Clayton County and the University of Georgia Archway Partnership have partnered to create the Clayton Archway Public Image Committee, a community based group made up of concerned residents, local government communication professionals and business and community leaders. Together, the group works closely with the Clayton County Board of Commissioners and various other county stakeholders to ensure that they fulfill their mission of assisting with the creation and delivery of Clayton County’s positive messaging to the media and other agencies.

In order to assist with the delivery of the county’s public messaging a series of community investment mediums have been created to promote the positive news occurring in Clayton County. Some of these mediums include the county’s only magazine that focuses on the positive aspects of the people, places and events taking place in Clayton County, We Are Clayton Magazine. When the publisher of the magazine, who is a member of the Archway Public Image Committee, began to research launching the magazine, the Public Image Committee instantly realized that supporting the magazine fell in line with their goals of promoting the image of Clayton County.

“We’re looking at all mediums to help spread the word about the fabulous locations and venues in the county,” said Archway Professional Gail Webb. “Since the committee is made up of communications professionals they fully understand that Clayton is vying for air time and space with other metro counties when it comes to coverage. Therefore, the committee is always exploring various other communications options.”

The Clayton Archway Public Image Committee recently piloted a social media blog that was created and managed by UGA’s Creative Consultants students, a group of undergraduates majoring in advertising and public relations from UGA’s Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications. Under the direction of the committee’s chairperson and county public information officer, Jamie Carlington, the trial blog was developed to see how effective this form of social media would work for disseminating information to the general public. “The blog was a way of testing the waters of social media for our county government as well as determining its usefulness” according to Carlington. “Overall the test pilot blog was a success and the committee is hopeful that social media will be fully utilized throughout the county soon.”

One of the most noted efforts came from a partnership between the Clayton Archway Public Image Committee and Clayton County Communicators, who include local public relations professionals and county communication officials. The partners invited various metro Atlanta media outlets to Clayton County to address media coverage issues and concerns. The media representatives participating in a panel discussion included representatives from WSB TV, Clayton Neighbor Newspaper, Radio One, Fox TV and the Communications Director for Association County Commissioners of Georgia.

The committee members learned what stories were considered “news worthy” when reporting on the news for such a large metropolitan area. The event also provided representatives from the various news outlets with an opportunity to meet with county communicators face to face and develop positive, personal connections that could assist them in the future when reporting on stories about Clayton County.

**Advancing Community Priorities:** Discouraged by the press surrounding the county, Clayton County officials felt that it was time to improve the community’s image. In 2009, Clayton County and the Archway Partnership identified public image as a top priority. Officials knew that with the help of the Archway Partnership and community partners, they could demonstrate that Clayton County is a great place to live, work, and play.