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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Upson County Honored with Georgia County Excellence Award

ATLANTA (June 7, 2021) – Upson County's Thomaston-Upson Community Heart & Soul Initiative has been recognized with a 2021 Georgia County Excellence Award. Hosted jointly by the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) and Georgia Trend magazine, the awards program honors the innovative and cost-effective work of county governments.

“ACCG is proud to continue this partnership with Georgia Trend to recognize the innovative efforts of our counties,” said ACCG Executive Director Dave Wills. “Each year, the Georgia County Excellence Awards program showcases the versatility of county programs and services and the ingenuity of those elected or appointed to serve.”

This year, the theme for the program was community investment, and counties submitted applications for a variety of projects. Submissions focused on programs ranging from accountability courts, cyber education, and senior services to transportation projects. Upson County is one of five award recipients in this year’s program.

“Recognition from your peers is always something to be very proud of and we thank ACCG for this honor,” said Upson County Commission Chairman Norman Allen. “Our community’s efforts throughout the Heart & Soul process and the partnerships of all those involved was impressive. The results of these efforts help to guide community leadership as decisions are made and priorities are established. We are grateful for this acknowledgement.”

Along with the city of Thomaston, Upson County embarked on a journey to show their constituents that their voices matter. Using the Orton Family Foundation’s Heart & Soul Community Model in 2018, the County became the first community in Georgia to pilot the program as way to allow the residents to shape the future of the community where they live, work, and play. The Thomaston-Upson Community Heart & Soul Initiative hosted more than 42 community events, conducted countless citizen interviews and administered thousands of surveys to solicit feedback from community residents over the course of two years. That work resulted in the fruition of resident-identified action items such as improvements to outdoor recreation areas and the development of a master plan for Rural Zone designation of the downtown area. Learn more about the award-winning initiative in the [June issue of Georgia Trend magazine](#).

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ACCG is Georgia’s county association and works on behalf of county officials and their communities by providing public policy and legislative advocacy, leadership development, civic and community engagement initiatives, insurance and retirement programs that specialize in local government needs and other cost-saving programs. Formed in 1914 when county officials came together to help fund the state’s first highway department, ACCG today serves as a catalyst for advancing Georgia’s counties. For more information, go to www.accg.org.