the face of greatly increased construction and operations costs. Unlike most surrounding counties, Sumter can come nearer paying for such a facility through imposition of an additional sales tax levy because it is a retail trade center for a much larger population base. However, the first such referendum, which included numerous other development proposals, failed. A second attempt to pass a special use sales tax referendum is scheduled for the spring of 1994. Passage is critical to funding landfill development. The total cost of solid waste management under federal law and regulation must be clearly communicated to the electorate before the issue will pass. Because of projected high compliance costs the county should investigate the options for regional solid waste management.

**The increased demands on the Sheriff's Department are such that additional staff should be added. The county commission should fund a more frequent turn-over of vehicles in the Sheriff's Department.** Sumter County should not be dependent on a fleet of emergency response vehicles with odometer reading in excess of 100,000 miles. **Departmental communications are currently transmitted through a hodgepodge of hardware which should be replaced with a uniform communications system.** Perhaps the most opportune time for such a communication update would be simultaneous with relocation into a new county jail, which should also occur as soon as possible.

Sumter County should **continue to operate the correctional institute using inmate work crews** to provide numerous public services. Staff levels should be maintained at appropriate levels.

In each of those commission districts where fire protection is not available, **county commissioners should inform their respective constituents of the benefits of establishing rural fire departments** or, where available, subscribing for response from municipal departments. Almost all potential **dry hydrant locations** are within the current service areas of existing rural or municipal fire departments. Each of these sites **should be developed for hydrant access to enhance fire fighting capability**.

Sumter Regional Hospital is commended for improvements in administrative/managerial practices instituted early in the decade. **The community is well served and well pleased with local medical facilities and the emergency medical service.**

**Recreational opportunities** are an important amenity contributing to the quality of life in a community. The local level of demand has outpaced the recreation departments capital expansion program. The physical **improvements and expansion** identified earlier, i.e., renovation of existing ballfield complex, gymnasium and office construction, and additional ballfield development, **should be implemented as soon as possible.**

The county must resolve the recurrent problem of leaks in the courthouse roof.

**Sumter County has an impressive public education complex.** Elementary, middle and high school facilities are among the most modern in the state. Significant and unanticipated increases in enrollment have resulted in full utilization of some facilities much earlier than projected, however. Now that county schools need to initiate plans for another capital facilities plan, the Americus Board of Education is actively pursuing abandonment of its school charter and, if successful, the Sumter County Board of Education would assume operations of the current municipal system. A consolidated system would likely necessitate more capital facilities development. While the critical issues associated with siting another school complex are not addressed here, suffice it to say careful attention should be devoted to making sure any such construction does not exacerbate the current land use conflict between county schools and the adjoining industrial park, or create another land use conflict elsewhere.

**Georgia Southwestern College and South Georgia Technical Institute both collectively, and individually, are tremendous assets to this community.** Recent incorporation of these resources into training and industrial recruitment activities is a very positive and potentially lucrative development. **More extensive interaction should be pursued.**

**The community is well served and well pleased by the quality and quantity of services provided by the Lake Blackshear Regional Library.**

Although development of a full-fledged hazardous materials team is cost-prohibitive, **a higher level of emergency preparedness should be pursued.** Two fuel spills at railroad crossings in

Americus in recent years could have just as easily involved more volatile chemicals for which the local emergency management team is ill-prepared to control. The level of service should be developed beyond that of the current rescue vehicle. In addition, the county should use the recently instituted rural address system to develop and implement a 911 emergency response system.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Based on the data reviewed in preparation of this document, **the economic health of this community has been found not to be as sound as perceived by many.** Perhaps this perception is based on retail sales volumes, and it is true that in comparison with the state's non-metropolitan area per capita sales are high. It is also true that the local employment base is large enough to keep the county's out-commuter rate among the state's lowest. Large numbers of employees at local businesses drive in from out-of-county. However, recent economic censuses indicate a softening in some aspects of the local economy.

While the county's 1987 per capita retail sales were 30% higher than the state's non-metropolitan area, local growth in retail sales volume, retail payroll and retail employees lagged the increases recorded by the same non-MSA area over 1982 levels. The 1992 Census of Retail Trade is expected to record another disappointing performance for the county because of the closure of some high volume retailers in Americus' central business district.

It is no surprise that local incomes, (per capita and median family) are lower than state levels. However, according to the Department of Commerce Sumter's per capita income is equivalent to the average per capita income among the state's 125 non-MSA counties (1980 MSA definition). This ranking is not consistent with the community's position as an economic trade center.

In 1989, the Georgia General Assembly enacted a system of tax credits designed to encourage businesses to locate and expand in less developed areas of the state. The four criteria used in defining "less developed areas," i.e. counties, were: (1) highest unemployment rate for the most recent 36 month period, (2) lowest per capita income for the most recent 36 month period, (3) highest percentage of residents whose income is below the poverty level, and (4) average weekly manufacturing wage. Counties designated as the first through fortieth least developed are classified as tier 1 and those designated forty-first through eightieth least developed are classified as tier 2. In the first (1990) ranking Sumter was 63rd among 159 counties; in 1991 - 57th, and in 1992 - 49th. Each year this tax incentive program has been in place, Sumter County's relative position has deteriorated from the previous designation.

Even before passage of this tax incentive program, Sumter County initiated bold action to redress these economic deficiencies. Many counties throughout Georgia took advantage of the revenue enhancement authorized in the mid 1980s by the General Assembly in the form of a

Special Use Local Option Sales Tax. Sumter was one of the many, but distinguished itself by being the first to pass a referendum restricting sales tax proceeds to economic/industrial development. Investment of these funds did facilitate some developments which otherwise may not have occurred. Additional infrastructure is now in place to accommodate industrial development.

But industrial development simply for the sake of development is not the answer to the community's current plight. Sumter already has the largest job base between Albany, Columbus and Macon. **The key to significant, positive, economic development is the kinds of employment opportunities which are available to the resident population.** Kinds of employment opportunities are usually a function of the education level of the resident population. This is the area (education/training) in which the community has only recently made what may well prove to be its greatest stride.

Although impacts on the local economy are not yet easily measured, **a well conceived partnership between the education community and industry promises high returns.** Students in the local public high schools can see how classroom concepts are applied to the work environment through the Tech-prep and Automated Manufacturing Technology (robotics) programs. Hopefully, this will help reduce the dropout rate by motivating those students who otherwise see no real utility in classroom instruction. Those who complete the course of study will be better prepared for the work world. Others can continue their technical training at South Georgia Technical Institute and become qualified for higher paying jobs offered by industries attracted to the community where technical training is available, and where qualified graduates live. Still others can earn an associate degree through an associated program from Georgia Southwestern College. The Technology Training Center will enhance the technical skills of experienced workers making the community even more attractive to prospective industries.

Technical training programs of this sort will not bring local incomes in line with those of the state metropolitan areas. However, it will require employers who need skilled employees to pay wages above current local levels to ensure they can attract and retain a qualified labor force. These wages, high by local standards, will stimulate additional economic activity in the community.

Additionally, there are two projects that could be initiated to further promote economic development in Sumter County: establishing (1) a business incubator, and (2) a revolving loan fund.

Business incubators house small start-up enterprises during their difficult early years. Most are facilities where rents are low and certain business support services (e.g., office services, accounting, marketing, management and technical assistance) are provided. Secondly, many small businesses have trouble raising all of the cash/equity needed to secure the financing required for expansion. The county should pursue funds which are available for local governments to extend "gap" financing often needed to help small local business grow and expand their workforces.

## NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

**Sumter County is blessed with an abundant supply of clean groundwater.** This is a major, positive contributor to the local quality of life, and any significant threat to this resource must be promptly and responsibly addressed. Local consensus is that the existing regulatory system is adequate to protect this resource, but that all elements thereof should be enforced. **No additional regulatory safeguards are deemed necessary at the present time.**

**Prime agricultural land is an irreplaceable local, state and national resource;** the true value of which is forever being revealed as increasing mechanization and efficiency extracts higher and higher yields from a shrinking agricultural production base. This economic value is only one measure of the resource's worth; however, for when in an agricultural land use it makes immeasurable, positive, contributions to the community's quality of life.

Conversion of prime agricultural land to uses other than agricultural production can be so slow as to be unnoticeable, especially in rural settings such as Sumter's. But with each year that passes the cumulative acreage converted gets larger; in part because some land use conversions render surrounding/adjacent prime acreage uneconomical to farm. The gradual loss in Sumter County is compounded by the fact that since prime agricultural land is so prevalent, much of the future development will affect this resource. **For the long-term best interests of Sumter County it is important that land development standards in some form be instituted.**

Likewise, forest land is an important contributor to the local quality of life. However, no man-made threat to this resource is foreseen, especially in light of recent increases in local forested acreage.

Plant and animal habitats are recognized as important elements in the local and larger ecosystems, and must be carefully addressed in any future land development standards. Until such local standards are developed, no additional protective measures above those currently enforced as a result of federal/state statutes are deemed necessary.

## LAND USE

Land use findings and recommendations are found in the Existing Land Use and Future Land Use sections, respectively.



**STATEMENT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

## STATEMENT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**HOUSING - MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE COUNTY'S HOUSING STOCK IN A SAFE, SOUND AND SANITARY CONDITION FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY.**

- Objectives:
- 1.0 Pursue, as appropriate, housing assistance programs such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership (HOME) program,
    - 1.1 Continue to support, as appropriate, private sector housing activities such as the Sumter County Initiative,
    - 1.2 Maintain rigid enforcement of the current mobile home park ordinance.
    - 1.3 Consider adopting a building code ordinance and enforce same.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES - WITHIN THE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS OF SUMTER COUNTY, PROVIDE THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL OF PUBLIC SERVICES WHICH ENHANCE LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE.**

- Objectives:
- 1.0 Maintain a good relationship with the Georgia Department of Transportation as an important aid in developing further the county's transportation network, which would include:
    - 1.00 Americus north bypass/connector
    - 1.01 Four-lane U.S. 19
    - 1.02 Americus south bypass/connector
    - 1.03 Diversion of truck route around Americus city core
    - 1.04 Pave and maintain rural roadways.
  - 1.1 Devise and implement an appropriate plan to manage the county's solid waste.
  - 1.2 Enhance the response capability of public safety.
    - 1.20 Additional personnel/equipment for Sheriff's Department
    - 1.21 New county jail

- 1.3 Ensure continued operation of Sumter County Livestock Association.
- 1.4 Secure funding with which to construct a new county jail.
- 1.5 Secure funding with which to renovate the courthouse.
- 1.6 Expand recreational programs and infrastructure
- 1.7 Establish a 911 emergency response system.
- 1.8 Expand emergency response capabilities and preparedness.
- 1.9 Educate general public of the benefits of rural fire departments.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - DEVELOP COMMUNITY/PUBLIC SERVICES TO A LEVEL WHICH ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CURRENT RESIDENTS, WILL RETAIN YOUNGER, WORKING- AGE RESIDENTS AND ATTRACT ECONOMIC INVESTMENT.**

- Objectives:
- 1.0 Pursue funding which can be used to capitalize a locally controlled revolving loan fund.
  - 1.1 Investigate the establishment of a small business incubator with the City of Americus.
  - 1.2 Maintain an aggressive industrial recruitment campaign, through the local chamber of commerce, targeted toward environmentally responsible industries which can make positive contributions to the local quality of life.
  - 1.3 Incorporate resources available through Georgia Southwestern College and South Georgia Technical Institute in recruiting industry.

**NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES - PRESERVE THE QUALITY OF THOSE NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY MAN, AND TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS WITHIN THE CAPABILITIES OF THE COUNTY, REVERSE THE DEGRADATION WHICH MAN HAS INFLICTED UPON LOCAL NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES.**

- Objectives:
- 1.0 Encourage development of soil conservation districts
  - 1.1 Defer to federal and state enforcement of species act laws

- 1.2 Maintain awareness of conversion of prime farmland to uses other than agriculture and its irreplaceable value.

**LAND USE - PLAN FOR AND PURSUE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN LOCATIONS WHICH MINIMIZES ADVERSE IMPACTS ON NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES, AND MAXIMIZES RETURN ON CAPITAL INVESTMENT.**

- Objectives:
- 1.0 Prepare, implement and enforce land development standards.
    - 1.1 Guide physical development away from prime farmland acreage.

## **FIVE YEAR WORK PLAN**

The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed listing of various projects and programs recommended for implementation during the first five years covered in the comprehensive plan. Priority projects and program initiatives resulting from the overall planning process are listed for each of the five years (1994-1998). Each recommendation should be undertaken and/or completed in the year scheduled. In addition to the scheduling of priority items, the Five Year Work Plan also provides guidance to county officials regarding cost estimates and potential sources of financing. By scheduling major initiatives and capital expenditures in advance over a period of years, the Five Year Work Plan will be an aid to the county in undertaking activities to implement its plan and achieve its goals. In addition, the recommended capital improvement items contained in the work program will allow the county to schedule these "big ticket" items in a more logical and cost efficient fashion.

To be effective the Five Year Work Plan must be linked to and coordinated with the annual operating budget. The majority of the items contained in this section require direct county expenditures or indirect costs through allocation of staff. Therefore, implementation of established goals, policies and recommendations is tied directly to the county's annual budget. As the local government implements its plan it should: (1) review the recommendations in the Five Year Work Plan for the upcoming year; (2) revise the recommendations based on current information; and (3) transfer the recommended items that require local funding in that year to the county's annual operating budget. Through such an approach Sumter County will be able to systematically implement this comprehensive plan.

## FIVE YEAR WORK PLAN

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>PROJECT</u>  | <u>ESTIMATED<br/>COST</u> | <u>FUNDING<br/>SOURCE</u> |
|-------------|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1994</b> | Pave Small Piece Road -2.4 miles<br>Salter's Mill Road to Thompson<br>Mill Road | \$240,000                 | Sumter 40%<br>State 60%   |
|             | Pave Brady Road - 2.6 miles<br>Holman Road to Lower Forks Road                  | \$260,000                 | Sumter 40%<br>State 60%   |
|             | Pave Five Points Road - 1.8 miles<br>Three Bridges Road to Lee County           | \$180,000                 | Sumter 40%<br>State 60%   |
|             | Pave Beauchamp Road - 1.4 miles<br>Three Bridges Road to Lee County             | \$150,000                 | Sumter 40%<br>State 60%   |
|             | Three-lane State Route 27 from<br>U.S. 280 to east of Southland Drive           | \$670,000                 | State 80%<br>Federal 20%  |
|             | Maintenance on GA 27 from<br>Southland Drive to GA. 195                         | \$300,000                 | State 80%<br>Federal 20%  |
|             | Motor Grader for Public Works   | \$135,000                 | Sumter                    |
|             | Backhoe for Public Works  | \$ 60,000                 | Sumter                    |
|             | Water Truck for Public Works  | \$ 50,000                 | Sumter                    |
|             | Car for Public Works  | \$ 17,000                 | Sumter                    |
|             | 3 Walkie Talkies for Public Works   | \$ 2,000                  | Sumter                    |
|             | Solid Waste Transfer Station  | \$850,000                 | Sumter                    |
|             | Front End Loader for Landfill   | \$125,000                 | Sumter                    |
|             | Garbage Truck   | \$ 75,000                 | Sumter                    |
|             | 11 Groundwater Monitoring Wells   | \$ 71,000                 | Sumter                    |

| <u>YEAR</u>           | <u>PROJECT</u>  | <u>ESTIMATED COST</u> | <u>FUNDING SOURCE</u> |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1994<br/>cont.</b> | Four, 40 C.Y. Garbage Bins  | \$ 11,200             | Sumter                |
|                       | Landfill Entrance Improvements  | \$ 10,000             | Sumter                |
|                       | Five Sheriff's Department Vehicles<br>Police Package - Three with Radios  | \$ 75,000             | Sumter                |
|                       | Sheriff's Inmate Uniforms   | \$ 5,000              | Sumter                |
|                       | Two Corrections Officers at SCCI  | \$ 40,000             | Sumter                |
|                       | Transport Van for SCCI  | \$ 20,000             | Sumter                |
|                       | Share of New Ambulance for EMS  | \$ 25,000             | Sumter                |
|                       | Initiate Creation of Emergency<br>911 System                              | \$ -                  | Sumter                |
|                       | Develop and Adopt Land Development<br>Standards Ordinance                 | \$ 5,000              | Sumter                |
|                       | Encourage Four Lane Development<br>of U.S. 19 Between Atlanta and Florida | \$ -                  | State                 |
|                       | Pursue Recreation Enhancement   | \$2.5M                | Sumter                |
|                       | Begin Construction of New<br>County Jail at CI                            | \$4M                  | Sumter                |
|                       | Architectural Study of<br>Courthouse Roof                                 | \$15,000              | Sumter                |

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>PROJECT</u>  | <u>ESTIMATED COST</u> | <u>FUNDING SOURCE</u>    |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1995        | Americus North Bypass   | \$2.1M                | State 80%<br>Federal 20% |
|             | Four, 40 C.Y. Garbage Bins  | \$ 11,500             | Sumter                   |
|             | Pursue Approval of Permit for Subtitle "D" Landfill, (or negotiate for regional disposal) | \$4M                  | Sumter                   |
|             | Add Two Lanes along U.S. 280 from Felder Street to Intersection with GA. 27               | \$3.7M                | State 80%<br>Federal 20% |
|             | Five Sheriff's Department Vehicles Police Package - 3 with Radios                         | \$ 77,000             | Sumter                   |
|             | Two Corrections Officers at SCCI  | \$ 40,000             | Sumter                   |
|             | Park Development - Recreation Development   | \$ 5,000              | Sumter                   |
|             | Begin Renovation of Courthouse  | \$1M                  | Sumter                   |
|             | Update Emergency Operations Plan  | \$ 1,000              | Sumter                   |
|             | Pursue Development of Business Incubator  | \$ -                  | Sumter<br>Americus       |
|             | Pursue Capital for Revolving Loan Fund  | \$ -                  | Sumter<br>State          |
|             | Encourage Four Lane Development of U.S. 19 between Atlanta and Florida                    | \$ -                  | State                    |
|             | Investigate Water and Wastewater Treatment along Lake Blackshear                          | \$ -                  | Sumter                   |
|             | Develop System of Dry Hydrants  | \$ -                  | Sumter/SCS               |



| <u>YEAR</u>          | <u>PROJECT</u>   | <u>ESTIMATED COST</u> | <u>FUNDING SOURCE</u> |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1995</b><br>cont. | Finish Construction of New County Jail at CI                                       | \$2M                  | Sumter                |
|                      | Pursue Community Development Block Grant for Housing (and associated improvements) | \$800,000             | Sumter<br>State       |
| <b>1996</b>          | Four, 40 C.Y. Garbage Bins   | \$ 12,000             | Sumter                |
|                      | Five Sheriff's Department Vehicles   | \$ 75,000             | Sumter                |
|                      | Two Corrections Officers at SCCI   | \$ 42,000             | Sumter                |
|                      | Park Development - Recreation Development  | \$ 5,000              | Sumter                |
|                      | Pursue Development of Business Incubator   | \$ -                  | Sumter/<br>Americus   |
|                      | Pursue Capital for Revolving Loan Fund   | \$ -                  | Sumter                |
|                      | Pursue Development of South Bypass   | \$ -                  | State<br>Federal      |
|                      | Encourage Four Lane Development of U.S. 19 Between Atlanta and Florida             | \$ -                  | State<br>Federal      |
| <b>1997</b>          | Four, 40 C.Y. Garbage Bins   | \$ 12,200             | Sumter                |
|                      | Five Sheriff's Department Vehicles   | \$ 76,000             | Sumter                |
|                      | Sheriff's Radio Base Station   | \$ -                  | Sumter                |
|                      | Two Corrections Officers at SCCI   | \$ 43,000             | Sumter                |
|                      | Park Development - Recreation Development  | \$ 5,000              | Sumter                |
|                      | Pursue Development of South Bypass   | \$ -                  | State<br>Federal      |

| <u>YEAR</u>                 | <u>PROJECT</u>   | <u>ESTIMATED COST</u> | <u>FUNDING SOURCE</u> |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1997</b><br><b>cont.</b> | Encourage Four Lane Development of U.S. 19 Between Atlanta and Florida           | \$ -                  | State<br>Federal      |
|                             | Pursue Community Development Block Grant for Housing and Associated Improvements | \$800,000             | Sumter<br>State       |
| <b>1998</b>                 | Four, 40 C.Y. Garbage Bins   | \$ 12,500             | Sumter                |
|                             | Five Sheriff's Department Vehicles   | \$ 77,000             | Sumter                |
|                             | Two Corrections Officers at SCCI   | \$ 43,000             | Sumter                |
|                             | Park Development - Recreation Development  | \$ 5,000              | Sumter                |
|                             | Pursue Development of South Bypass   | \$ -                  | State<br>Federal      |
|                             | Encourage Four Lane Development of U.S. 19 Between Atlanta and Florida           | \$ -                  | State                 |

SUMTER COUNTY  
BASE MAP

