



## Rotary Club of Dalton Newsletter

<http://www.daltonrotaryclub.org>

### This Week:

February 16  
Patty Mooney  
*Coach Tony Ingle of  
Dalton State College*

### Upcoming Meetings:

February 23  
Scott Rhoden & Dr. Larry  
Tripp (DHS)  
*Dalton State College  
Rotaract and Dalton  
High School Interact  
Students*

March 1  
Scott Delay

March 8  
Norris Little

March 15  
David Pennington  
*Mick Stein, Wescott  
Center - Opioid Addiction*

March 22  
**NO MEETING**

March 24  
Rotary R&R  
*Dalton Convention Center  
Social @ 6pm  
Dinner @ 7pm*

March 29  
Larry Winter

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## The Dalton-Whitfield Economic Development Authority: An Update

By: John Hutcheson



Rotarian Kevin Harris introduced Rotarian Carl Campbell, Executive Director of the Dalton-Whitfield Economic Development Authority (DWEDA). A graduate of Dalton High School and the University of Georgia, Carl worked for the Georgia Department of Economic Development before returning to Dalton to assume his current position.

Carl began with an overview of DWEDA's mission and operations. The authority was established to facilitate positive economic growth in local jobs, capital, and productivity by identifying appropriate targets in industry, retailing, commercial and service enterprises, and health care for recruitment to Dalton-Whitfield. Working with state-level professionals, company representatives, retailers, and local government agencies, DWEDA markets to industries that can take advantage of the strengths of the area, such as its excellent infrastructure (especially water) or improve such weaknesses as retailing, where there is much leakage to Chattanooga and Atlanta—since the typical retail prospect looks for an average annual household income of \$75,000 and 75% of Dalton-Whitfield households fall below that amount, many potential retailers are discouraged from locating here. Generally speaking, prospects want a promising location and a low-cost business environment with a freeport exemption, no sales tax on energy, thorough local knowledge of applicable state and federal opportunities for grants, etc., and tax-savings through an Industrial Revenue Bond. Incentives such as these become paramount once a community makes a firm's short list for expansion or relocation.

During the last year, DWEDA's project pipeline comprised dealings with 59 companies, with projections for 8,308 jobs and \$1,964,820,000 in capital investment. Of these, 19% were in floorcovering, 17% in automotive technology, 17% in retail, and 47% in other lines, especially food, chemicals, and plastics. Between 75% and 80% were interested in the Carbondale Industrial Park, but 68% looked at other locations as well, especially for retailing. There were more than 25 project visits to Whitfield County in 2015, and the area was a finalist for 13 projects. Current efforts focus on automotive concerns, building on proximity to Chattanooga's Volkswagen plant and its ancillaries.

Floorcovering remains the mainstay of the local economy, of course, but many potential new industries are apprehensive about competing with it for an adequate supply of skilled workers. Further insight into the challenges facing Dalton-Whitfield's economic development can be gained from looking at some recent unsuccessful recruitment projects. Cabrera, an automotive stamping company, went to a Tennessee location after

