

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PROGRAM (EDRP) GRADY COUNTY MOTOCROSS FACILITIES

LOCATION Grady County
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Grady County has developed a unique cluster around the motocross industry. As is often the case with industry clusters, the development of the industry in Cairo was not the result of a strategic economic development plan, or government action, but rather one man who followed his dream and a community that initially embraced motorcycle riding part of the local fabric. There are several motocross facilities in the Grady County area including Millsaps Training Facility (MTF), Georgia Practice Facility (GPF), Action Motocross Park (AMX), and Camp Carmichael, among others. Cairo, Georgia is now considered the “Motocross Capital of the World” by many people in the business and attracts riders from all over the globe including the U.S., Europe, Australia, South America, and Canada.

The Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI²) conducted an analysis to quantify the effect of the industry cluster on the county. Researchers visited Grady and questioned the facility operators about their operations; surveyed visitors about their spending; and interviewed local residents about their feelings regarding motocross in Grady. The results were compiled and used to assess the economic impact of motocross on the local economy.

The motocross facilities in Grady generate more than **11,000 visitor days per year**, and **visitors spend nearly \$90 per day**, resulting in **nearly \$1 million in annual visitor expenditures**. Combined with the operation of the facilities, and the spending of the full-time members, the **total economic impact is 66 jobs, \$1.7 million in personal income, and \$3.8 million in new economic output annually** in the local economy. In addition, this activity generates approximately **\$263,000 in state and local government tax revenues**.

However, not everyone in Grady County has a positive feeling toward the industry. Researchers interviewed residents who were vocal in their opposition to the motocross facilities. The primary concern expressed was the noise and the resulting mental frustration and stress that result. Other concerns included inability to start a business, and excessive dust. Unfortunately, most people were unable to quantify the negative impacts. Of those that did, the total lost annual revenue resulting from the operation of the motocross facilities totaled about \$125,000 per year – less than 4 percent of the direct positive economic activity generated by the motocross industry in Grady County.

Between 1985 and 2000, the Economic Development Research Program (EDRP) provided economic development consulting services to communities throughout Georgia. In 2012, Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI²) was awarded a five-year grant from the US Economic Development Administration to leverage the university’s assets to build regional economic ecosystems that support high-growth entrepreneurship, and improve community capacity to achieve and sustain economic growth. Upon receiving the EDA University Center grant, EI² reintroduced the EDRP as a competitive RFP process.

