

Georgia's rich history in the floor covering industry combined with its efforts to develop innovative practices for the industry positions the state to continue to lead the industry.

Get connected with Georgia's floor covering industry and history through this directory and see how you can grow your business by building on the state's floor covering industry's winning strategies focused on cost reduction and efficient practices. ■



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Floor Covering



Born from a textile heritage that included cotton mills and thread and hosiery mills, Georgia today leads the United States in the production of floor covering, particularly carpets and rugs. More than 47 percent of the U.S. exports of carpets and other textile floor coverings originate in Georgia, amounting to almost \$480 million in products.

Dalton, Ga., is home to the majority of the state's carpet and textile floor covering industry. More than 80 percent of the U.S. carpet market is supplied by mills located within a 65-mile radius of Dalton (Whitfield, Gordon, Catoosa, Murray and Barrow counties). The carpet and rug industry is



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among the state's top employers with nearly 40,000 jobs related to the production of floor covering products and the largest manufacturer in the state is a carpet manufacturer.

Georgia is home to the carpet industry's top four companies and eight of the 13 largest carpet companies are headquartered here. Seven of the top 10 carpet manufacturers are based in Georgia. Georgia carpet manufacturers contributed \$10.7 billion to the economy. In 2005, Georgia carpet and floor covering manufacturers generated more than \$11 billion of the industry's \$14 billion sales.





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History: Georgia's carpet industry has a rich history dating back to the 1950s when textile manufacturers in Dalton, working from their success in creating tufted textile products such as bed spreads, toilet seat covers, robes and throw rugs, developed wide tufting machines that could produce room-size rugs and wall-to-wall carpeting. Unlike other carpet manufacturers at the time, the Dalton-based operations created tufted cotton materials that sold at half the cost of woven wool products. By the late 1950s, the Georgia carpet manufacturers started using synthetic fibers like BFC nylon which helped create an economic boom in the state's northwest region.

Innovation: The state of Georgia is committed to providing its manufacturers with the latest tools and technology resources that will allow them to meet and exceed their business goals. One such effort is the state's Center of Innovation for Manufacturing Excellence that is training floor covering industry employees on the use of robotics

and Programmable Control Systems (PLC). By using automation and other technology, Georgia's floor covering manufacturers will be able to compete on productivity which will reduce operating costs and promote increased sales. The technology will be used for packaging and label application and future advancements will include nanocoding for carpets to scan materials and detect wear.

Environment: Georgia's carpet industry has taken steps to develop environmentally friendly technologies and business practices, including: recycling and reusing raw materials, material packaging, waste management, by-products and post-consumer carpet. Through manufacturing innovations, the industry has increased its water, energy and fuel conservation levels. The Indoor Air Quality and Labeling Program, established by the industry and administered by the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI), promotes products which contribute to a healthier indoor environment.



Trade Shows & Associations: The state is also home to several industry trade shows and expositions each year. FloorTex Expo, presented by the American Floorcovering Alliance (AFA), and is held annually in Dalton. According to the AFA, the show is the only international flooring manufacturing trade show dedicated to the production and materials of the industry.

Atlanta's AmericasMart is home of the world's largest permanent area rug product collection and hosts the



National Oriental Rug Show each January and July. Each year, the state supports Georgia floor covering manufacturers that exhibit at the Domotex in Hanover, Germany - the largest floor covering show in the world.

Dalton is also headquarters for two leading floor covering industry associations, CRI (www.carpet-rug.org) and AFA (www.americanfloor.org).