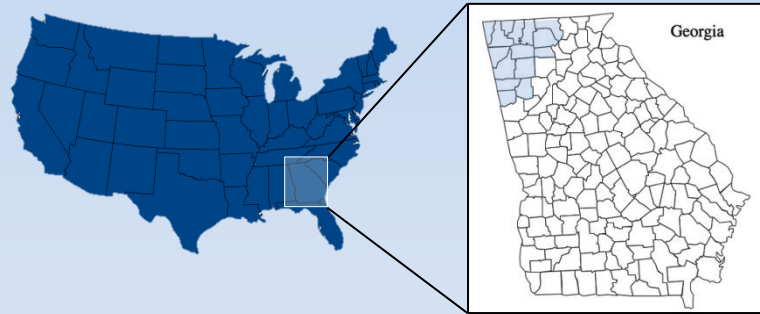


Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership

Northwest Georgia Manufacturing Community



The Community

Known as “The Carpet Capital of the World,” 85 percent of all carpet manufactured in the United States is produced in Georgia, and more than 70 percent comes from the Dalton region. Georgia is home to the carpet industry’s top four companies and eight of the 13 largest carpet companies are headquartered in the state. The carpet industry in Northwest Georgia is unique in that it is situated outside of a large metro region and is highly innovative rapidly adapting to technology changes and shifts in the market.

The Vision

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) and Georgia Tech are launching the Northwest Georgia Center for Sustainable Floor Covering Innovation and Advanced Workforce Readiness (S-FLOR), which will anchor the region’s business development and innovation in the floor covering industry, attracting resources from around the state to support industry growth. The team anticipates that the coordinated, quality implementation of the S-FLOR programs will yield \$27 million in new investment and 2,623 new jobs over 10 years.

The Strategy

Workforce and Training: As the local technical college, GNTC will provide workforce training and professional education to fill the over 500 vacant jobs in the region. Partnerships with industry associations, and the region’s four college and career academies and its secondary education network will address identified critical weaknesses, including the need to prepare more skilled entrants for the workforce, declining interest and enrollment in technical training programs, and the need for more competitive educational levels in the region.

Supplier Network: The Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP) and the Georgia Tech Manufacturing Institute (GTMI) will capitalize on the opportunity to make the industry more sustainable by locating suppliers closer to their customers and increasing the purchase of materials such as dyes, resins, and petroleum-based products within the region.

Research and Innovation: The Georgia Center of Innovation for Manufacturing (COI-M) will deliver support local entrepreneurs in adopting new industry innovations. The Georgia Tech Institute for Materials (IMat) will conduct cutting-edge materials research in concert with industry to develop new and innovative products for the marketplace. The Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI2) will supply technology scouting and co-development partnerships for the industry to infuse needed open innovation.

Infrastructure and Site Development: The Northwest Georgia region is home to 25 full-service business parks totaling 3,170 acres, and three shovel-ready sites totaling 977 acres. Companies located in the Dalton Utilities service area have a 100 percent fiber optic telecommunications network. The NWGRC is also conducting a Digital Economy and Broadband planning program to document both the resources and unmet needs of each region's digital assets, broadband infrastructure, services, and related technology utilization and to inform on-going efforts to fill identified gaps.

Trade and International Investment: The Northwest Georgia region's strength in logistics also allows floor covering companies to reach markets across the globe. Currently, the annual value of carpet and textile floor covering exports from the region is \$208 million. The Georgia Department of Economic Development provides resources for Georgia companies interested in expanding their exports, including trade leads.

Operational Improvement and Capital Access for Operational Improvement: While companies have several financing avenues available to help them access capital, the region has opportunities to improve small manufacturers' product and process operations. Major initiatives in the floor covering industry revolve around environmental sustainability and product lifecycle. Many manufacturers have implemented their own sustainability plans, which include reducing water and energy consumption, designing all products according to "cradle to cradle" protocols, minimizing carbon emissions from factories, and reducing and in some cases eliminating waste to landfills.

The Partnership

Research: Georgia Center of Innovation for Manufacturing (COI-M); Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP); Georgia Tech Institute for Materials (IMat); Georgia Tech Manufacturing Institute (GTMI) **Education:** Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy; Dalton State College; Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC); Georgia Tech Professional Education (GTPE); Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) **Government:** Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA); Georgia QuickStart; Gordon County Board of Commissioners; Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce; Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce; Northwest Georgia Regional Commission; Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Board; Southeast Tennessee Development District **Manufacturers** Beaulieu of America; J + J Flooring Group; Mohawk Industries; Shaw Industries, Inc. **Suppliers:** ArrowStar, LLC.; Northwest Georgia Center For Sustainable Floor Covering Innovation and Advanced Workforce Readiness (S-FLOR); Carpet Industry Clearinghouse, Inc. (CINCH); EVCO Plastics, Inc.; Propex Global, Inc. **Associations & Utilities:** Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE); Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI); Dalton Utilities; Georgia Association of Manufacturers (GAM); Georgia Power; Southeast Industrial Development Association (SIDA); Technology Association of Georgia (TAG); University of Georgia Archway Partnership