

Relocation Packet

Serving Folkston & Charlton County,
Georgia

“Gateway to.....adventure, opportunity
and the Okefenokee”



“Train, Trails and Alligator Tales await you”

Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce

3795 Main Street, P.O. Box 756, Folkston, GA 31537

Phone 912.496.2536 Fax 912.496.4601

Email generalinfo@folkston.com/ director@folkston.com

www.folkston.com,

Facebook.com/okefenokee chamber of commerce

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History of Folkston

Charlton County was created by an act of the Georgia General Assembly on February 18, 1854. It was named for former U.S. Senator Robert M. Charlton, who died that same year. The first county seat was Traders Hill, a community located on the St. Mary's River previously known as Fort Alert.

The City of Folkston was created simply because the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad needed a station there. At that time, the city was known as "the station." The first train passed through Charlton County in 1881.

Most of the early settlers came from nearby Center Village. These settlers built homes and stores near the platform that was used for railroad passengers. Once the city began to grow, a city name other than "the station" was definitely needed. Thus, the settlement was named for Dr. William B. Folks of Waycross, Georgia. It was officially incorporated as a city on April 3, 1895, even though the first school was built one decade earlier in 1885.

In 1901, Folkston replaced Traders Hill as the county seat of Charlton County. Folkston soon became the commercial center of the county. The Old Train Depot has been restored and houses the Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority of the City of Folkston and Charlton County. Residents and visitors alike cherish this historic landmark. Along with the train depot we have the Folkston Funnel Train Platform bringing many visitors from all over the world to "train watch."

The oldest church in the county, Sardis Church, was organized before 1821. For more than a century now, the pulpit has been in continual use. If you look close enough, you can still see the bullet hole that was fired from the musket of a soldier who was defending the church from an Indian attack.

Aside from the many historic landmarks and the Folkston Funnel Platform, the great Okefenokee Swamp attracts thousands of visitors each year. We have two bed and breakfasts and motels to spend the night along with great restaurants. We also have campgrounds, a sporting clays range and other recreation sites in the area.



The Okefenokee Swamp

The great Okefenokee Swamp evolved from the depths of the ocean and has existed for thousands of years. The ancient peat bog encompasses 700 square miles in South Georgia and North Florida and was once inhabited by the Indians some 4,000 years ago.

The Indians called the swamp “Okefenokee” or “trembling earth.” The reason they called it this was because of the islands that formed from the layers of peat that serve as the foothold for grasses, shrubs and trees. When stepped on, these islands actually moved, hence the “trembling earth” reference.

Today, the Okefenokee Swamp is one of the most outstanding examples of ecologically intact swamp in North America ranging in elevation from 103 to 128 feet above sea level. It is also part of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, which is the largest national wildlife refuge in the eastern United States. It contains approximately 396,000 acres of the outstretched 496,000-acre Okefenokee Swamp.

Islands, prairies, wildlife and cypress trees that are over 500 years old are found within the wildlife refuge. Endangered species include the red cockaded woodpecker, wood storks, and the threatened indigo snake.

The different seasons bring different touches of beauty to the refuge too. The spring months produce golden club, tick seed sunflowers and other wildflowers. During the winter months, the refuge becomes home for many types of birds, including the greater sand hill cranes, robins, hawks, owls and bald eagles.



Quick Phone Guide

Cable Television Services

Comcast.....800.266.2278

Electrical Services

City – Georgia Power.....888.660.5890

Rural – Okefenokee Rural Electric.....800.262.5131

Internet Services

Windstream Broadband.....888.292.3827

Mobile Home Transporting

David Crews.....912.496.3713

Permits and Inspections

County Health Inspector –.....912.496.2561

County/City Inspector –.....912.496.2549 or 912.496.2563

Satellite Services

Dish Network.....800-200-1285

Direct TV.....800-201-0488

Septic Tanks

Mike’s Septic Service.....912.496.3061

Tim Huling Enterprises.....877.496.7902

Telephone Services

Windstream Residential.....800.501.1754

Windstream Business.....800.501.1776

Well Services

Chesser Sales & Service.....912.496.2952

Accommodations

Bed and Breakfasts

The Mizell House Inn & Gardens
101 Garden Street
Folkston, GA 31537
Mizellhouse.com
904-219-4240

Folkston House
802 Kingsland Drive
Folkston, GA 31537
folkstonhouse.com
904-219-4240

The Inn at Folkston
3576 Main Street
Folkston, GA 31537
Innatfolkston.com
912-496-6256

Motels

Western Motel
3340 2nd Street South
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-4711

Star Motel
1900 N. Second Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-7767

Relax Inn
1201 South 2nd Street
U.S 301-23 South
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-2514

Lodges

Roadmasters Lodge
3742 Main St.
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-2255

Newell Lodge
P.O. Box 627
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-2838

Activities and Attractions

The Charlton County Courthouse: The present courthouse, located at the east end of Main Street, was built in 1928 and has the distinction of being the only courthouse in the state of Georgia without the county name chiseled into the building.

Folkston Funnel: The Folkston Funnel is located at MP 602.2 on the Nahunta Subdivision of the CSXT, Jacksonville services lane. Train watchers from all over the world enjoy coming to Folkston's Funnel to watch over 60 trains a day. You can see six Amtrak trains each day passing through the Funnel, and The Tropicana Juice Train moves from Bradenton, Florida, to Kearney, New Jersey five nights a week. Lights, electric outlets, floodlights shining on the tracks from each end for night viewing and a picnic table and grill are also available for visitors.

Homeland Walking Track: Enjoy walking and watching the train at the Homeland Walking Track. It is a one mile track with benches located along the side of the railroad.

Jesse Crews Memorial Park: The Jesse Crews Memorial Park is located in downtown Folkston along the west side of the CSX Railroad mainline. Shaded by giant oak trees, the park is a popular place for train watchers and tourists. The renovated Train Depot houses the Train Museum and gift shop, the Regional Visitor Information Center, and the offices of the Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce and the Development Authority of the City of Folkston & Charlton County,

The Train Museum: The Train Museum is home to the "Cookie" William's Model Train Room, a radio exhibit that spans four decades, railroad memorabilia along with historic pictures of Folkston.

The Mizell House: The Mizell House represents the contributions made to the community by one of Charlton County's oldest families. On September 4, 1997, the Department of Natural Resources Historic Division placed the house on the National Register of Historic Places.

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge: Has visitors Center, exhibits, wildlife observation drive, hiking trails, boardwalk, observation tower, picnic areas, and is open for fishing. There are guided boat tours, motorboat and canoe rentals and Camp Cornelia

Café available at Okefenokee Adventures Concessions. For more information please call 912-496-7836

Activities and Attractions

Okefenokee Sporting Clays: Enjoy shotgun shooting on this lakeside course. Skeet shooting area offered, and clubhouse, certified shooting instructor available. Open Saturday and Sunday. **Call to make reservations: 912.496.2417**

Sardis Church: The oldest active church in Charlton County was organized prior to 1821. The pulpit in the church has been in continual use for more than a century. A hole in the pulpit caused by a musket ball fired by a soldier defending the church serves as a reminder of the nation's war with the Native Americans. Services are held the third Sunday of the month.

St. Mary's – Satilla Rivers: The scenic rivers are ideal choices for boating, canoeing, fishing, swimming, picnicking and camping on their many white sandbars. There are five public boat ramps within the county. The St. Mary's River, originating in the Okefenokee Swamp, is one of the most crooked rivers in the world. The St. Mary's is about 65 miles from its source to the mouth, the Atlantic Ocean. If the river were straight, it would be about 175 miles. In the 1800's, old sailing vessels known as "Tramps" would come hundreds of miles to procure drinking water from the St. Mary's River for their long voyages. The St. Mary's River divides Georgia and Florida. The Satilla River is in the northern part of Charlton County separating Charlton and Camden Counties. The scenic river is bordered by native trees and plants and is a favorite spot for fishermen.

Stephen Foster State Park: Located 17 miles northeast of Fargo on Highway 177. This entrance is managed by the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites. Enjoy 25 miles of day-use waterways, the one-mile Trembling Earth Nature Trail, boat ramp, motorboat and canoe rentals, picnic shelters, Interpretive Center and Museum, cabin rentals tent and RV camping sites. **Call to make reservations: 912-637-5247 or 800-864-7275**

Banks

FNB South

4322 2nd Street North
912-496-3000

Southeastern Bank

4233 2nd Street N.
912-496-7345

United 1st Federal Credit Union

3792 South 2nd Street
912-496-2006

Real Estate

South Georgia Realty

Marion Davis
3940 Main Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912.496.3173

Southern Properties

Lawanda Jones
104 W. Love Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-7653

Catering

Joyce's Sweet Kitchen

173014 Andrews Rd
Hilliard, FL 32046
904.845.4795

Gift Shops

Conner's Florist

739 Kingsland Dr.
Connersflorist.net
912.496.7635

Folkston Furniture

3229 Main Street
912-496-2440

The Crossings

3802 Main Street
912.496.0075

Heaven to Seven

3860 Main Street
912-496-3411

Rosalee's Unique Flowery

912.496.4702

Whistlin' Dixie

3852 Main Street
912-496-2255

The Perfect Gift

484 First St.
912.496.1099

Restaurants

Burger King

4362 N. Second Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-4473

Okefenokee Restaurant

1507 3rd Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912- 496-3263

Tuptim Thai Restaurant

3925 Main Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-6200

Der Bahnhof

The Train Station
100 Folkston Funnell St.
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-0000

Quick Chic

107 N. Second Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-7044

Roadrunner Restaurant

1700 N. Second Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-4306

Subway

207 Second St.
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-4862

McDonald's

3973 S. 2nd Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-4160

Pizza Hut

3634 South 2nd St.
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-1128

Asian Kitchen

110 South Second Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-7888

M&R Fried Chicken

805 MLK Road
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-7655

Jalen's BBQ

3762 Second Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-2990

Dairy Queen

603 S. Second Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-2228

Campgrounds/ Boating

Okefenokee Adventures is located inside the Okefenokee Swamp Park. Your adventure starts here. Canoe, kayak or boat the mirrored black waters of the Okefenokee Swamp. Join us for our regularly scheduled 90 minute boat tours. Arrange a 4-5 hour extended excursion with our expert, professional guides. Experience the canoe camping trip of a lifetime in the backcountry wilderness of the swamp interior.

Folkston, GA

Call: 912-496-7156

www.OkefenokeeAdventures.com

Kingfisher Wilderness Campground is located at the Northeast entrance to the swamp which is 13 miles North of Folkston on US 1. There is canoe/shuttle rentals available. Bird watching, canoeing, fishing permitted in the refuge. For more information call:

Folkston, GA 31537

912.496.3331 for Reservations (7am-10am)

912-496-2186 for Information

Okefenokee Pastimes located on Highway 121/23 at the entrance to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. There are four cabin rentals (2 with bath/kitchenette), RV hookups, primitive tent camping, bath house and kayak rentals. There is also a dumping station and Artist studio on the premises.

28244 Hwy 121

Folkston, GA 31537

912.496.4472

swampers@okefenokee.com or you can leave a message

Traders Hill Park, located off Highway 121 about seven miles south of Folkston. Have a primitive campsite, picnic tables, BBQ pits, picnic shelter, restrooms, nature trails, boat ramp and a fishing pier. There is ample parking and docking space. Traders Hill, known originally as Fort Alert, was established in the 1700's. Traders Hill Park has been developed at the site of the old courthouse, when Traders Hill was the county seat in 1854. **912.496.3412**

Hidden River Resort, located 35 miles south of Folkston on the St. Mary's River. 15 minutes north of I-10 in MacClenny, Florida.

912.843.2603

P.O Box 614

Sanderson, FL 32087

Charlton County School System

Charlton County Board of Education

1259 Third Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912.496.2596

Public Schools

Bethune Middle School

912.496.7369

Charlton County High School

912-496-2501

Charlton County Service Center

(Behavioral Health Center)
912.496.7460

Folkston Elementary School

912.496.2360

St. George Elementary

912.843.2383

Private Schools

Charlton County Christian Academy (K-12)

Highway 121
Folkston, GA 31537
912.496.4120

Day Care

Marsha Davis' Pre-School

Sardis Rd
Folkston, GA 31537
912.496.3203

Sugar Bear Learning Center

811 Pickney Dr
Folkston, GA 31537
912-496-7243

Roberson Day Care

107 Milton St
Folkston, GA 31537
912.496.3620

General Information

AD VALOREM TAX, more commonly known as property tax, is a large source of revenue for governments in Georgia. The basis for ad valorem taxation is the fair market value of the property, which is established at 40% of the fair market value. The amount of tax is determined by the tax rate (mill rate) levied by various entities (one mill is equal to \$1.00 for each \$ 1,000 of assessed value or .001).

Several distinct entities are involved in the ad valorem tax process:

The County Tax Commissioner, an office established by the Constitution and elected in all counties except two, is the official responsible for receiving tax returns filed by taxpayers; receiving and processing applications for homestead exemptions; serving as agent of the State Revenue Commissioner for the registration of motor vehicles; and performing all functions related to billing, collecting, disbursing, and accounting for ad valorem taxes collected in the county. In Charlton County, the tax assessors have been lawfully delegated with receiving tax returns.

The County Board of Tax Assessors, appointed for fixed terms by the county commissioner(s) in all counties except one, is responsible for determining taxability, value and equalization of all assessments within the county. The County Board of Tax Assessors notifies taxpayers when changes are made to the value of the property; receive and review all appeals filed; and insures that the appeal process proceeds properly. In addition, they approve all exemptions claimed by the taxpayer.

The County Board of Equalization, appointed by the Grand Jury, is the body charged by law with hearing and adjudicating administrative appeals to property values and assessments made by the board of tax assessors (Note: An arbitration method of appeal is available to the taxpayer in lieu of an appeal to the board of equalization at the option of the taxpayer at the time the appeal is filed).

The Board of County Commissioners (or the sole commissioner in some counties), and elected body, establishes the budget for the county government operations each year, and levies the mill rate necessary to fund the portions of the budget to be paid for by ad valorem tax.

The County Board of Education, an elected body, established the annual budget for school purposes and then recommends their mill rate, which, with very few exceptions, must be levied for the school board by the county commissioner(s).

The State Revenue Commissioner exercises general oversight of the entire ad valorem tax process. In addition, the State levies ad valorem tax each year in an amount, which cannot exceed one – fourth of on mill (.00025). For additional information:
<http://www.etax.dor.ga.gov/ptd/dis/index.aspx>

Tax Returns: Taxpayers are required to file at least an initial tax return for taxable property (both real and personal property) owned on January 1 of the tax year. In Charlton County, the time for filing returns is January 1 through April 1. This return is a listing of property owned by the taxpayer and the taxpayer's declaration of the value of the property.

Once the initial tax return is filed, the law provides for an automatic renewal of that return each succeeding year at the value finally determined for the preceding year. The taxpayer is required to file a new return only as property is acquired, improvements are made to existing property, or other changes occur. A new return, filed during the return period, may also be made by the taxpayer to declare a different value from the existing value where the taxpayer is dissatisfied with the current value placed on the property by the Board of Tax Assessors. This serves the purpose of establishing the taxpayer's appeal right if the Board of Tax Assessor change the declared value again.

BUILDING PERMITS: All plumbing, electrical, or building inspections are conducted by the City/County building inspector. All building, electrical, mechanical and construction work must be in accordance with Federal, State and local building codes. The building inspector can be reached by calling City Hall at 912.496.2563 or County Courthouse at 912.496.2549.

BUSINESS LICENSE: Any business located within the city limits must have a business license. All business license applications should be obtained at City Hall. Applications are mailed annually to current business license holders.

CABLE TELEVISION: Comcast cablevision services the local area. Service can be arranged by contacting 800.266.2278.

CITY HALL
541 First Street
912.496.2563
Mayor – Melad Smith
City Manager – L. H. Lloyd
City Clerk – Darlene Williamson
Chief of Police – Wesley Green

County Commissioners (County Annex)
68 Kingsland Dr
912-496-2549
County Clerk- Jenifer Nobles

Homeland City Hall
401 Pennsylvania Ave
912-496-7332
Mayor- Austin Hickox

General Information

Marriage License: The first step to getting your marriage license is that you need to contact the Probate Court to see what you will need to bring with you. The Probate Court is located at Third and Main Street. There is no blood testing required, no waiting in lines and the total cost for everything is \$106.00. If you just want to purchase a certified copy of your marriage license then it will cost \$10.00 for each copy that you purchase. For more information please call 912-496-2230

DRIVER'S LICENSE: A Georgia Driver's License is required of any resident who wishes to legally drive upon Georgia highway's and has lived in Georgia more than 30 days. Military personnel and their family members may continue to use valid license from their home state while in Georgia under official military orders. Inquiries concerning driver's licenses can be made at the Charlton County Sheriff's Office at 912.496.2565.

ELECTRICAL SERVICE: Electrical service is provided within the city limits by Georgia Power Company. Georgia Power is located at 1101 South Second Street. Office hours are 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Telephone number is 888.660.5890. Most rural areas are served by the Okefenokee Rural Electric Membership Corporation (OREMC). OREMC is located in Nahunta, Georgia. Telephone number is 800.262.5131. Office hours are 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES: Fire and Emergency Medical Services are readily available to residents of Charlton County. Folkston has an excellent Volunteer Fire Department consisting of 22 volunteer firemen. Fire protection is also provided outside the city limits. The county wide volunteer firemen total is 75. All emergency personnel can be contacted by calling 911.

FIREARMS REGULATIONS: It is illegal to fire a firearm in the city limits of Folkston. The State of Georgia permits the carrying of firearms in your residence, your vehicle and your place of business.

GARBAGE COLLECTION: Within city limits, residents are provided a 50 gallon container. Garbage is collected twice a week in residential areas and business garbage is collected on an as needed basis. For special trash pick up (limbs, leaves, etc.) contact City Hall, 912.496.2563.

For county residents, a container is provided also. Garbage is collected once a week in residential areas and business garbage is collected on an as-needed basis. An \$87.00 annual landfill fee is included in the annual ad valorem tax assessment.

GEORGIA LICENSE TAGS: Tags are required when the automobile owner becomes a resident or is living in Georgia. To obtain these tags for the first time you must present a certificate of title or registration certificate from another state to the Tax Commissioners Office. For more information call the Tax Commissioners office at 912.496.205.

NATURAL GAS: Georgia Natural Gas Company supplies service to most areas of the community. Local office is located in Kingsland, Georgia. Telephone number is 800.427.5463.

NEWSPAPER: The Charlton County Herald provides weekly local news. The Florida Times Union (Georgia Edition) and Waycross Journal Herald are also available daily locally.

Important Offices and Services

POLICE: The Folkston Police Department is run by one Chief of Police and five full time policemen and can be reached at 912.496.2565. The Charlton County Sheriff's Department is run by one Sheriff and eight Sheriff's deputies and can be reached at 912.496.2281. All emergencies can be reported by calling 911. All three departments provide many public services.

POSTAL SERVICE

Folkston Post Office
110 West Main Street
Folkston, GA 31537
912.496.2137

St. George Post Office

Florida Ave
St. George, GA. 31646
912.843.2271

SALES TAX: City and county have 3% local sales tax in addition to the 4% state sales tax.

SCHOOL REGISTRATION: Information concerning school registration requirements can be obtained by calling the Charlton County Board of Education at 912.496.2596.

TELEPHONE SERVICE: Can be arranged by calling the Windstream number located in the Quick Phone Guide on Page 5 of this booklet.

UTILITY SERVICES: Water and sewer is available from the City of Folkston. System users are required to post a \$75.00 deposit for this service. Meter billing is on a monthly basis. Contact City all for further information at 912-496-2563

VOTER REGISTRATION: Voter registration is conducted at the County Commissioners Office, located in the Charlton County Annex building. Inquires can be made at 912.496.2549.