EFFINGHAM COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

OpenAI Commits $2 Million to Kickstart Trail System at Effingham County's Atlas Park

Latest investment adds to OpenAI's commitments to Effingham County families.

OpenAI Chief Financial Officer Sarah Friar joins Effingham County officials at Atlas Park on Thursday, October 22, to celebrate a $2 million grant for the park's trail system.

Pictured, left to right:

Seth Zeigler: Parks & Landscape Services Director, Effingham County
Forrest Floyd: Commissioner – District 1, Effingham County
Sarah Friar: CFO, OpenAI
Brent Mayo: Head of Construction, OpenAI
Jake Zeigler: Public Engagement Services Director, Effingham County
Tré Wilkins: Capital Projects Manager, Effingham County
Tim Callanan: County Manager, Effingham County
Katie Comer: Public Engagement Manager, OpenAI

Effingham County residents will soon have new places to walk, bike and spend time together. OpenAI has awarded Effingham County a $2 million grant to support a trail system at Atlas Park, one of the most ambitious recreation projects in the County's history.

OpenAI Chief Financial Officer Sarah Friar joined County officials at Atlas Park on Thursday, October 22, to mark the grant. The money comes from OpenAI's $80 million community investment fund. It will help kickstart the park's trail system as part of the Phase 1 improvements in the County's SPLOST 2022 program.

OpenAI chose this project based on a public opinion survey that asked residents what mattered most to them. The goal is to put community investments into the projects local residents want.

A Partnership Built on Community Commitment

Since Project Camellia was announced and the related land sale was completed, the Effingham County Industrial Development Authority (ECIDA) and OpenAI have built a partnership around a shared goal: making sure this project delivers real, lasting benefits for the people who live here. That partnership has been part of a growing list of commitments OpenAI has made to Effingham County:

Free School Meals for Every Student	Trails at Atlas Park
$4.8 million Every student in the Effingham County School District gets free breakfast and lunch for the 2026–27 school year. Free meals began on September 8, and families have one less expense to worry about.	**$2 million** The grant announced today will help create trails where families can walk, bike and enjoy the outdoors together.

> *"We want our investments in Effingham County to reflect what matters to the people who live here. This $2 million grant will help create trails where families can walk, bike and spend time together."*
>
> — Katie Comer, Community Engagement Representative, OpenAI

The ECIDA will keep working alongside OpenAI, the County and the School District so that Effingham County residents see the benefits of this investment for years to come.

About Atlas Park

Atlas Park sits near Highway 80 and Sand Hill Road. It will turn a former sand mining property into a major spot for outdoor recreation and community gatherings, built around a lake of about 138 acres. The long-term master plan includes:

- Trails
- Pickleball, basketball and volleyball courts
- An outdoor arena and event venues
- A swimming beach and camping areas
- Fishing and boating
- Access to the Ogeechee River

As planning and construction move forward, Effingham County will share updates on the trail system and future amenities.

ProjectCamelliaEffingham.com | **EffinghamCounty.org**