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### **Bainbridge Awarded Outstanding Community Transformation/Downtown of the Year Award at the 2024 Georgia Downtown Conference**

**ATLANTA, GA** – Bainbridge has been honored with the prestigious Outstanding Community Transformation/Downtown of the Year Award at the Georgia Downtown Conference. This accolade recognizes the remarkable success of their preservation-based downtown revival, highlighting the organization’s commitment to revitalizing Bainbridge’s historic core while fostering economic growth and community engagement.

The Outstanding Community Transformation/Downtown of the Year Award is the highest recognition in the Economic Development category, awarded to downtown programs that have demonstrated excellence in revitalizing their districts through strategic preservation efforts. Since Hurricane Michael devastated Bainbridge in 2018, downtown has experienced a remarkable resurgence with the arrival of 53 net new businesses which created 280 net jobs, and the redevelopment of historic properties has generated an economic impact over \$14.1 million. In 2017, the occupancy rate stood at 76%, but by June 2024, it has risen impressively to 96%. In 2018, the city was designated a Rural Tax Zone, and the tax credits offered through this program are astounding: \$102,000 job tax credits claimed, \$636,000 rehabilitation tax credits claimed, and \$165,900 investment tax credits claimed. Public + Private investment totaled \$6.3 million among 70 projects, and 61 properties sold for an investment of \$4.2 million.

“This recognition is more than just an award; it is a testament to the spirit, dedication, and resilience of our beloved community,” said Amanda Glover, the Director of the Downtown Development Authority

The Georgia Downtown Conference is a premier event for downtown development professionals, offering a platform for sharing innovative ideas, strategies, and success stories. The Outstanding Community Transformation/Downtown of the Year Award is a key highlight, celebrating communities that have made significant strides in downtown preservation and revitalization.

The awards ceremony was held on August 28 in Thomasville, where Bainbridge was celebrated for their vision, leadership, and the transformative impact of their efforts on downtown Bainbridge. This honor underscores the critical role that thoughtful preservation and community-driven initiatives play in creating thriving downtown areas that honor the past while embracing the future.

**About the Georgia Downtown Association:** The Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) is a non-profit statewide organization that connects communities and professionals that are committed to downtown vitality. GDA provides accredited training programs for downtown development professionals, advocates for Georgia's downtowns, and educates private and public sectors on the economic benefits of a thriving downtown. GDA also hosts the annual Georgia Downtown Conference to offer top-notch educational training and networking opportunities.

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