While there are so many things to see and do in the region, sometimes the word about these things doesn’t travel as fast as the back porch gossip. Southern hospitality is still alive and well and we’ve created this to highlight things to help you enjoy life on rotations and see all that Southwest Georgia has to offer!
What’s for dinner?

Thomasville is quickly making a name for itself as the cultural hub of SOWEGA, but it shines with many great restaurants. Some of our favorites are listed below.

*Jonah’s Fish & Grits:* Seafood is the specialty, but the hush puppies are out of this world.

*George and Louie’s:* The greek salad is phenomenal and the Big Louie special is always a crowd pleaser.

*Sweet and Savory Sisters (S.A.S.S.):* Located in the old train depot, it’s southern cooking with a cajun twist. There isn’t a bad menu choice, but save room for the peach cobbler.

*Sweet Grass Dairy:* Wine and cheese. Need I say more?

*Paulies:* Great atmosphere for catching up with friends and the pizza is cooked fresh in a brick oven while you wait.

*Billiard Academy:* A beloved downtown staple, stop by and grab a hot dog and a glass bottled coke for a quick treat.

*Savannah Moon Bakery:* These treats are worth every calorie.

*Grassroots Coffee:* Roasted right here in Thomasville, Grassroots coffee is the perfect start to the morning or boost to get you through the afternoon.

Thomasville is a place that has stayed true to its Southern roots. The town is proud of its historical architecture and has a charming downtown that boasts a variety of shops and great restaurants. The First Friday events are a blast! The community has a large focus on the arts and hosts many events throughout the year to showcase the local talent. Make sure to check the town calendar as well as events at nearby plantations that are open to the public so you don’t miss out!

John D. Archbold Memorial Hospital is the most likely place to be assigned a rotation in Thomasville. The preceptor and pharmacists here are really great at letting the students have a very self-directed learning environment. This works well for students who have specific interests in the hospital by letting them focus on certain areas, but also those that have no idea what to expect from hospital pharmacy and want to explore a little bit of everything! Students also have the opportunity to visit some of the other system campuses to see how they operate day-to-day.
Albany is the largest and most central town in the SOWEGA region. There are many shopping options available in Albany including the Albany Mall and several shopping centers nearby. In addition, Albany also has several great locally-owned restaurants to check out. Pearly’s Harvest Moon, Albany Fish Company, Coach’s, Our Daily Bread, The Cookie Shoppe and The Merry Acres Inn all provide great atmospheres for socializing.

For anyone who is looking for a fitness challenge, Albany hosts a half and full marathon in March. The race includes a great course and an opportunity to get to see the town. If you’re looking for a less strenuous activity in cooler weather, Mark’s Melon Patch is the perfect place to pick out a pumpkin in the Fall or play in the field of sunflowers!

Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital offers several great rotation sites that are structured with extensive one-on-one learning between students and preceptors.

**Visit Chehaw to hang out with chameleons, chetahs, rhinos & more!**
Valdosta is South Georgia’s “college town.” Home to Valdosta State University, it has all the amenities for college living. For the foodie, Smok’n Pig, Friend’s, Bleu Cafe, Steel Magnolias and 306 North are popular dining spots. Downtown Valdosta hosts First Friday gatherings as well as Farm Days on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month. The Farm Days market showcases locally sourced products and crafts from surrounding areas. Valdosta’s most famous attractions, Wild Adventures and Splash Island waterpark, also provide entertainment with several rollercoasters and many favorite theme park rides.

There are several types of rotation sites to choose from in the Valdosta area. Ambulatory care at Moody Air Force Base provides an opportunity to see pharmacy at work in a unique practice setting. Barnes Healthcare Services offers a rotation centered on home health. This company is a longstanding, yet still growing service provider and offers a variety of innovative services. This particular setting allows for many opportunities for direct patient interaction.

South Georgia Medical Center offers acute anticoagulation and nutrition support. These rotations are very structured and great for students who like lots of one-on-one learning throughout the day with the clinical pharmacists. Students get to directly work with the pharmacists writing progress notes and making warfarin adjustments for the inpatient setting, as well as, TPN monitoring.
ARLINGTON- About 45 minutes southeast of Albany, Still Pond Vineyards is one of South Georgia’s hidden treasures. The winery offers free tours and tasting of their award-winning wine made from sweet muscadine grapes. It’s a great Saturday afternoon activity any time of the year, but make sure to check the schedule for grape-stomp festivals!

CAIRO- Home of the Syrupmakers, but not the Karo syrup kind! On Hwy 84, almost right in the middle of Thomasville and Bainbridge you can catch a $5 movie at the historic Zebulon Theatre. Center Drugs Pharmacy & Gifts is a community pharmacy rotation site with compounding opportunities and has a old-fashioned soda fountain and ice cream for $1 a scoop!

MOULTRIE- Historic downtown Moultrie is lined with specialty shops and restaurants and has been designated on the National Register of Historic Places. It’s home to the Sunbelt Expo held each year in October and the event has become one of the premier farm shows in North America. The Calico Arts & Crafts Show is held semi-annually in the Spring and Fall.

TALLAHASSEE, FL- About 45-50 minute drive from Bainbridge, Cairo or Thomasville, Tallahassee is a convenient day trip for the weekend. Even if you’re a Bulldog at heart and nothing can beat SEC enthusiasm when it comes to sports, FSU sporting events aren’t a bad alternative. Especially if you’re already in the area. There’s tons of shopping in Tallahassee and it’s great for a change of rural scenery without driving all the way back to Atlanta!

TIFTON- Get in touch with your redneck side at one of Tifton’s Truck and Tractor pull events, normally in the Spring and Fall each year. And what’s Fall without getting lost in a maze? Saturdays in October you can do just that at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture pumpkin patch and crop maze.

There are also opportunities to attend the required professional meetings in the area. GPhA hosts regional meetings in the Fall and Spring of each year. These are typically rotated in different towns throughout the region from year to year.

There is also an active GSHP group in the SOWEGA region. Residents from Phoebe and local pharmacists present at many of these meetings. Most commonly, these are held in the Thomasville or Albany area.

Additionally, the Florida Society of Health-System pharmacists have meetings in Tallahassee that students may also attend.
Generally speaking, commute times can be estimated by the mileage between the towns to equal about a mile per minute.

A safe bet to estimate total travel time between destinations between towns is to take the mileage put it into minutes and expect to add about 10-15 minutes to that time, give or take.
Housing Options in SOWEGA:

Depending on rotation sites and schedule, commuting may be technically be possible, but ultimately it can be tiring to spend extra (unnecessary) hours on the road each day. AHEC housing is a great resource to check out if you have rotations in particular areas of SOWEGA. The best part? IT’S FREE!

Plantation Apartments, Valdosta

Madison House, Albany

Gordon House, Thomasville

SOWEGA-AHEC is a community-driven, not-for-profit organization whose goal is to improve access to healthcare by increasing the number and distribution of healthcare providers in the region. One way they do this is by providing free housing for students. Housing includes private bedrooms and shared bathrooms with other healthcare students in the area. Accommodations include access to basic necessities including pots and pans, washer/dryer and wireless internet. (Yes, wi-fi is a necessity.) Students are required to provide their own paper products and linens. More info about each site can be found on their website.

AHEC housing is available in the following areas: Albany, Moultrie, Thomasville, Cordele, Valdosta and Tifton.