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**“THERE’S NO POINT LIKE
EAST POINT”**

Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham

By LaKeisha Fleming

[COVER STORY]

When East Point Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham came to the city in August 2010, she had no intention of occupying a political office. But falling in love with the area and the people caused her to forge ahead with a life of public service, and never look back. Three years later, she found herself running for city council. She came in as a newcomer, and managed to engage the community. So much so that in January 2018, she started her term as the city's mayor. She is now at the forefront of a city on the cutting edge of growth and development in the Atlanta area. Through a spirit of cooperation, determination to do what's best for the city, growth and revitalization, Mayor Holiday Ingraham is leading the city of East Point through its most profound economic upswing to date.

The change in East Point's landscape is the result of a methodical approach of letting every voice be heard on every level. A lack of forward momentum previously kept the area from development on a larger scale. "There were developers who would not come back into the city," Holiday Ingraham states. "They weren't interested because of the lack of working together." She continues, "I would say, the higher echelons of city government weren't operating as a cohesive unit. And the city as a whole was suffering. The voters wanted change in the city." Holiday Ingraham notes, "we had to rebrand the city. We had to position ourselves to be something different than what people were used to." That change came in the form of unification. "This council and I agree that what's most important is that we all care about East Point and its residents." That attitude of cooperation became a launching pad ... for meetings with many of those same developers who left, for flourishing jobs and opportunities for city residents, and for a burgeoning, robust downtown area.

Actively partnering with the Aerotropolis Alliance, along with close proximity to the airport, has caused a beneficial spotlight to shine on East Point. Working with Aerotropolis has led to jobs in construction, as well as a variety of work-ready programs, being more accessible to East Point residents. "It greatly impacts economic development. People are paying attention to South Fulton now. And I believe East Point is a jewel city with the best amenities and the best opportunities," explains Holiday Ingraham. The proximity to the airport increases the city's visibility, causing it to become more of a destination for dining, shopping and entertainment. And the uptick in traffic translates to an uptick in customer service job opportunities. "Our hospitality industry is growing, (and) we're getting more hotels," Holiday Ingraham states. Camp Creek Marketplace continues to be a strong asset both economically and developmentally for the area as well. Partnerships on every level are proving advantageous. "Being able to think in that way and partner in that way helps us to build a system to ensure that things aren't just happening to us, (but) that we



are being engaged in the future and charting a path."

Another growing industry spurring growth in the East Point economy is film. "We have quite a few businesses that have come in the film area," Holiday Ingraham continues, "we are really becoming a spot for real quality filming. And we're excited about that." East Point has been designated as one of Fulton County's "Camera Ready" communities by the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Film, Music and Digital Entertainment Office. Property owners can register their land or home to be used as a potential film location. Cast and crew associated with a production bring in business with dining and lodging needs. In fact, the city is in the process of negotiating common ground on the issue of short-term rentals, a potential income source which is also a potential cause for concern in residential areas. "It's important to me that people on both sides realize there's people on the other side," Holiday Ingraham states.

Small businesses are also contributing to the thriving business climate, and at the same time causing additional doors of opportunity to open. "Smalls businesses are the heart of the community," she explains. "They help people take care of their families but also provide jobs to help other people." Even the proliferation of virtual employment has impacted East Point. "There are a lot of people who are doing businesses from their homes ... who, with the right training, with the right network, resources, capital and knowledge, could grow. We are really committed to that."

Holiday Ingraham and her team are also committed to building up their city internally. A major part of that is their downtown revitalization project. "We are building a new government center which is a little under \$16 million investment for us. But that's us investing in ourselves. We want you to come and grow with us and be a part of the community, and we believe our soil is so fertile that we're investing in ourselves," Holiday Ingraham explains. Construction on their new city hall facility is slated for completion in April, and it will come in at a little under 32,000 square feet. It will have office space for the mayor and staff, as well as a multipurpose city council chamber and house a number of other departments. A huge attraction will be the amphitheater, which is slated to hold thousands of people. That feature, says Holiday Ingraham, is one of the most attractive to her. "While business will be conducted there, it will be a building for our community." A splash pad with a play area for children and families aims to be an attraction for area residents. "It's exciting and I think it's symbolic of what you can do when you work together."

The city is also preparing for mixed-use development projects. Creating spaces that cater to a live/work/play environment is high on the agenda for Holiday Ingraham. "We've purchased a little under 9 acres across the street from city hall that will be put in the mixed-use development. So those projects will be catalytic to creating this downtown experience that we'll have in our city." Holiday Ingraham notes that both she and city council are committed to equitable revitalization. "We're focusing on our downtown ... building our skyline, building a place for people to really work, as they learn and play. And to be able to enjoy our city."



Mayor Holiday Ingraham reading to Pre-K students



Mayor Holiday Ingraham pictured with community members at the HCJ Bowden Thanksgiving Luncheon



Mayor Holiday Ingraham pictured with citizens during National Bullying Awareness Month

[COVER STORY]

Part of the mixed-use concept also involves creating more walkable spaces. “We have an East Point Path Plan that’s about 26 miles of path connecting our parks, schools and neighborhoods throughout the city.” The plan can enhance the community feel, while having the added bonus of providing a healthy exercise outlet. Building up East Point’s residents inside and out is also a part of the community revitalization.

Working on buildings, structures, employment possibilities, and business opportunities all have a positive impact on East Point residents externally. Holiday Ingraham doesn’t want to stop there. She and her team are actively involved in a number of programs that offer residents healthy activities. They’ve recently launched their 90-day healthy point initiative. It is a “90-day intensive focus on how people improve healthy lifestyle choices. There’s also the component of what healthcare resources and programs are available in our community, and making sure we can let our residents know.” Residents have the opportunity to work out with the mayor and members of city council, participate in Walk it out Wednesdays, or take advantage of aerobics, yoga, and soon Pilates classes. “All of these are free opportunities to engage, connect, and be healthy,” Holiday Ingraham states.

Entertainment and activities for children factor in to the many options East Point residents and visitors have to choose from. The city offers free concerts, holiday fireworks, theatrical presentations, and even Wednesday wind down on the fourth Wednesday of every month. “We’re also going to be working on a public arts master plan,” tells Holiday Ingraham. Mentorship programs engage the youth at the public schools in the city, helping with a variety of school subjects. Additionally, East Point is excited to welcome Soccer in the Streets. “This amazing opportunity is a partnership with the Soccer in the Streets organization, as well as Arthur Blanks Foundation. They are creating the first transit soccer league in the world.” Several Marta stations will host soccer fields where children can be transported to play, and among them is the East Point station.

Of course, it’s difficult to help a community thrive without working to eliminate the undesirable element of crime. “We prioritize safety,” Holiday Ingraham asserts. Officer patrols have been increased in key areas, and she works to make safety a collaborative effort with the entire community.

A strong sense of expectation surrounds the city. All of the new developments and the amelioration of the quality of life makes East Point an even more attractive place to be. But Holiday Ingraham makes sure it’s understood that the city will always maintain its original charm. “I think people choose East Point because we do have a small-town feel, but we’re next to a big city and I don’t want us to lose that.”

She summarizes the city’s appeal in one phrase.

“There’s no point like East Point.”



Mayor Holiday Ingraham pictured with citizens during 2018 Hispanic Heritage Month



Mayor Holiday Ingraham engaging with East Point citizens at Volunteering In The Point meeting



Mayor Holiday Ingraham pictured with Chefs at East Point Eats Well Cooking Demo



The Point Is ...

The City of East Point is a prime location that can satisfy the needs of business. With over 35,000 residents, East Point boasts a vibrant workforce of professional and skilled labor with exceptional quality of living standards for its citizens.

The East Point Advantage:

- 10 minutes from the heart of Downtown Atlanta
- 2 TAD Districts, a CID and an Opportunity Zone
- No impact fees on new development
- 100% Freeport Exemption
- Approximately 2.3 million square feet of office, warehouse, distribution space within the commercial / industrial areas
- Multiple rail lines/spurs
- 5 minutes from Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport
- Its own power and private water reservoir
- East Point Business and Industrial Development Authority
- MARTA Train Station
- Access to all major interstates
- Home to Camp Creek Marketplace, Creek Pointe, Camp Creek Business Center, Southmeadow Business Park and several major headquarter companies



To learn more about advantages and opportunities in East Point's business district, contact Maceo Rogers, 404-270-7217, jmrogers@eastpointcity.org

LaGrange Housing Authority

Providing safe, affordable housing for the people who need it most

By Ann Almond

Under the leadership of Zsa Zsa Heard, the LaGrange Housing Authority has a new voice, new vision and new opportunities.

Heard is responsible for implementing HUD and federal regulations for the housing program. She is continually seeking to develop a portfolio of affordable housing for her fellow residents of LaGrange. Along with managing the housing budget, she oversees a staff of twenty-five housing professionals and four hundred and twenty public housing units.

They are dedicated to providing a premier safe, secure, and diverse community where families are encouraged to set life goals through education, gainful employment, and healthy life styles.

Meet the team:

Daniela Bailey is the Director of Administration for the LaGrange Housing Authority.



Daniela assists in coordinating in trainings and organizational development. She has been in the housing authority field for a total of six years. She is certified in public housing management, and rent calculation, and she is a 2018 graduate of GAHRA leadership academy. She is also married to the Reverend Dr. Kenneth Bailey. They have two children and one grandson.

Lashata Rena Boykin is the Director of Housing for the LaGrange Housing



Authority. She works with the executive director to pace and drive organization development, including analysis and implementation of priorities, partnerships, and infrastructure needs. She also monitors lease violations and delinquent rent roll, oversees issuance of delinquent notices and late payment charges, and initiates the eviction process.

Additionally, she counsels residents who are not complying with policies and procedures, have economic, health, or social problems, and have delinquent rent problems amongst many other job duties.

Harriett Hayes is the Director of Maintenance and has worked with the LaGrange Housing Authority for ten years. During her time, she has worked in several different positions. She started out as an administrative assistant, and within a year, she was promoted to occupancy specialist, and later became a maintenance clerk.



She has certifications in Fair Housing, Procurement, Section 3, and has completed the GAHRA Future Leadership program.

Chad Cooper is the Development Director at the LaGrange Housing Authority. He is a two-time graduate of Auburn University with a Bachelor's in Sociology and a Master's in Education. With more than 10 years of experience in community development, cross-functional team leadership, diversity, and inclusion, Chad is an innovative leader. He has established partnerships with non-



profit organizations and businesses from Main Street to Wall Street, to effectively deliver complex programs that empower and educate youth and adults. He is driven and creatively adept professionally at leading strategic planning initiatives to achieve organizational goals. Chad also serves on various boards and committees, including the business development board for LaGrange College which develops and enacts initiatives to increase enrollment and retention.

Debra Black has been employed with the LaGrange Housing Authority for 10 years as the Director of Finance. She is from LaGrange and graduated from West GA Technical College, with an Associate's Degree in Accounting. She plays a vital role in helping manage the finances for the LaGrange Housing Authority.



Earnest S. Pickett serves as the Facilities Director. He is responsible for the overall specific maintenance and up keep of all the residential units. He has been in the maintenance and repair field for over 26 years. He has served in the United States Navy. Following active duty, he enrolled in West Ga. Voc. Tech, where he obtained a Drafting and IMT diploma. Earnest has also earned a diploma in Conditioned Air Technology and holds a universal EPA certification. He is currently working on clean green energy projects for the community: (Solar panels, Sunflower, and Clear View solar windows) with the Solutions Group partnering with Southface on healthy homes for GA.

