Candler County: Community Website Portal Created
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In August 2013, the Candler County Archway Partnership Executive Committee identified the need for a cohesive online presence for the community. The web pages for the City of Metter, Candler County, Chamber of Commerce, and Industrial Authority were outdated, lacked essential information, not user-friendly, or even non-existing. With limited marketing expertise and staffing, the four organizations requested assistance from the Archway Partnership in order to determine a direction and implementation plan for the project.

The project began with a visioning session in the Fall of 2013 that included leaders from all four organizations to discuss key website elements, design likes and dislikes, and use functionality.

In January 2014, Metter Chamber Executive Director Jaime Riggs and Archway Professional Betsy McGriff attended Dr. Elizabeth Davis’ (UGA English Department) Writing for the Web and Technical Writing classes to describe the desires of the community for a unified web presence with increased functionality and a thorough integration of the iconic slogan “Everything’s Better in Metter.” In addition to website issues, the classes were asked to include a social media strategy as a part of their final report for enhancing the community’s web presence.

Approximately 40 students, in two courses, worked from January 2014 through July 2014, designed proposed web-page layouts using local photography and graphics, and composed sample verbiage to help tell the community story clearly and succinctly.

The recommendations were presented to the community, and the Chamber of Commerce led the request for proposal process with area web designers for implementation. By February 2015, all four partner entities entered into a joint contract with 365 Marketing, a professional marketing and web-design company, to begin the creation of the website. On October 1, 2015 the new community website portal was launched using the “Everything’s Better in Metter” logo and dogwood flower that had been designed through the community-wide signage design process, thus reinforcing the rebranding efforts of community at large.

According to Riggs, “This community-wide website project is a great example of community collaboration and unified branding at its best. All parts of our community really came together around a common goal, all while engaging students at UGA in meaningful local projects. We’re excited about the outcome and what this new website will do for our community.”

Advancing Community Priorities
One of the initial priorities of Candler Archway Partnership was community beautification and branding, as well as economic development. The online presence is a way to brand the community to the world, not just those passing through. The project will assist both residents, visitors, and potential businesses in easily accessing information about the community.