



## Opening Your Business in Historic Downtown Rome

### A RESOURCE GUIDE

*Starting a business involves planning, making financial and location decisions and completing legal activities. We've taken the local process of opening a business in downtown and broken it into simple steps. These steps can help you plan, prepare and manage the process. In order to establish a **successful** business, it is essential to plan well, stay motivated and execute effectively. You will find the Downtown Development Office to be Business Friendly and we are here to assist with the local process. Whether starting new, considering expansion, acquisition or renovation, we are here to assist you in avoiding unnecessary delays and expense. Your dream is important and with a plan and resources it can become a reality.*

#### Develop a Business Plan

#### PLANNING

Provide your business with an accurate and realistic path for success. Business start-up assistance and other programs are available from the Small Business Development (SBDC). The SBDC provides one-on-one counseling, business training seminars in marketing, financing, and business start-up; use these tools and resources to create a business plan. There are ample internet examples as well for developing a plan.

- Contact The University of GA SBDC 901 North Broad Street Suite 320, 706-622-2006
- Research internet for examples for Business Plans

#### Seek Assistance and Training

#### PLANNING

Do your research and take advantage of free training and counseling services, from preparing a business plan and securing financing, to expanding or relocating a business. Once you have a business plan drafted, determine if your prospective business has particular needs that can be met by one of the programs. The Downtown Office has information on business loans, incentive programs, site selection, and market information and encourages you to talk to other business owners. Consult the small business community and utilize available resources, such as free government-provided demographic data. Understanding laws and regulations imposed on businesses in Rome is essential to your success. Consult with the Business License Department and the Office of Downtown Development to get started. Call today for an appointment.

- Contact Downtown Development Director Ann Arnold, 607 Broad Street, 706-236-4520
- Contact City Clerk's Office, Business License Officer Walt Greene, 601 Broad Street, 706-236-4459

#### Choose a Location and Confirm Zoning will allow the intended Use

#### PLANNING

Get advice on how to select a customer-friendly location and comply with zoning laws. Work with a broker to find a suitable site for your business that is aligned with the model outlined in your business plan and city codes. **Do not sign a lease until you have reviewed all zoning laws, building codes and fire codes.** Zoning regulates the types of use allowed on each site. It is imperative that the type of business is aligned with the zoning. The Downtown Office is also available to assist with site selection. Remember to consider parking for your employees and customers, as well as trash removal, recycling and utility consideration. All are part of making the right location decision.

- Select a Broker
- Contact the Zoning Official, 607 Broad Street, 706-236-4675
- Contact the Planning Director, Sue Hiller, 607 Broad Street, 706-236-5025, shiller@rome.us
- Contact the Parking Manager, Becky Smyth, 607 Broad Street, 706-236-4458, bsmyth@rome.us

## Finance Your Business

## PLANNING

Local Banks stand ready to discuss your new business venture and are familiar with gap financing opportunities available thru the City of Rome Office of Downtown Development. Look for government backed loans, venture capital and research grants to get started. Open a checking account for your business and select an accountant.

- Select a Bank
- Select an Accountant
- Contact the Downtown Development Office early for gap financing, 607 Broad Street, 706-236-4520

## Determine the Legal Structure of Your Business and Register the Name

## REGISTRATION

Decide which form of ownership is best for you: sole Proprietorship, Partnership, Limited Liability Company (LLC), Corporation, S Corporation, nonprofit or cooperative. As the County seat for Floyd, Rome has numerous attorneys located in the downtown area that can assist in determining the appropriate form. Check the downtown directory for a list of contacts. Register your business name with the Secretary of State of Georgia and the Clerk of Superior Court of Floyd County.

- Select an Attorney
- Register with Secretary of State on Line: <http://www.sos.georgia.gov>
- Clerk of Court 706-291-5192 3 Government Plaza, Suite 101 Rome, GA 30161

## Obtain Business Licenses and Permits

## PERMITS

- Business Licenses / Tax Permits** - Obtain a business license and pay an annual business license fee from the City of Rome Clerks Office, City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Additionally, they can tell you which permits are necessary before opening.
- Zoning Permit** - Zoning review is required and determines if your business may open in the district.
- Building Inspection Permit** - This permit is generally required if you are constructing or modifying your place of business. 706-236-4481. Any exterior changes (including a sign) will require Historic Preservation Review.
- Fire Inspection Permit** - The Fire Prevention Division inspects all business, commercial, industrial and multi-family apartment complexes. The division is responsible for the inspection and compliance of all life safety code enforcements. Dean Oswalt, Fire Marshall 706-236-4510 ext 1
- Certificate of Occupancy (CO)** - Permit is issued by Building Inspection, states property is ready to be occupied.
- Health Permit** - Health Department. 706-295-6316
- Signage Permit** - The Historic Preservation unit within the Planning Department will require review before a permit can be issued by the Building Inspection Department to erect a sign for your business.
- Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)** - Exterior changes to a property require Historic Preservation Review.
- Utility Connections** - The City of Rome Water Department located in City Hall, 601 Broad Street will assist with water, solid waste, and trash issues. 706-236-4440

## Get a tax identification number and register for state and local taxes

## REGISTRATIONS

Learn which tax identification number you'll need to obtain from the IRS and your state revenue agency. Employers with employees, business partnerships, and corporations, must obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service. Internal Revenue Service 1-800-829-4933. Register with the state to obtain a tax identification number, workers' compensation, unemployment and disability insurance. Businesses that operate within Georgia are required to register for one or more tax-specific identification numbers, licenses or permits, including income tax withholding, sales and use tax and unemployment insurance tax. Consult your attorney and accountant.

***The Office of Downtown Development of the City of Rome should be your First Stop for information and assistance. Located at 607 Broad Street, we can provide: current vacant commercial buildings and contacts, Loan programs, Design Assistance, Façade Grant Assistance, Marketing Information and much more.***