



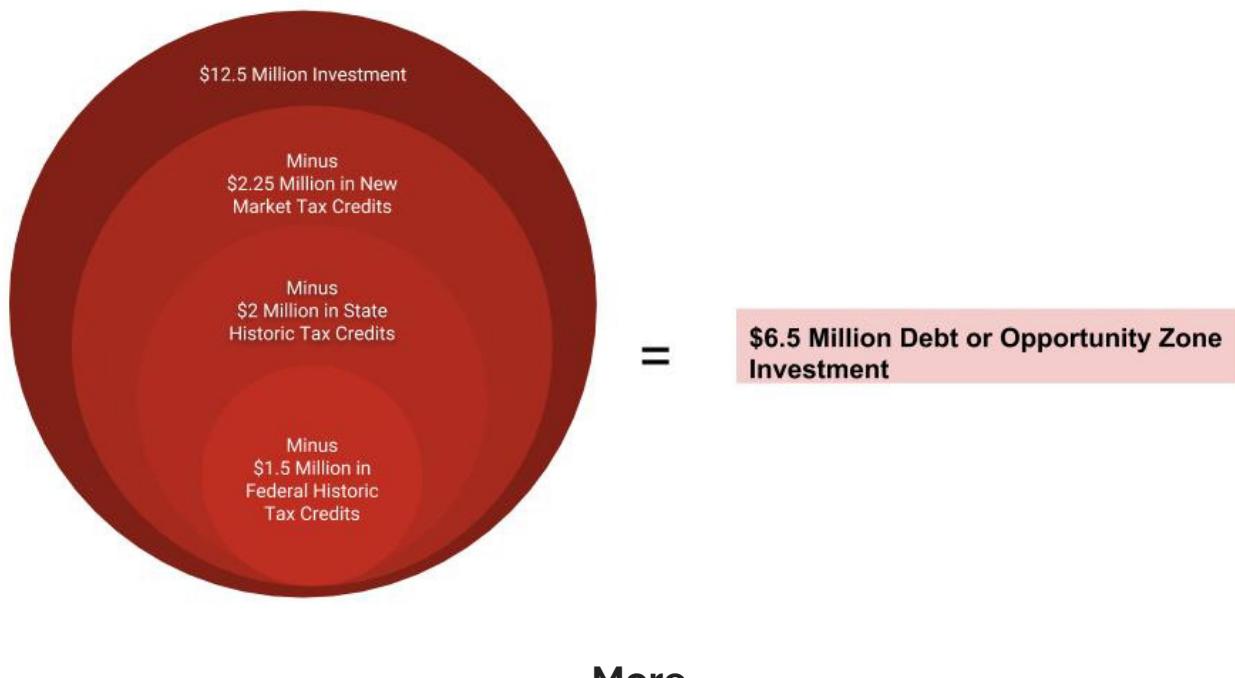
# Takin' It Back to the Old School...

**Creating Jobs. Keeping Character.**

by Tanya Maloney, Heflin Main Street Director

What Alabama town, with two syllables and about as many stoplights, is causing financial buzz lately? Heflin! The smallest Main Street Alabama-designated city is no different than any other small town in Alabama, with its majestic courthouse and stock of ornamented, brick buildings. So, how is it that this little town is making big headlines? In the famous words of rappers Tag Team, we're "takin' it back to the old school." Literally!

On Friday, September 14th, Heflin Main Street hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Assisted Living and Memory Care Facility to be located in the former Cleburne County High School (1936). Attracting a \$12.5 million dollar investment and 35 professional jobs is unheard of in a rural Alabama town with a population of 3,425. However, by combining some old school tax credits and a new incentive program, Heflin Main Street was able to put together a capital stack that made the project attractive to a developer and one that many are watching throughout the nation. Here is how we stack it up....





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What makes this project unique is that it's located in an Opportunity Zone. The Opportunity Zones incentive is a new community investment tool established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in low-income urban and rural communities nationwide. Opportunity Zones provide a tax incentive for investors to re-invest their unrealized capital gains into dedicated Opportunity Funds. The developers of the Heflin Project are currently courting national investors with Opportunity Funds to reduce the \$6.5 million debt that is left after all the tax credits. Lowering the debt and risk to the developer helps to lower the cost to future residents of the facility in an area where most citizens are middle income. Should the project successfully take down the debt using Opportunity Zone funds, it would be a model for the rest of the nation.

Sure, the numbers work, but what makes the project even more special is the community buzz and excitement surrounding it. Thousands of former students, from their late-40s and up, once roamed the halls of this historic high school building. Once complete, those individuals will have an opportunity to literally relive the "glory days" by spending their golden years in a beautiful new space filled with "old school" memories.