



## Rome, Georgia: A Perfect Fit for Lowe's Distribution Center

### DRIVER

In the early 2000s, Lowe's was looking to resolve tension in the supply chain for its stores in western Georgia, northern Florida and Alabama. Searching within a 150-mile radius, Lowe's developers began looking into a handful of sites that could meet the company's needs: a location large enough to accommodate a 1.6 million-square foot state-of-the-art distribution center on a 180-acre site and a workforce that can fill every need from forklift operators to human resources experts.

“One thing we really appreciated was the Georgia governor's involvement in the project. Not all states do that. It was an entirely different attitude.”

- Joe Hilton, Real Estate Manager  
Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.

### SOLUTION

In that search, Lowe's worked with the Georgia Department of Economic Development and reviewed more than a dozen sites. Among those sites they found Floyd County, Georgia. The site ticked off all of Lowe's must-haves - size, workforce, location - with the added benefit of strong financial incentives from the city, county and an EDGE fund award from the OneGeorgia Authority.

At the same time, the global financial crisis struck, and the lagging economy eased the tension in the company's supply chain. Lowe's no longer needed an additional distribution center.

### Company:

Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.

### Facility Type:

Distribution center

### Top-line Requirements:

180-acre site with a workforce capable of filling hundreds of positions

### Number of Jobs Added:

700, ranging from manual labor to human resource administration

### Investment:

\$125 million

### What Georgia Offers Lowes:

- Customized training at no cost through Georgia's best-in-the-nation Quick Start training program
- Focused pre-employment assessment through Quick Start
- Access to logistics expertise at no cost through the Center of Innovation for Logistics

### Incentives:

- OneGeorgia Authority EDGE Fund, awarded to provide financial assistance to eligible applicants that are being considered as a relocation or expansion site
- Less Developed Census Tract designation through which local governments that undertake redevelopment and revitalization efforts in certain older commercial and industrial areas - maximum job tax credit of \$3,500 per job
- Localized incentive package coordinated through the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce



That didn't stop Floyd County from its commitment to bringing in big business to the Rome site. Al Hodge, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce put it this way: "Initially, our community voted to support the development of this land through a Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax. The people of Floyd County really stepped up, as did the Floyd County and City of Rome local governments."

The county continued to develop the site, taking care of the due diligence, wetlands delineation, grading, power, water and sewage.

As work continued at the site, the economy was picking back up, and in 2011 Lowe's was again in search of a distribution center in the same vicinity. The Floyd County site was a favorite among the Lowe's site selectors, and they moved quickly. Because of the due diligence that had already been done, a broker wasn't even required.

## RESULTS

The groundbreaking was held the same year, and the project – Lowe's 35th distribution center – was completed in 2012. With it came an investment of \$125 million and 700 jobs.

To assist in filling those 700 jobs, Quick Start stepped in. As Georgia's internationally acclaimed workforce development program, Quick Start provided not just job training but also pre-employment assessments.

"The continuous effort from the local community and their dedication the project and the site is what saw this project to fruition," Georgia Department of Economic Development Director Scott McMurray explained. "When these projects come around, you have to strike while the opportunity exists."

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