

# TRANSPORTATION

**SS8G2—highway system, airport, deepwater ports, and railroads**

## 4 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS IN GEORGIA

### Georgia's Strength in Transportation

Many teachers dig in to the stories of our state's history but do not understand the value of really getting into the state's economic history. When teaching about Georgia's economy, one underlying theme is always present: transportation. It is the backbone of our state and should be taught not as a unit, but as an on going process with the history units so that students can connect the necessity of the growth of our state's many transportation systems.

In reality Georgia's transportation system is astonishing. While most citizens take it for granted, our state government continues to spend tax payer dollars to maintain and expand the system that has truly built the state of Georgia into the Empire State of the South. Without our modes of transportation, the state's economy and importance to the nation wouldn't be to the level it is today. Highways, railroads, ports, and air travel have been the basis of our great state and will continue to be what fuels our future.

The biggest reason to focus on transportation as part of our economy is freight. The moving of freight around our state contributes more money than most imagine. While your family travels safely on our highways, freight trucks account for 12% of automobiles on our highways. We have 4,500 miles of railroad to help move items around Georgia with over ten rail yards in the Atlanta metropolitan area for cargo storage and transference. Most of the freight on land arrives by water. The deep-water port of Savannah is the third largest port in the U.S. Our airport assists the arrival of goods by being the 11<sup>th</sup> busiest cargo airport in the nation.

Many do not understand the value of moving freight around the state. Moving cargo makes up 18% of the state's gross state product. Over 5,000 companies exist in Georgia to move the goods. These companies employ 110,000 Georgians and



generate over \$50 billion in sales annually. Over 30,000 companies in Georgia rely on cargo movers and those private companies employ over 700,000 people in Georgia contributing over a half trillion dollars of annual revenue.

All in all, teachers must focus more on the importance of our state's transportation in order to present Georgia in it's true likeness.

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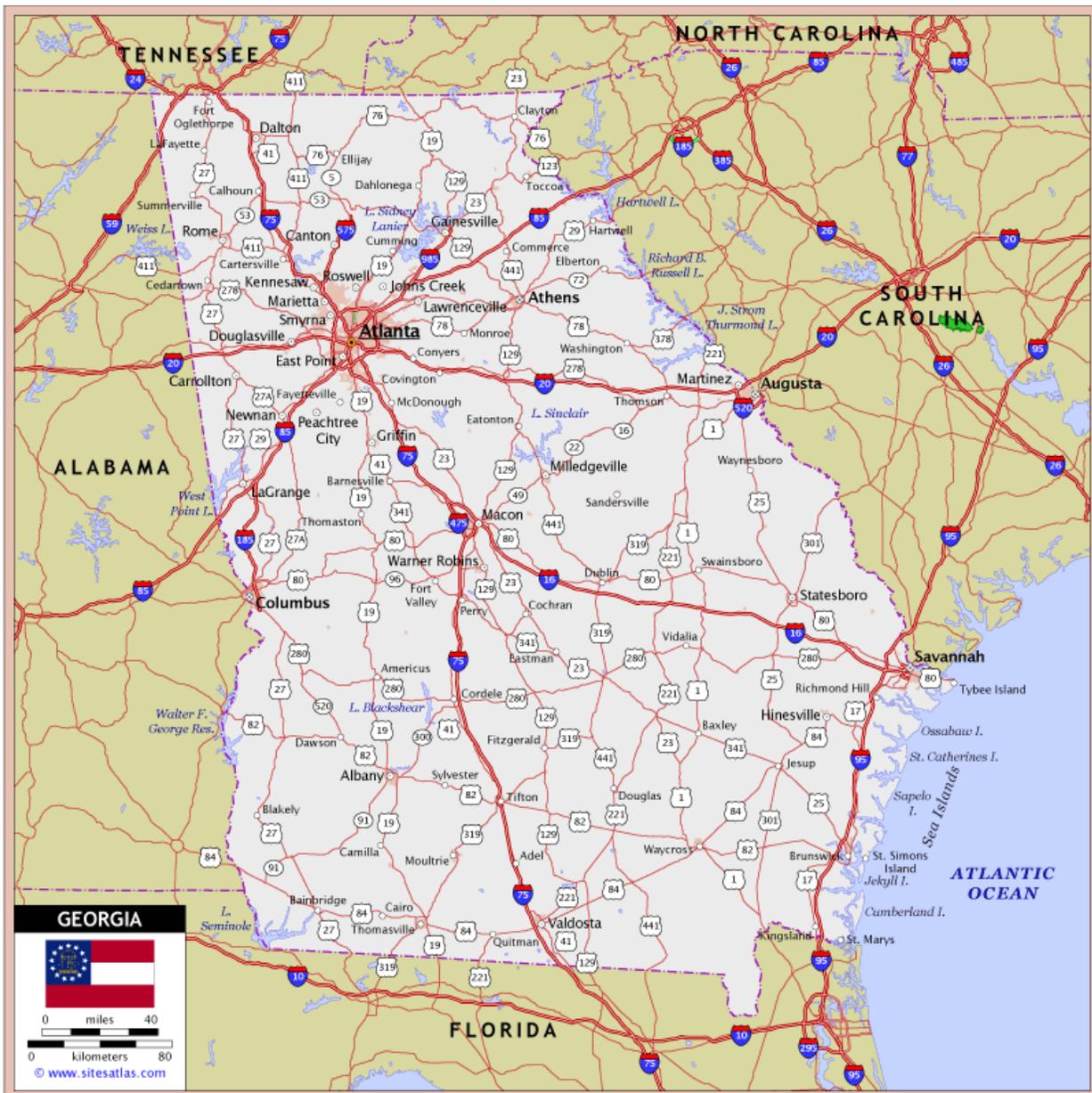
#### Quick Facts:

- Atlanta has the world's busiest airport
- Savannah provides materials to 70% of the US population
- Atlanta is one of five major cities to have three or more interstates serve the metropolitan area
- 200 trains pass through Atlanta daily

## Highway System

Georgia has 1,244 miles of interstate highways connecting the state to the rest of the nation, linking major cities, and helping suburban commuters to get to work in cities. The interstates have helped Atlanta to become the transportation hub of the southeast. Atlanta is one of only five cities in the nation to have three major U.S. interstates convene in the metropolitan area: I20, I75, and I85. These three interstates helped urban sprawl to grow quickly in the 1970s and continue to bring industry and tourism. The service jobs created by the contribution of interstates is numerous in the form of hotels and fast food establishments built along interstates. Many industries have relocated to Georgia because of the easy access by interstates that are well taken care of and rarely closed due to inclement weather.

Aside from the U.S. interstate system, Georgia has created its own widely traveled state highway system. These roads criss-cross the state providing access to all points of the Empire State.



## Transportation

A look at Georgia's transportation system:

### Deepwater ports:

Savannah  
Brunswick

### Inland Barge Terminals:

Columbus  
Bainbridge

### US Interstate System:

I20  
I75  
I85  
I95

They all interconnect in order to make the impact that transportation does for our economy.



## Airport

In 1998 Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport was named the busiest passenger airport in the world. Not only can passengers travel to many destinations in our country, people can also travel to more than 75 international destinations in 50 countries. Atlanta handles about 250,000 passengers each day with 2,500 arrivals and departures daily. The reason that Atlanta's airport is so busy is the fact that Atlanta is within a two hour flight of 80% of the nation's population. Atlanta wouldn't be the southern economic powerhouse without the airport which contributes \$32.5 billion for the metropolitan economy and provides the state with 58,000 jobs. But don't overlook the fact that Atlanta's airport handles more than passengers; 18 cargo airlines do business in Atlanta.

Historically, the airport has an interesting story to tell. Originally the land was used as a racetrack. The city purchased the land and converted the straight ways of the track into its first two runways. During WWII it was converted into an air base by the US Government who doubled the size of the airport for war use due to our climate and location by the Atlantic Ocean. Atlanta Mayor Hartsfield worked to expand the airport during his six terms from the thirties to the sixties. It was after his death in 1971 that the airport's name was changed from Atlanta Municipal Airport to Hartsfield Airport to honor his diligence in bringing economic power to the city. It also earned the title international airport that same year by making flights to Jamaica and Mexico. Atlanta Mayor Jackson served in the 1970s and once again dedicated time and money to expand the airport. In 2003, the airport was renamed Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. Finally in 2006 a fifth runway was opened and named "The most important runway in America" for its connections for both passengers and cargo.

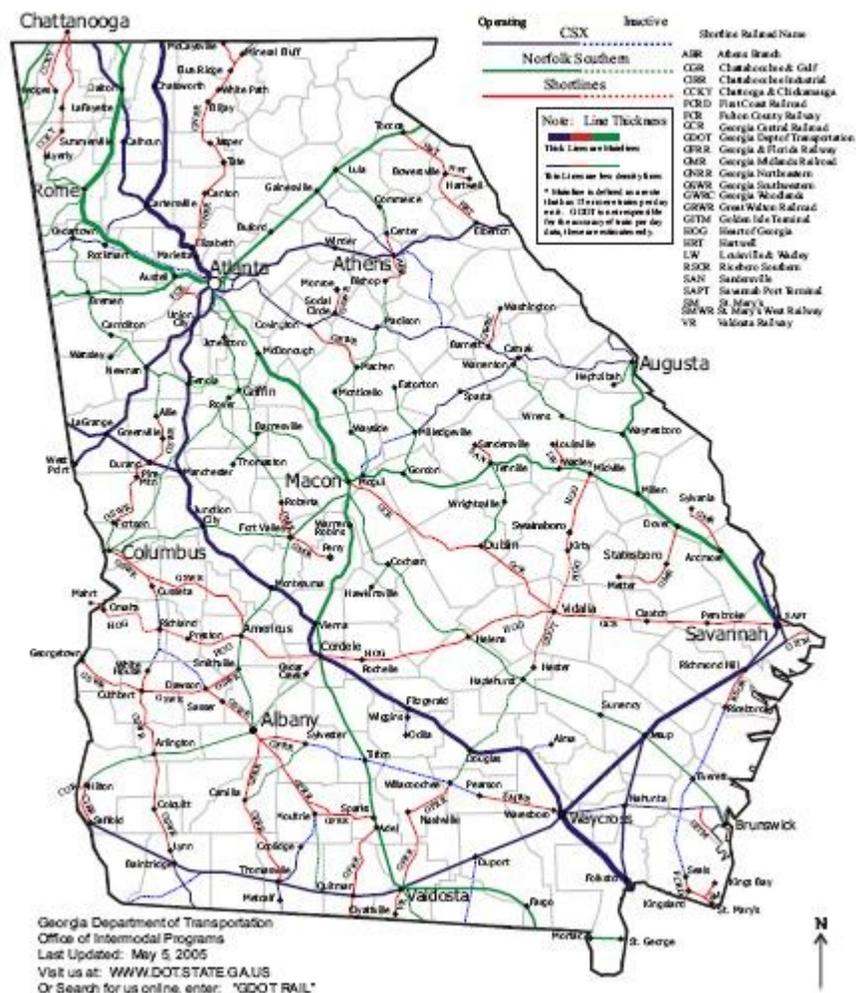
**Atlanta holds the world record for monthly flight operations with 88,408 in one month in July of 2009.**

## Railroads

During westward expansion the railroad enabled Georgia settlers to expand into new areas of the state. In the 1830s rail routes were created to connect Savannah to Augusta, Macon, and Athens. By 1900, Georgia had more railroad miles than any other southern state. Soon after, Atlanta would evolve as a major rail city. The original name for Atlanta reflects its importance to the rail industry: Terminus. It was to be the southern end for rail entering the state from Tennessee. The name was changed by the citizens to be more like the major line that served the city at the time: Western and Atlantic. It was the city's strength in rail that led Sherman to target Atlanta during the Civil War. Currently Georgia has over 5,000 miles of rail that are used by both Norfolk Southern and CSX, two major U.S. freight companies.

Many people overlook the avid use of our rail system today. Trucks on the highways and airplanes in the sky are obvious but in order to be aware of rail use, one must live near tracks. Even then, people do not usually realize how often a train passes. Of the eight major lines that run to and from our capitol, an average of 200 trains pass daily. Trains are also visible closer to the ports with 30 trains daily to both Brunswick and Savannah. Automobiles, storage containers, and manufacturing supplies are moved from ship to train daily in order to be moved to inland cities to be sold and used. It is a beautiful process that most of us fail to notice. Without the process of transportation, our state slumps in economic power.

## Georgia Rail System



## Ports

Georgia's two deepwater ports are in the cities of Savannah and Brunswick. Savannah actually has two ports: Garden City Terminal and Ocean Terminal. These ports provide materials to 70% of the US population. Norfolk Southern Railroad and CSX Transportation both serve the Savannah ports making it possible to provide overnight service to Atlanta, the fastest of any North American port. Savannah is often referred to as "the retail port" with seventeen high-volume retail import distribution centers in the surrounding communities of Savannah. The Savannah distribution centers in nearby towns combine to over fourteen million square feet. Garden City Terminal covers 1,200 acres and is America's largest single-terminal container facility. Ocean Terminal handles forest and solid wood products, steel, automotive and heavy equipment.

Brunswick also has three ports: Colonel's Island Terminal, Mayor's Point Terminal, and Marine Port Terminal. They offer the most efficient interstate and rail transportation to markets across the U.S. Colonel's Island Terminal covers 1,700 acres and handles twelve major manufacturers. Mayor's Point Terminal is a much smaller port with only twenty-two acres and specializes in forest products and general cargo. Marine Port Terminal is a seventy-two acre facility that handles break bulk (items that must be transported in single pieces).

Inland barge terminals are often discounted by Georgians for the role that they each play in both transportation of goods and our economy. Bainbridge is a 107 acre facility that handles liquid and dry bulk. Columbus is 14 acre facility that specializes in liquid bulk. While they are both small in geographic size, they contribute to the movement goods up and down the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers.

The deepwater ports of Savannah and Brunswick, along with the inland barge terminals Bainbridge and Columbus are vital for the flow of commerce between port and market. These facilities provide essential services on a worldwide as well as domestic scale.



Ports and their railroad connections



Ports and their interstate connections

Sources used for the creation of this instructional guide:

Railroad maps and statistics: [www.dot.state.ga.us/maps/pages/Railroad.aspx](http://www.dot.state.ga.us/maps/pages/Railroad.aspx)

Airport history and statistics: [www.atlanta-airport.com](http://www.atlanta-airport.com)

Highway statistics: [www.dot.state.ga.us](http://www.dot.state.ga.us)

Ports: [www.gaports.com](http://www.gaports.com)