



Conecuh County Recommendations

POLI 7700 | Group 1

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UNTAPPED
COMMUNITY
ASSETS
CONECUH
COUNTY





Conecuh County – Community Assets

- ▶ Evergreen (Pop. ~5,000) is the county seat and largest city — a natural hub for commerce and services
- ▶ Located directly on Interstate 65 – easy access to Montgomery, Mobile, and Pensacola with commercial and industrial-zoned properties near I-65 interchanges throughout the county
- ▶ Economic Development Pluses
 - Available land across the county suitable for light industrial, agricultural services, and logistics operations
 - Timber and rural land resources support wood processing, eco-tourism, or agri-innovation
 - Existing commercial land near I-65 could be zoned for light industrial or agricultural services
 - Public-private partnerships could involve the city, county, school district, and a private company
- ▶ Top Crops & Livestock: Cotton, corn, peanuts, cattle — strong foundation for agribusiness expansion
- ▶ Potential for public-private partnerships involving the county, city, school district, and private sector investors



Conecuh County – Community Assets

- ▶ Low land and labor costs offer a competitive edge for new and expanding businesses
- ▶ Natural Resource Base:
 - Rich in agriculture, forestry, and manufacturing industries
 - Strategic location with access to I-65 and rural transportation routes
 - Deep community knowledge in farming, forestry, and equipment operation
 - Ready landscape for agricultural innovation and expansion
- ▶ Forestry & Natural Resources
 - Home to portions of the Conecuh National Forest, the region supports timber, hunting, and eco-tourism.
 - Timber processing and wood product manufacturing are natural fits due to local resources and workforce familiarity.

Conecuh County – Community Assets

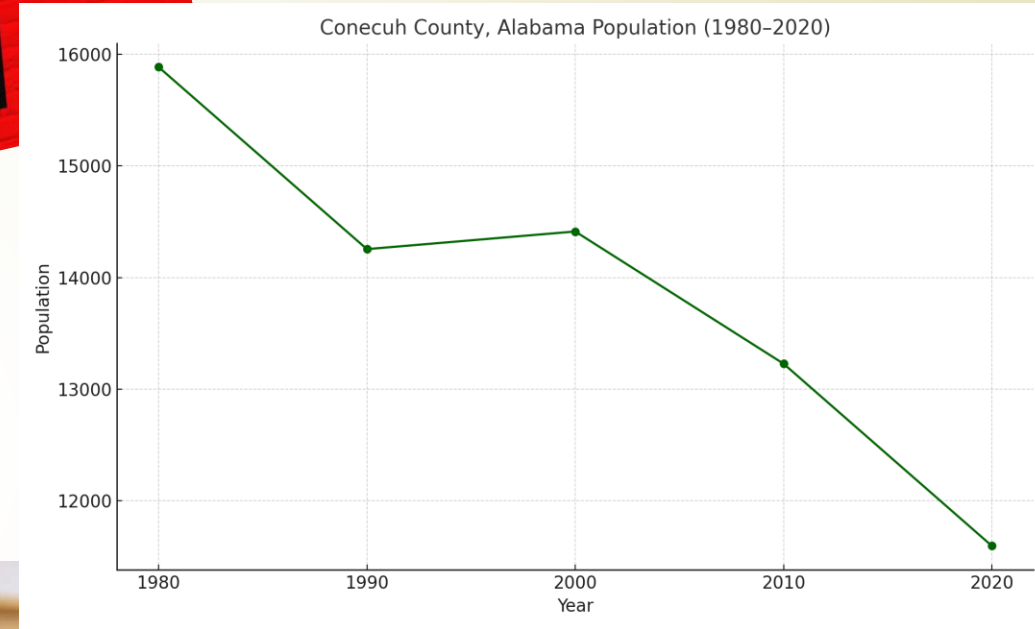
Conecuh County offers a strong foundation for workforce development through its local technical education programs. The Conecuh County Workforce Development Center in Evergreen provides hands-on training in mechanical and electrical systems, agriscience, medical fields, STEM, and welding — preparing students for high-demand careers across multiple sectors.

Reid State Technical College, also located in Evergreen, enhances this ecosystem with specialized programs in CDL, HVAC, industrial electronics, and more. Together, these institutions offer a unique opportunity to align education with local industry needs.

- Strategic Opportunity: Partner with a major agricultural or industrial brand to establish Conecuh County as a regional training and service hub.
- **Possibilities include:**
 - Creating a precision agriculture training center
 - Launching student internships and certification pathways
 - Developing custom workforce pipelines tailored to local employers in agriculture, forestry and skilled trades
 - This combination of strong technical training, workforce familiarity with land-based industries, and room for scalable partnerships positions Conecuh County as a launchpad for rural workforce innovation.



Key Challenges Facing Conecuh County & Barriers to Economic Growth To Address





► Low Population Growth & Workforce Drain

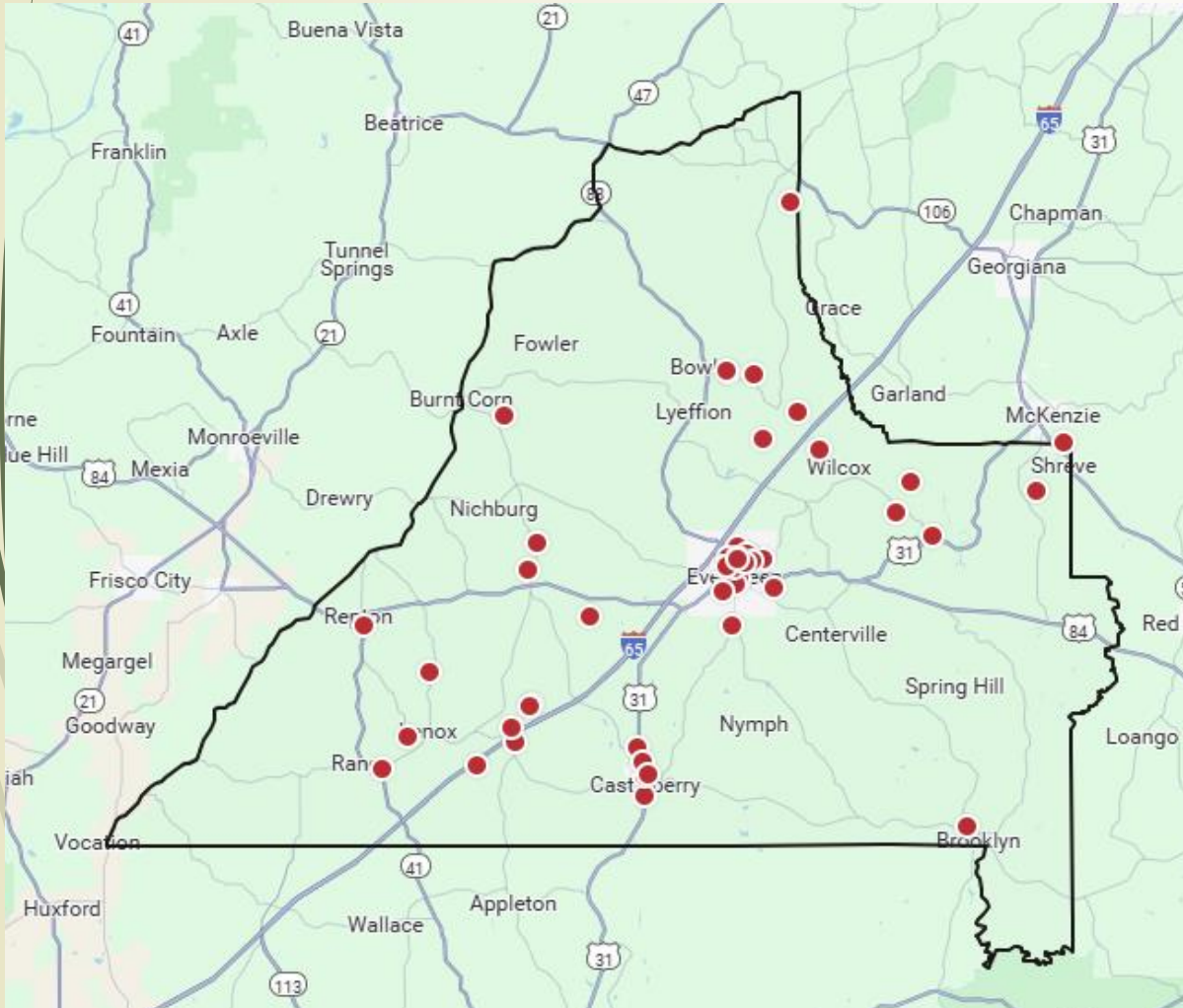
- From 1980-2020 Conecuh County has lost approximately 4,300 residents, a 27% population decline (**1980 Census:** 15,884 residents - **2020 Census:** 11,597 residents)

► Youth Out-Migration

- Many high school graduates leave for college or trade schools and do not return due to a lack of local career opportunities
- Conecuh has a relatively low percentage of residents with college degrees, which can indicate both limited educational return and limited professional employment opportunities

► What It Means for Residents

- While hundreds of jobs are available, many are concentrated in hourly/entry-level roles (e.g., retail, manufacturing, logistics, healthcare support)
- The unemployment rate is moderate but slightly above the state average
- Employment opportunities appear to be growing outside the county as well—many residents commute to nearby counties for work



➤ Aging Population

- Over **24% of residents are 65 or older** (compared to ~17% nationally)
- Only about **20% are under 18**, showing little generational replacement
- The median age is rising, which puts stress on both the labor pool and public services

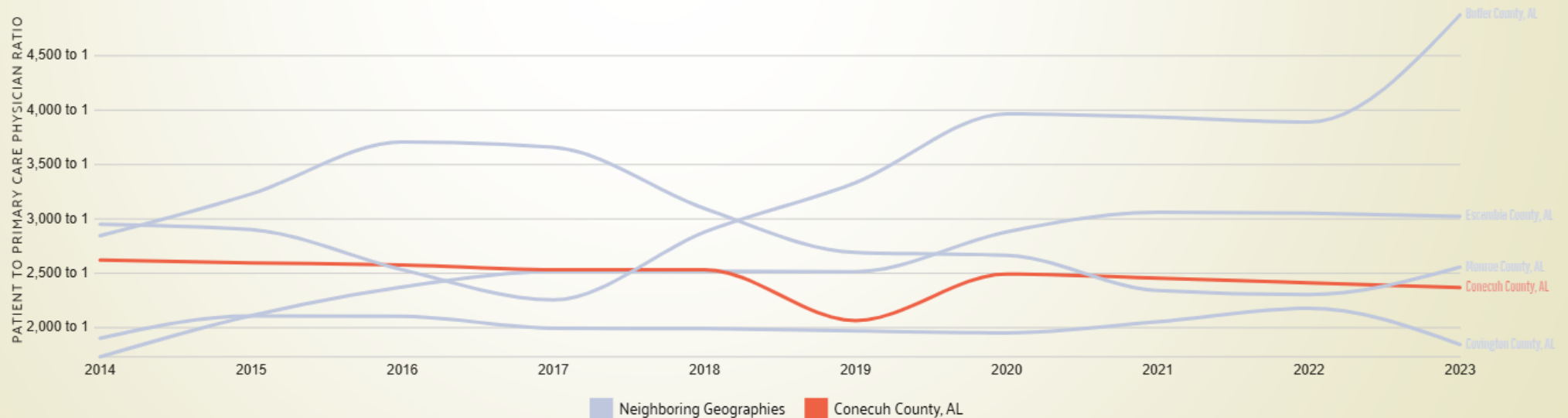
➤ Limited Housing & Infrastructure

- Inhibits ability to attract new businesses or workforce
- Realtor.com lists **52 active listings** as of June 22, 2025, with a median listing price around **\$189,000**, and homes averaging **74 days on market**

Healthcare Access & Education Concerns

- Affects long-term livability and investment appeal
- Primary care physicians in Conecuh County, AL see an average of 2,370 patients per year. This represents a 1.78% decrease from the previous year (2,413 patients)
- **Perinatal care access** — Conecuh County is a *maternity desert* with **no local delivery hospital or prenatal providers**, forcing expectant mothers to travel an average of **23 miles** for delivery, with 18% traveling over 70 miles for higher-level care

- An expanded workforce and strong community investment will help bring essential services, such as healthcare, to the area.





ENHANCING CONECUH COUNTY'S WEB EXPERIENCE AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

Messaging, Visual, and Data Improvements

- ▶ Some of the visual media—introductory video on homepage—is outdated and could be remade to be more up-to-date and visually appealing.
- ▶ Many of the tabs give essentially the same information, making inefficient use of web space.
- ▶ The site shows educational and workforce development initiatives—ACT Ready—but does not show how this has improved conditions in the county. Figures displaying increased education/employment rates could validate claims.
- ▶ Better image placement—Images look randomly attached. Lacks flow.



Content/Informational Recommendations

- ▶ Elaboration on the individual communities—Evergreen, Castleberry, Repton—to provide a better sense of the area.
- ▶ More information about the plethora of natural resources—timber, gas, and oil—that can be utilized by industry.
- ▶ A tourism tab should be added, showcasing the interesting attractions the community has to offer.
 - ▶ Conecuh Sausage festival
 - ▶ Hunting/fishing competitions and services
 - ▶ Parks, shops, restaurants



Workforce		Total NCRC	Bronze NCRC	Silver NCRC	Gold NCRC	Platinum NCRC
Emerging	High School	368	201	138	26	+
	College	12	+	6	+	0
Current	Private	54	23	20	10	+
	Public	43	24	12	5	+
Transitioning	Adult Education	74	35	32	7	0
	Unemployed	139	72	49	13	5
	Recent Veteran	+	+	0	0	0
	Workforce category not identified	+	0	+	0	0
	Totals	692	359	258	64	11

Workforce	Goals	Actual NCRC
✓ Emerging	67	380
✓ Current	20	97
✓ Transitioning	99	214
Workforce category not identified	+	1
Workforce		Total
Employers Supporting		15

To/From	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Not Earned	18	2	0	0
Bronze		11	0	0
Silver			0	0
Gold				0

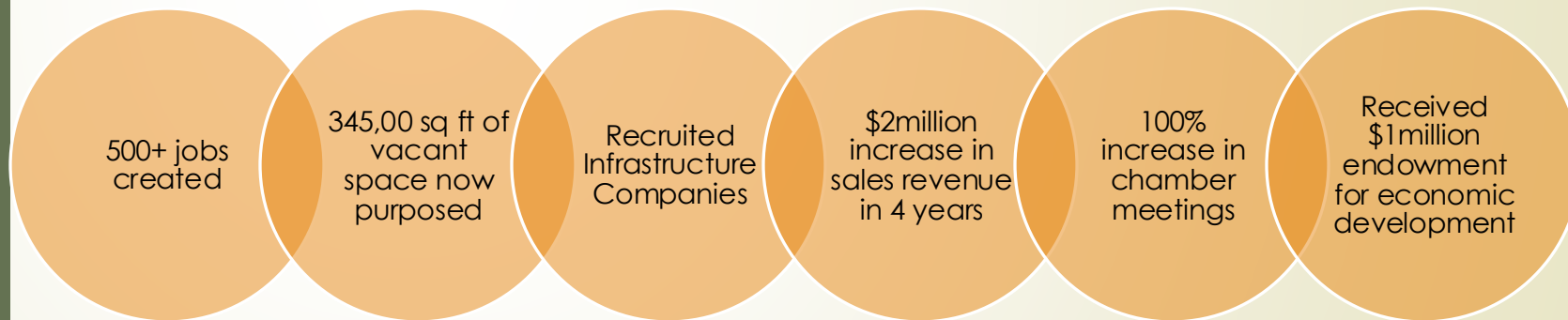


Douglas, GA

Population: 11,556
Median Household Income: \$34,112
Poverty Rate: 26.6%

- ➔ RETAIL INCUBATOR – An entrepreneurial leasing system where small business entrepreneurs can test their ideas that created higher education partnerships and grew into a local technology center

ADAPTING
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
IDEAS TO
CONECUH
COUNTY

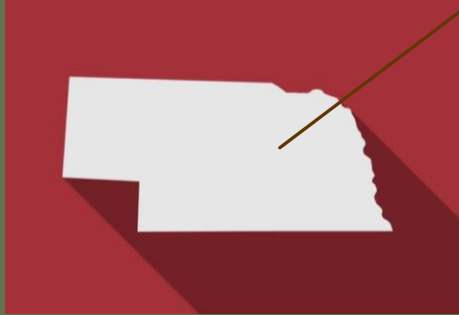


CONECUH COUNTY RETAIL INCUBATOR



- Revitalize empty storefronts
- Create a localized partnership with Reid State
- Create apprenticeships for high school and college students

More vision and framework to be shared in original concept!

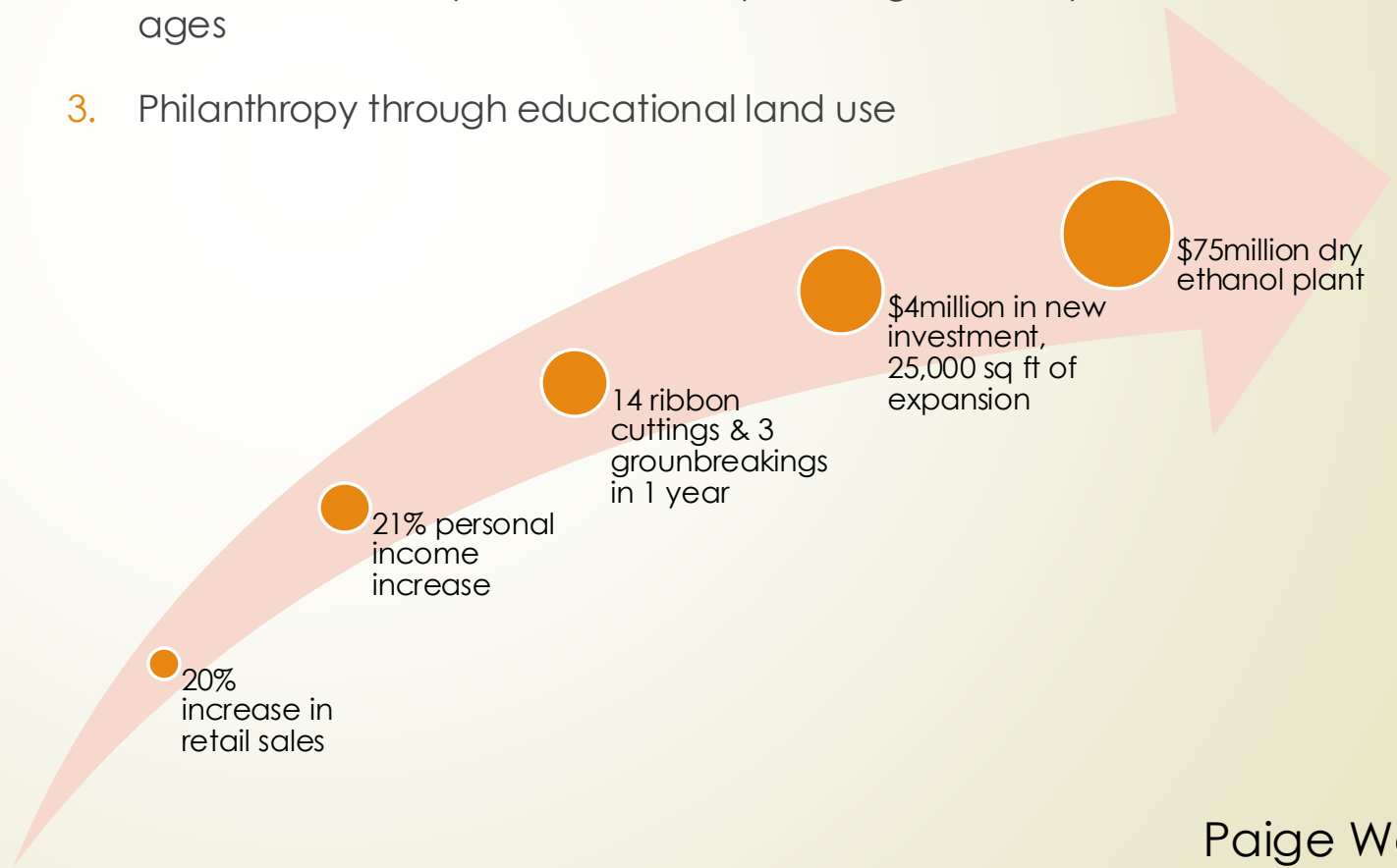


ADAPTING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IDEAS TO CONECUH COUNTY

Ord, NE

Population: 2,112
Median Household Income: \$49.639
Poverty Rate: 11.4%

- LEADERSHIP QUEST- A 9 month local leadership program funded through a community endowment through land-rich farmers focusing on:
 1. Youth outreach partnered with high school business classes
 2. Economic Development leadership training for entrepreneurs and farmers of all ages
 3. Philanthropy through educational land use

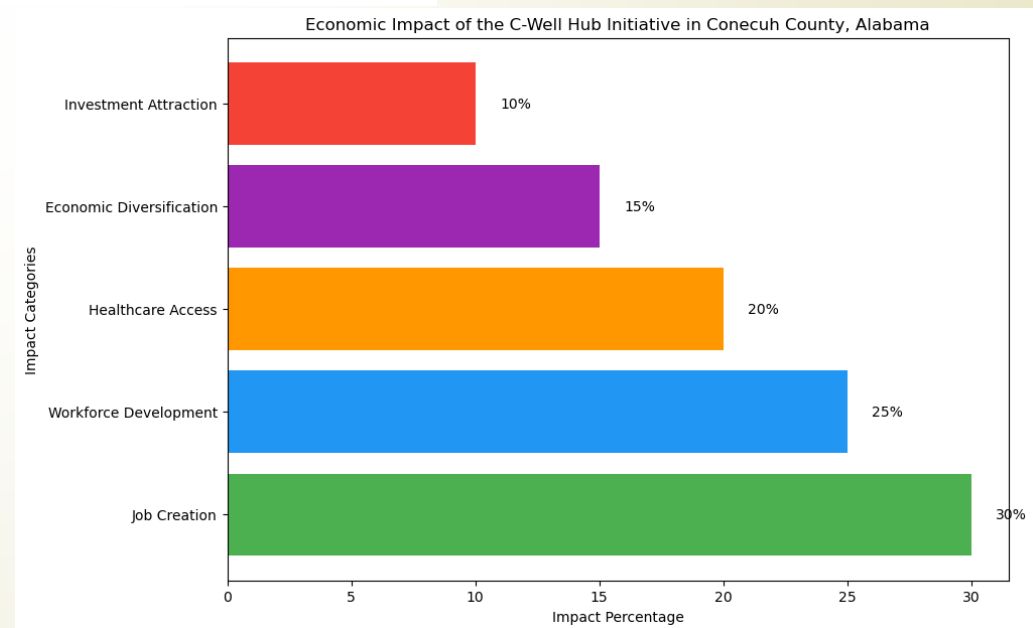
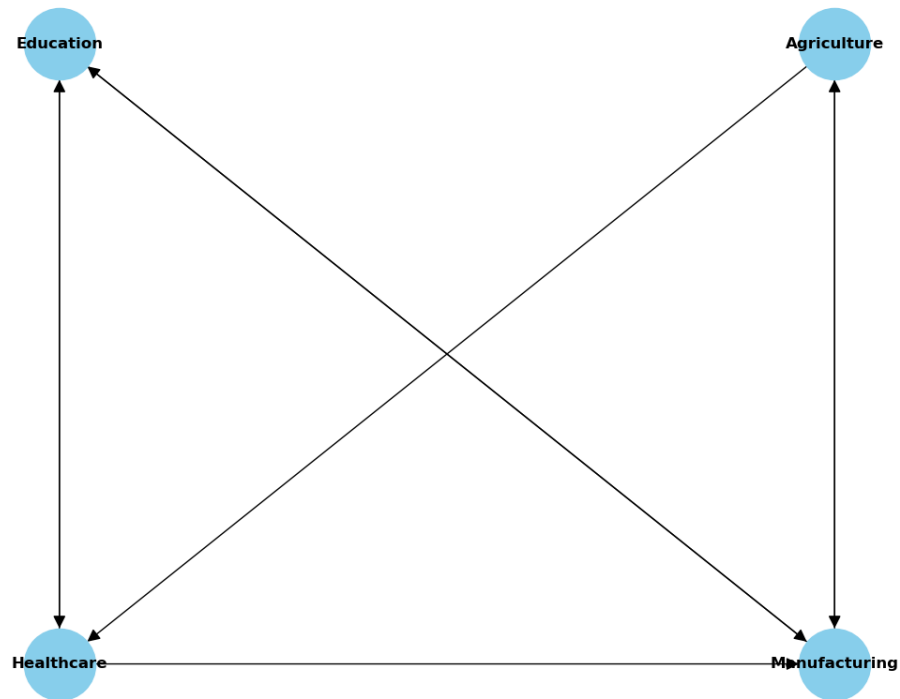


Leadership Quest in Conecuh County



- Youth development through multi-generational learning which can lead to increased longevity of life
- Development of school clubs and organizations around business and agriculture
- Tax abatement/incentive for those willing to lend land for educational purposes
- Exploration of the multi-discipline ecosystem of a successful agricultural and manufacturing region (engineering, forestry, meteorology, animal sciences, retail and supply, etc)
- Partner the Conecuh Sausage identity with other sustainable crop sources creating a farm-to-table sustainability feel for the community

CREATING AI-DRIVEN CONCEPTS IN CONECUH COUNTY





Initial Prompt:

- Can you develop an idea that will improve the **quality of life**, create a more **skilled workforce**, and provide **more jobs in the manufacturing and healthcare** industries in Conecuh County, Alabama? Additionally, please incorporate measures that will **enable people to work within the county**, as nearly half of the labor force residing within the county works in other counties. Additionally, there is a large gap between medical physicians, as there is one physician for every 2,370 residents.



Conecuh County Integrated Workforce & Wellness Hub (C-Well Hub). (Co-Pilot)

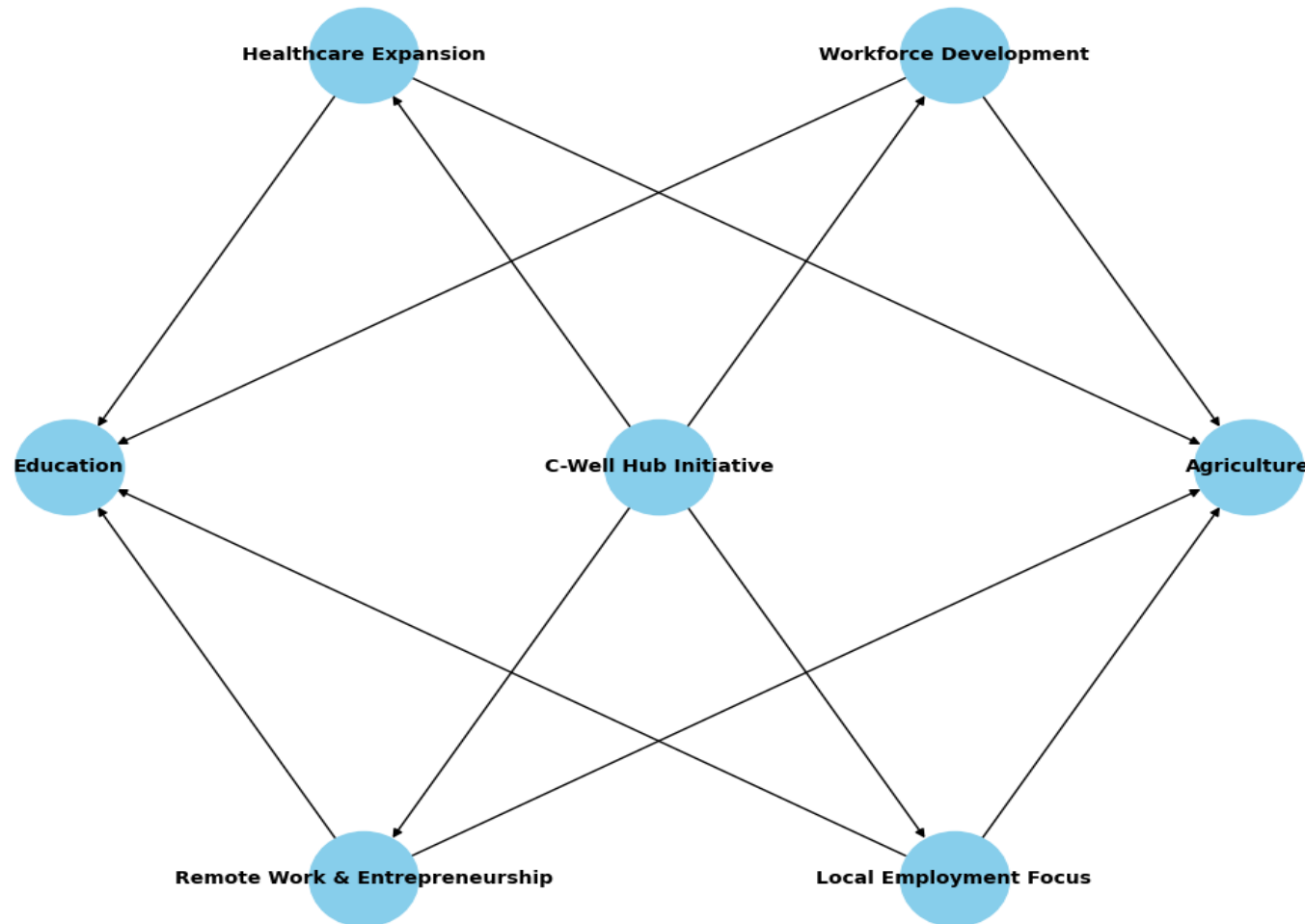
- ▶ Establish a **multi-purpose workforce and healthcare innovation center**—the C-Well Hub—in Evergreen, the county seat. This facility would serve as a:
 - ▶ **Training center** for healthcare and advanced manufacturing
 - ▶ **Telehealth and urgent care clinic**
 - ▶ **Business incubator** for local healthcare and manufacturing startups
 - ▶ **Remote work co-op space** with broadband access



Conecuh Works – A Community Advancement Hub for Healthcare & Manufacturing (ChatGPT)

- ▶ Conecuh Advanced Training & Workforce Hub (CAT-WH)
- ▶ Conecuh Rural Health Corps
- ▶ Local Manufacturing Business Incubator & Co-op Facility
- ▶ Remote Work & Tele-Industry Hub
- ▶ Live & Work Conecuh Incentives

Create a visual of the C-Well Hub Initiative in a downloadable format. (Co-Pilot)



Key Components (Co-Pilot)

Healthcare Expansion

- Physician Residency Incentive Program
- Telehealth Infrastructure
- Community Health Worker (CHW) Training

Manufacturing Workforce Development

- Advanced Manufacturing Training
- Apprenticeship-to-Employment Pipeline
- Mobile Training Labs

Remote Work & Entrepreneurship

- Remote Work Co-op
- Startup Incubator

Local Employment Focus

- "Work Local" Campaign
- Transportation Assistance

Funding & Partnerships

- Grants
- Public-Private Partnerships
- State Programs

Key Components (ChatGPT)

Conecuh Advanced Training & Workforce Hub (CAT-WH)

- Satellite Campus Partnership
- Work-Based Learning
- High School Pipeline
- Adult Upskilling

Conecuh Rural Health Corps

- Scholarship for Service Program
- Telehealth Expansion Center
- Mobile Clinics & Health Events
- Housing Incentives

Local Manufacturing Business Incubator & Co-Op Facility

- Shared Equipment Co-Op
- Micro-Factory Model
- Local Supplier Development Program

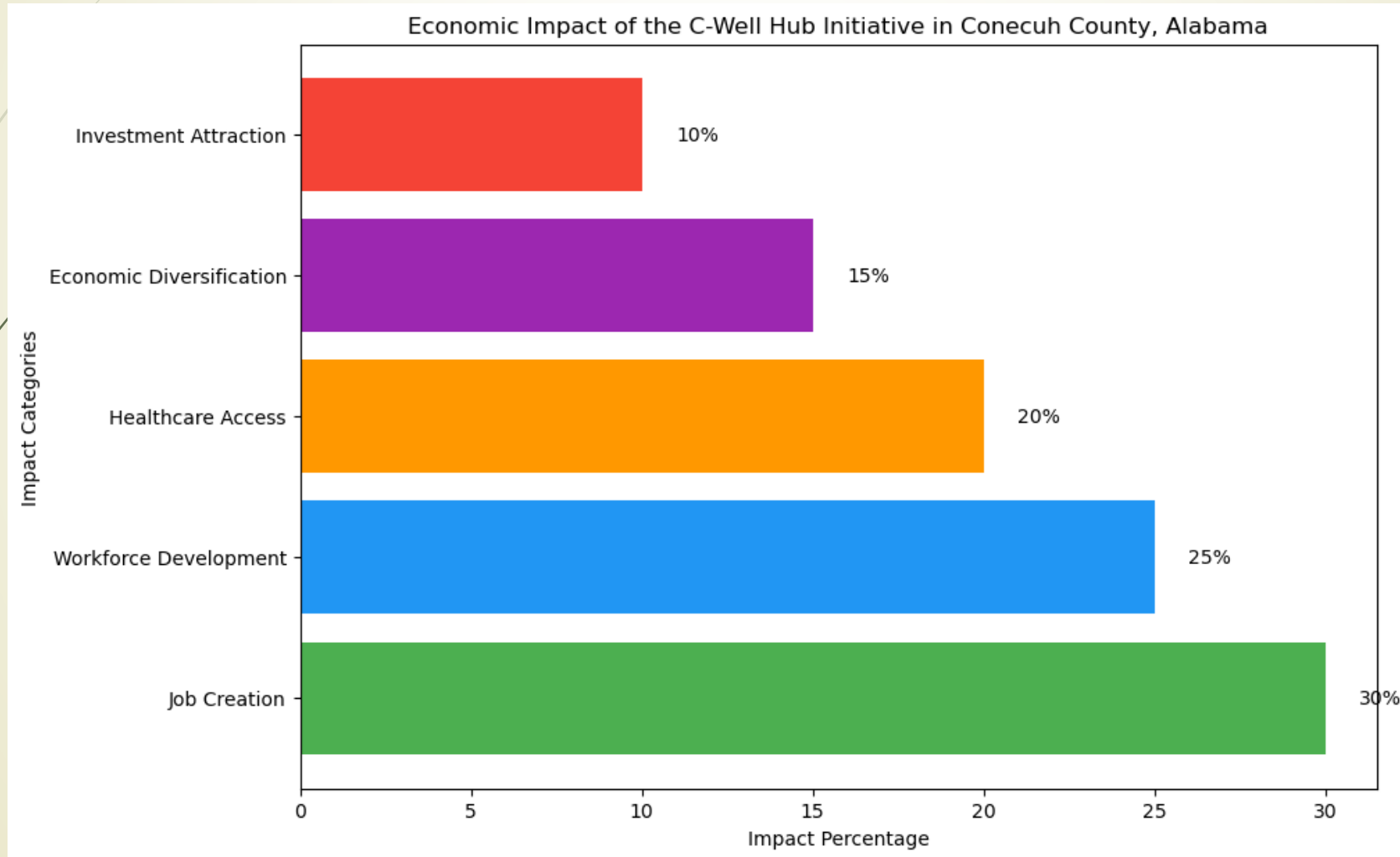
Remote Work & Tele-Industry Hub

- Coworking + Training Space
- Remote Medical Services Job
- Attract Remote Employers

Live & Work Conecuh Incentives

- Come Home to Conecuh Program
- Employer Housing Partnerships
- Transit & Childcare Support

How will this idea impact the local economy in Conecuh County, Alabama? (Co-Pilot)



Impact Summary (ChatGPT)



Improve Quality of Life

More Jobs in Healthcare

More Jobs in Manufacturing

Skilled Workforce

Work Locally



Next Steps (ChatGPT)



**Apply for USDA Rural
Development & HRSA Grants**

Form a Leadership Council

**Start with Pilot
Programs**



Can you create a visual of this concept in a downloadable format for a PowerPoint slide? (ChatGPT)

1. Conecuh Advanced Training & Workforce Hub (CAT-WH)

- Satellite Campus Training
- Work-Based Learning
- High School Pathways
- Adult Upskilling

2. Conecuh Rural Health Corps

- Scholarships for Service
- Telehealth Infrastructure
- Mobile Clinics
- Housing Incentives

3. Manufacturing Business Incubator & Co-Op

- Shared Equipment Co-Op
- Micro-Factories
- Supplier Development

4. Remote Work & Tele-Industry Hub

- Coworking Space
- Remote Health Jobs
- Employer Incentives

GROUP 1
SUGGESTION
FOR CONECUH
COUNTY

Bringing a John Deere Dealership to Conecuh County's shovel ready site

- Job creation
- Educational partnerships
- Recreational sponsorships
- Work in conjunction with CSX rail connection

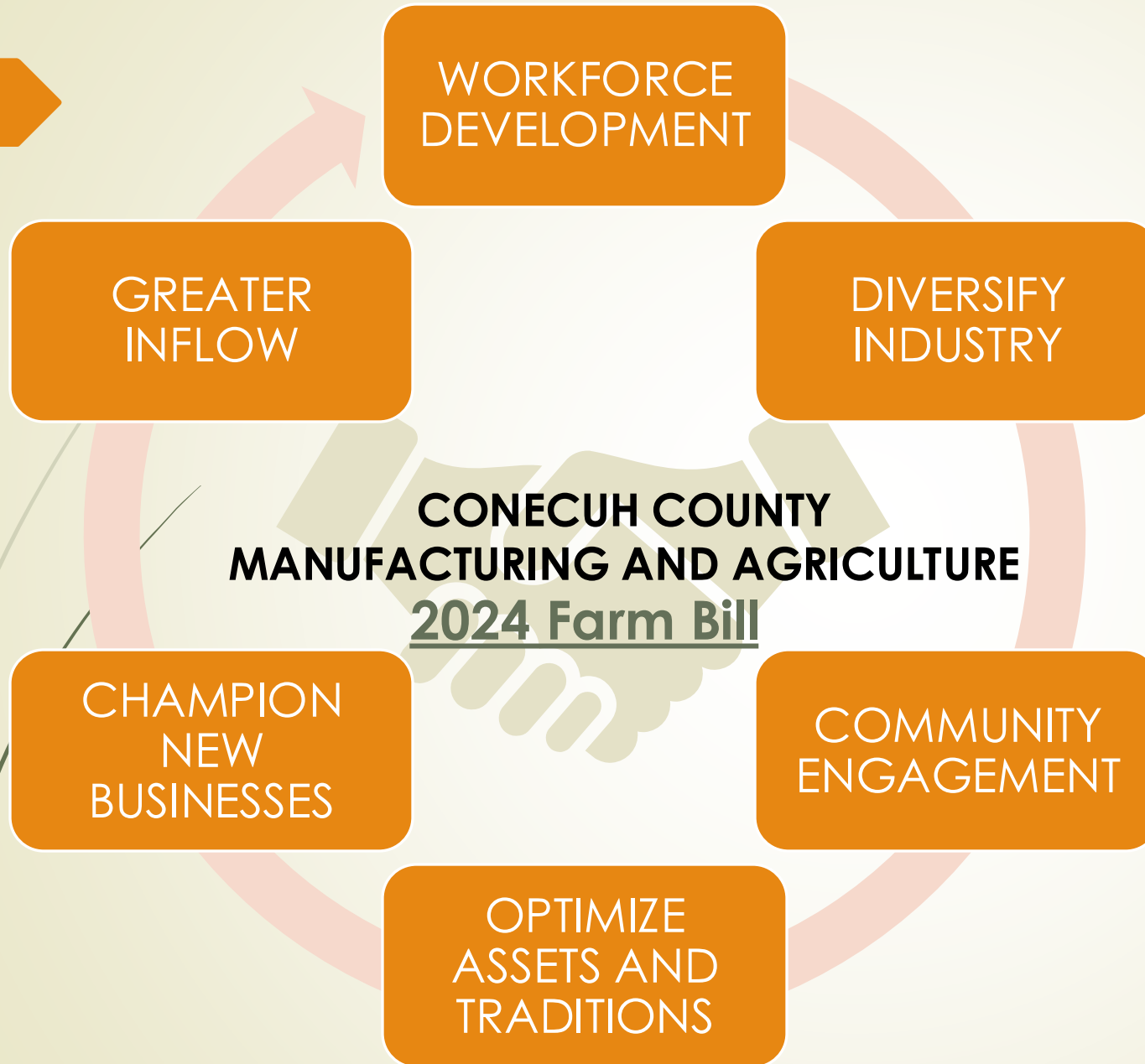


Why John Deere?

- Excellent Employee Benefits
- Improved tax base
- Cluster industry with existing Guyoung Tech that would diversify the manufacturing skill base within the county
- Create opportunities with local farmers through partnerships with the OneAcre Fund, Farmlink, and the World Food Program
- High School Registered [Apprenticeship Program](#) and [John Deere Inspire](#)
- No John Deere dealerships west of Birmingham, AL



JOHN DEERE



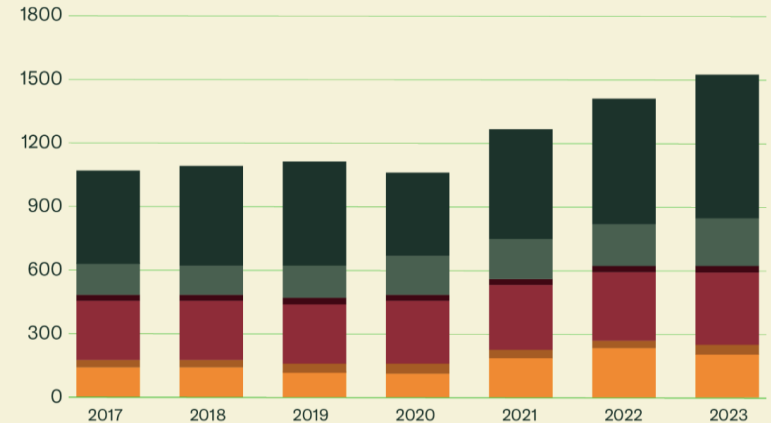
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Agriculture and related industries' impact on U.S. GDP

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2024

■ Food services, eating and drinking places
■ Textile, apparel, and leather manufacturing
■ Food, beverage, and tobacco manufacturing
■ Farms ■ Food and beverage stores ■ Forestry, fishing, and related

Billions of USD



"How Agriculture Supports the American Economy and Main Street Businesses", U.S. Chamber of Commerce



CONECUH COUNTY

REVIVE THE LAND, REBUILD THE ECONOMY