Oxford, Georgia

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OXFORD
A PASTORAL COMMUNITY

Oxford wishes to remain a community of homes, churches and schools dedicated to green space.

"In 1966, a hound dog could sleep undisturbed for an hour on Emory Street," jokes Hoyt Oliver, Oxford City Council member. This may not be so true today as growth throughout Newton County and nearby Covington is exerting pressures on the municipality to embrace more business and industry. Nonetheless, Oxford is committed to its pastoral way of life.

Except for small retail developments planned for the town center, Oxford wishes to remain a community of homes, churches and schools dedicated to green space. Within the city's comprehensive plan, a network of nature trails is to be added to its existing one-mile path. For over 10 years, Oxford has been designated a Tree City by the Arbor Day Foundation, and the city and Oxford College of Emory University, that is so much a part of the community, are of like mind in protecting the environment.

"We are moving toward a full pedestrian campus," explains Joe Moon, Dean of Campus Life at the college. "We have bicycles that are available for loan, offer a regular shuttle to the Emory campus in Atlanta and have moved car traffic to the perimeter of the campus."

So while others may rush toward a more metropolitan profile, Oxford continues to hold dear the pleasant serenity that has always been a part of the community.

Fast FACTS
OXFORD
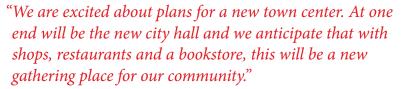
POPULATION: 2,398 with additional 700 college students

COUNTY: Newton – Population 91,451

UTILITIES: Electric, water and solid waste

TRANSPORTATION: U.S. Highway 81/Emory Street is the main corridor to Oxford

"We are excited about plans for a new town center. At one end will be the new city hall and we anticipate that with shops, restaurants and a bookstore, this will be a new gathering place for our community."

Mayor Jerry Roseberry

- **The biggest green project** for the city and college is a $28 million new dormitory. It is the first LEED-certified (Leadership in Environmental Engineering and Design) building in Newton County. LEED is an international program that sets standards for environmentally friendly construction. The college also has a no net tree loss policy that means every tree removed during construction will be replaced on the campus.

- **Oxford was awarded a Georgia Urban Forestry Award** for the seedlings created from its Yarbrough Oak, an enormous white oak whose limbs stretched 90 feet. Before its demise, volunteers helped distribute over 1000 "descendants" from the tree. Earlier in its history in 1929, city leaders deeded the tree to itself to ensure its longevity.

LIKE NO OTHER

The city of Oxford is unlike any other municipality in Georgia. Its beginnings, culture and lore are uniquely its own. Its life is inherently entwined with the college that shares its name, Oxford College of Emory University.

"In every way, the college and the town are connected," explains Joe Moon, Dean of Campus Life. "From its early beginnings, the faculty/clergy lived with the townspeople and it is no coincidence that, as the crow flies, all the city roads point to the college."

Oxford was chartered in 1839 and was designed by Edward Lloyd Thomas, a Methodist minister and surveyor. Its 125 lots were offered on a 999-year lease with the provision that "no intoxicating liquors shall be sold nor any game of hazard be allowed on the lots under penalty of forfeiture." These lots were later sold for private ownership and the town is more than triple its original size.

The city is 2.56 square miles and the original streets were all named for notable Methodists. More than twenty 19th-century buildings and sites related to Methodism are still standing.

Hoyt Oliver, third term city council member, Methodist minister and Oxford College faculty member, explains a piece of architectural history. "The Old Church on Wesley Street represents the long-standing ties uniting the college, the town and Methodism. The house of worship was built two years after the city charter, was used during the Civil War as a hospital for the wounded and is used by the college and town today for special occasions and gatherings."

Erik Oliver, son of Hoyt Oliver and fourth generation Emory graduate, sums up the relationship of the city and college this way, "Oxford is a rare and wonderful community, a place of living, working, worshipping and learning. The way to keep it special, both in essence and landscape, is to work on it together."

The Old Church, built in 1841, is leased to the Oxford Historical Shrine Society. Two wings were added to the central section in 1880.

Every half hour, a hammer strikes the old bell in the clock tower atop Seney Hall with a melodious clang. Cast in 1796, the bell is the oldest piece of history at Oxford College.

Oxford College is the birthplace of Emory University, one of the top 20 universities in the nation. The first president of Georgia Tech University began a career at Oxford with a mechanics shop in 1880.

More About HOMETOWN OXFORD

The entire town, including Oxford College, was designated a Shrine of the United Methodist Church in 1972, the first town in the country to be so designated.

Although commercialism was discouraged by the founding fathers, old Oxford did have several small business enterprises to accommodate the townspeople. The first Coca-Cola sold outside of Atlanta was purchased in one of Oxford's general stores.

The Dukes of Hazzard TV series filmed its opening credits, a series of car stunts, on the grounds of Oxford College.

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