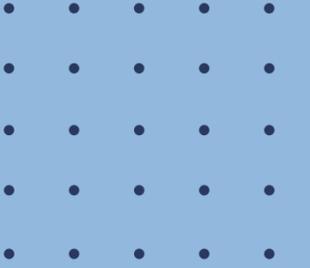


# Better Together

2026 STATE OF CHEROKEE COUNTY  
CHAIRMAN HARRY JOHNSTON



# The State of Cherokee County is Truly Exceptional!

## What Makes Cherokee So Great?





**It's the people, all pulling together.**





# Key Strengths



Small-town &  
Rural Lifestyle  
close to Atlanta



Geography &  
Climate



Best Public  
Safety



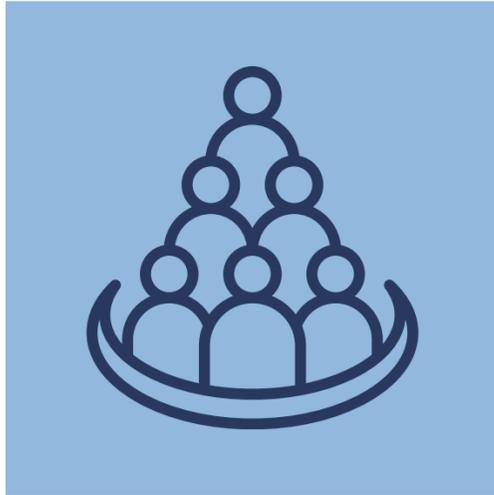
Low  
Taxes



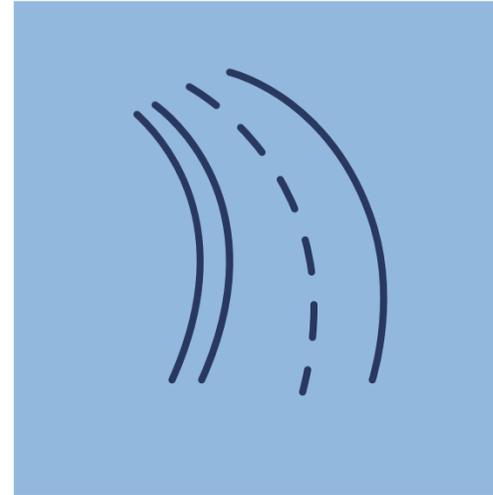
Great K-12 and  
higher  
education



# Our Challenges



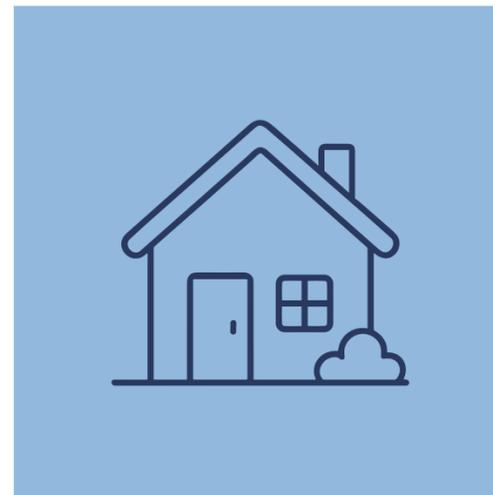
**Growth**



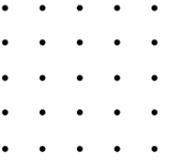
**Transportation**



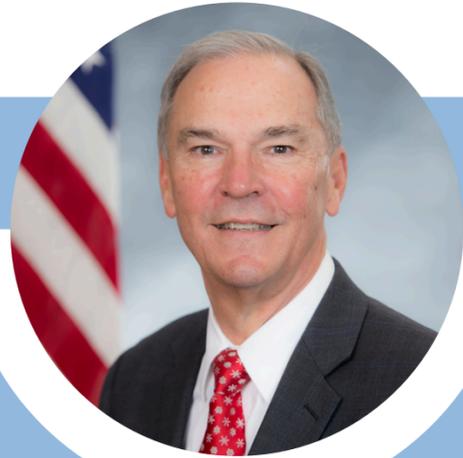
**Growing Financial  
Demands**



**Housing**



# Leadership



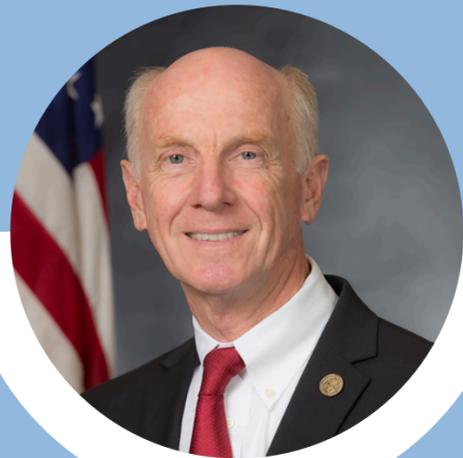
**Harry Johnston**



**Will Cagle**



**Richard Weatherby**



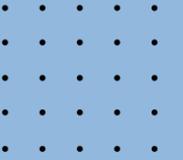
**Benny Carter**



**Corey Ragsdale**



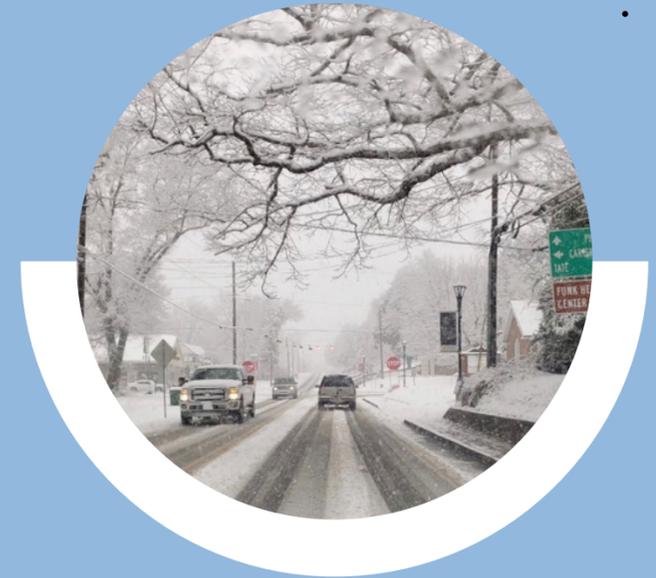
**Geoff Morton**



**Canton**



**Ball Ground**



**Waleska**



# Flourishing Cities



**Holly Springs**



**Woodstock**

# The Best Public Safety



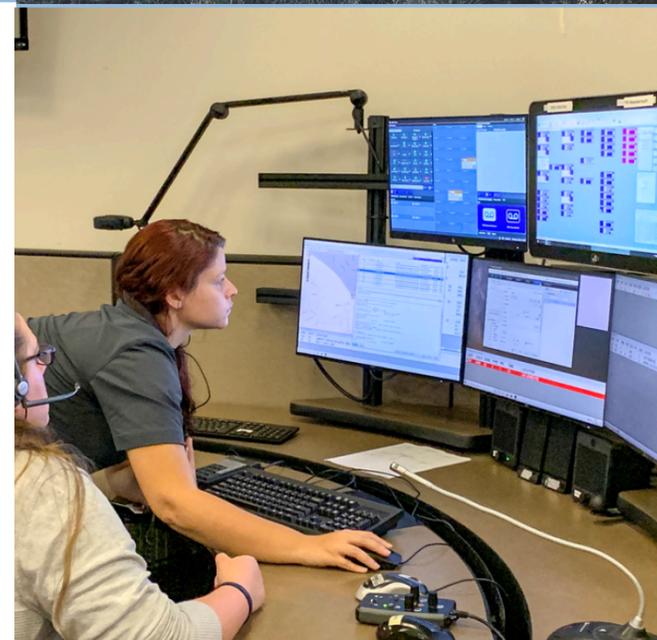
## Marshal's Office

- Accredited agency
- Truck Compliance Unit



## Fire & EMS

- One of 334 internationally accredited agencies
- Department buildout complete
- 2025 GA Fire Chief of the Year
- Blood transfusions in the field



## E 9-1-1

- Next Gen 9-1-1 Leader
- 2024 Call Center of the Year
- 98% of calls answered in 10 seconds or less



## Sheriff's Office

- Advanced Triple Crown Accreditation
- Real Time Crime Center to launch this year



## EMA

- 25 activations in 2025
- Highest certification in GA

# Community Services

## Recreation and Parks

- 2025 District 5 Agency of the Year
- 2025 Historic Site Award
- Two new parks starting this year
- Generated \$16.5 million for the local economy
- Girls' Flag Football Program won national and state awards
- Cherokee Youth Basketball
  - 5,000 Players
  - 1,000 Volunteers

## Senior Services

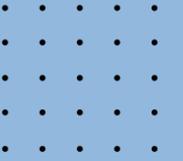
- 50,000 Meals on Wheels served
- Growing Active Adult Group
- New director in 2025

## Recycling Center

- Nearly 90,000 cars came through both sites in 2025
- Expansion planned
- Keep Cherokee Beautiful - citizen volunteers



# Other Services



## K-12 Education

- Top ACT/SAT scores
- Graduation rate 91%
- Highest-ever CCRPI score



## Collegiate

- Reinhardt University
- Chattahoochee Technical College



## Airport

- 6th Largest
- Added Hangars
- Runway Expansion



## Hospital

- Second Tower Underway
- MOB addition



## Economic Development

- Building Good Jobs and Tax Base
- 74 businesses - Startup Cherokee
- Be Pro Be Proud



## Water

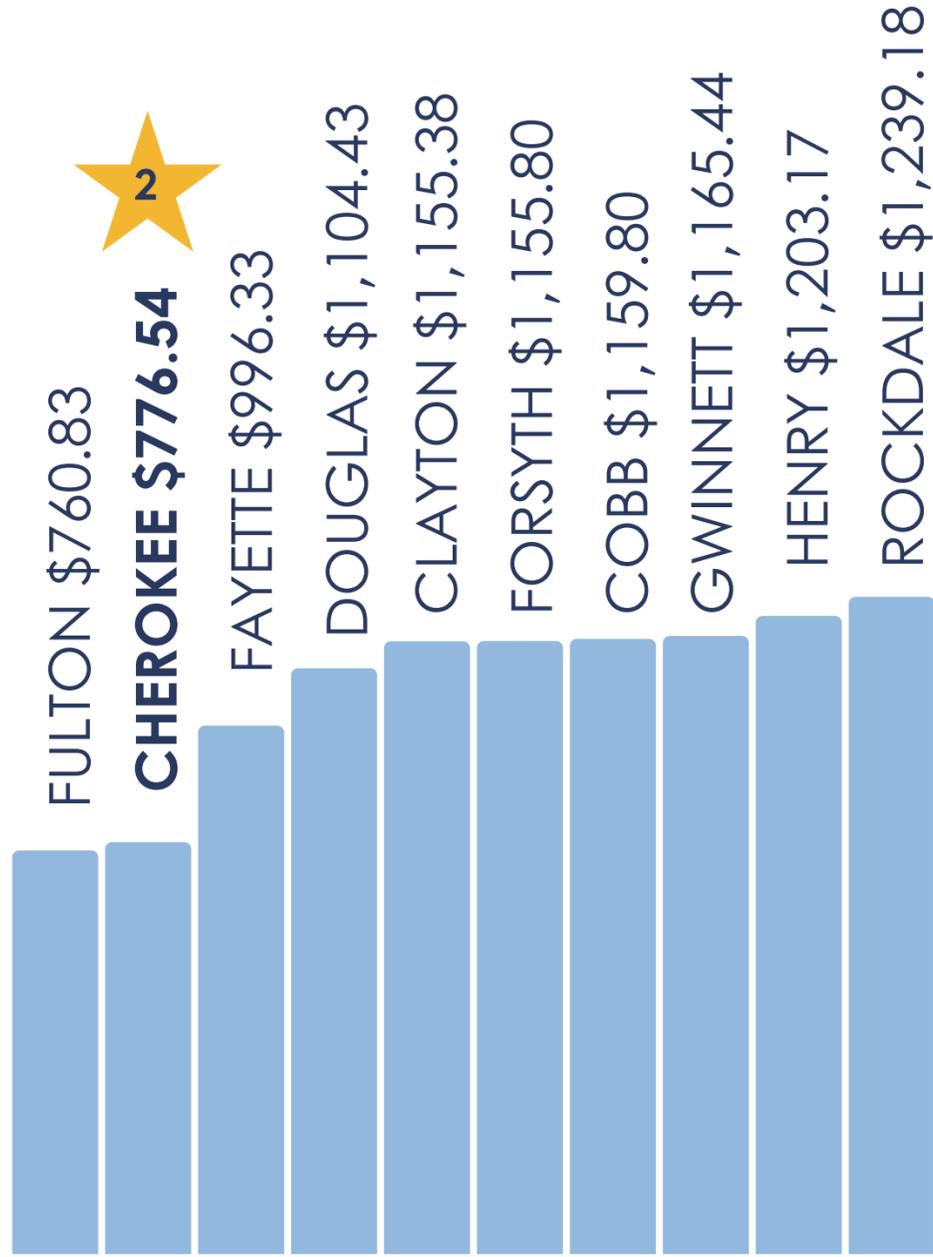
- Avg. Daily Demand: 20.544 MGD
- Treatment Capacity: 38 MGD
- Permitted Withdrawal: 40.5 MGD



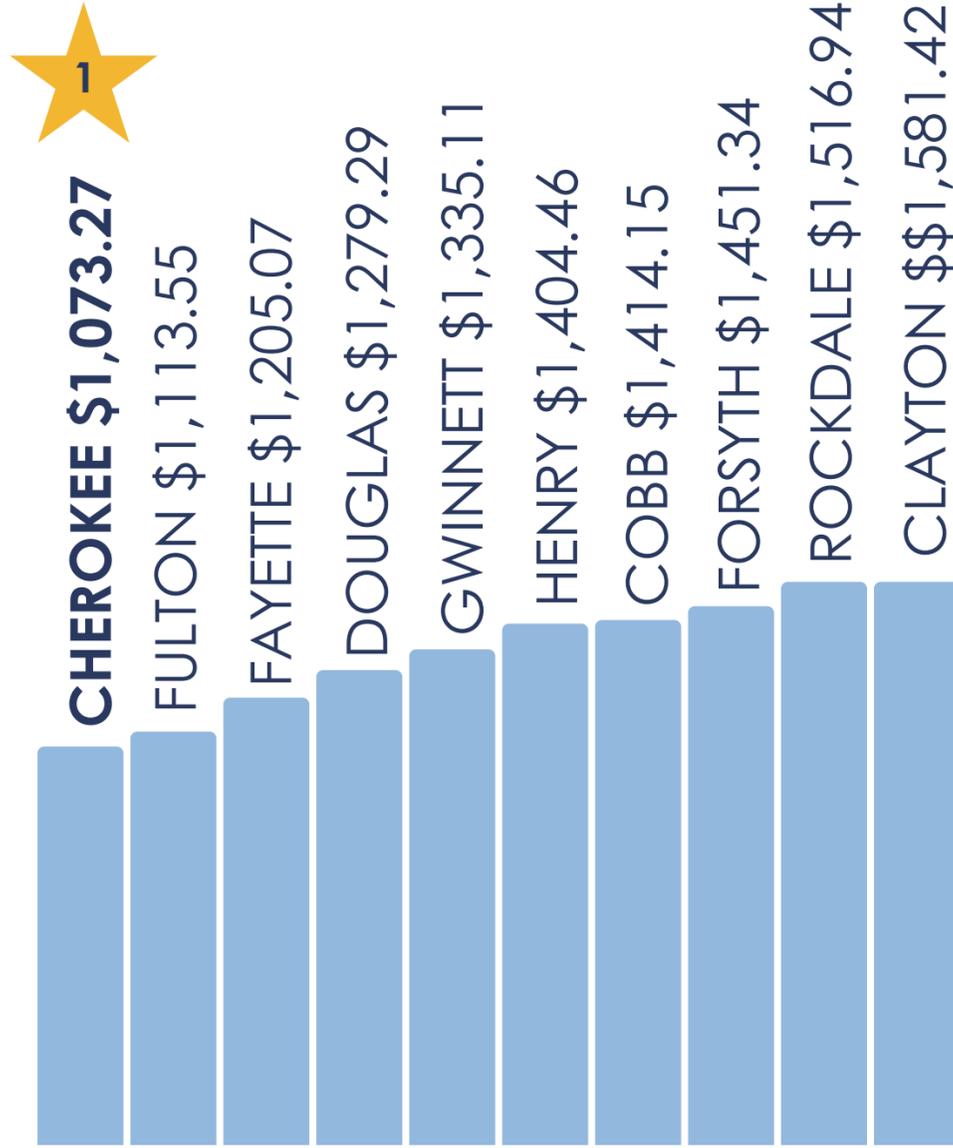
## Wastewater

- Avg. Daily Demand: 8.83 MGD
- Treatment Capacity: 18.75 MGD
- Permitted Capacity: 42.35 MGD

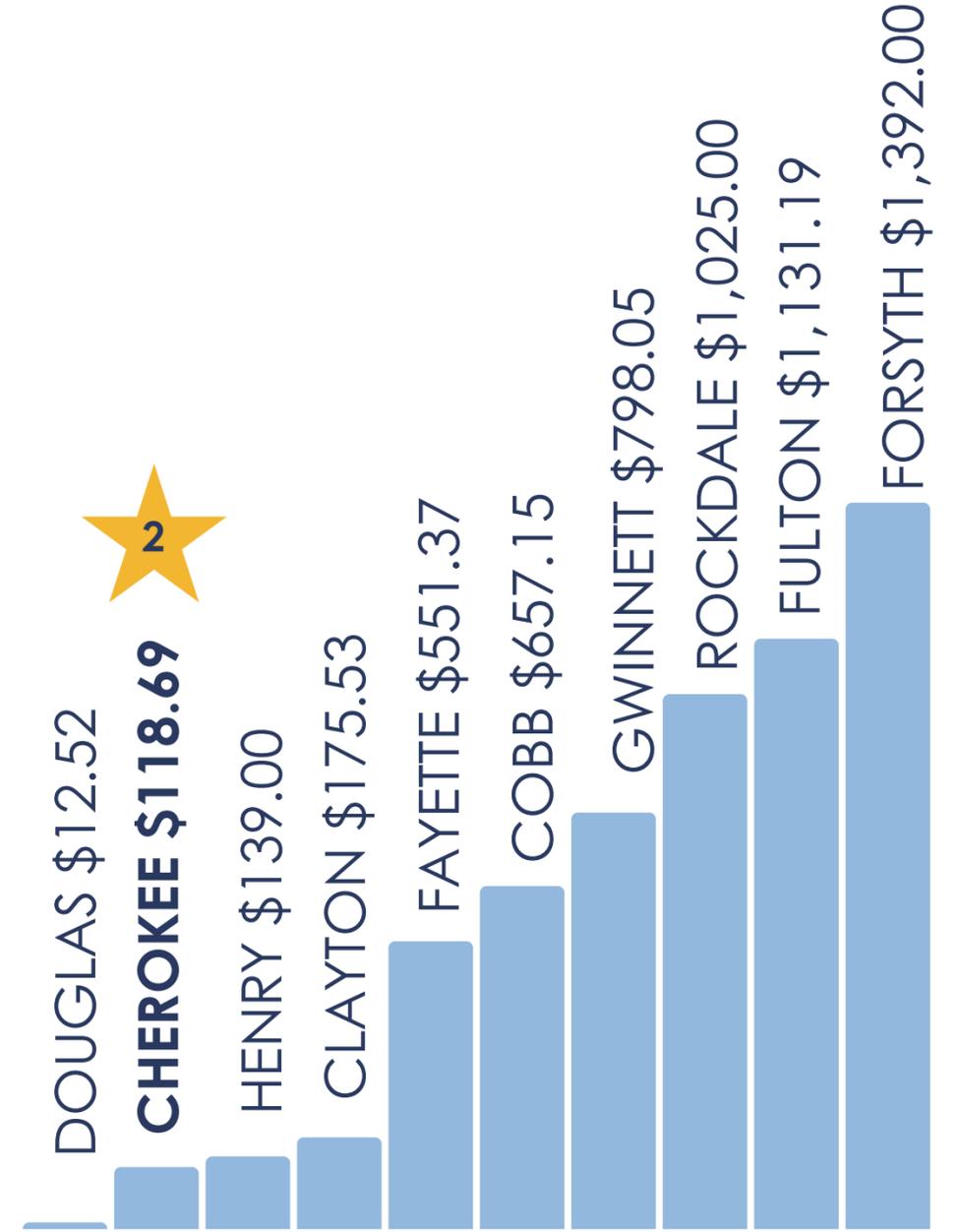
# Low Taxes



**TAXES PER CAPITA**



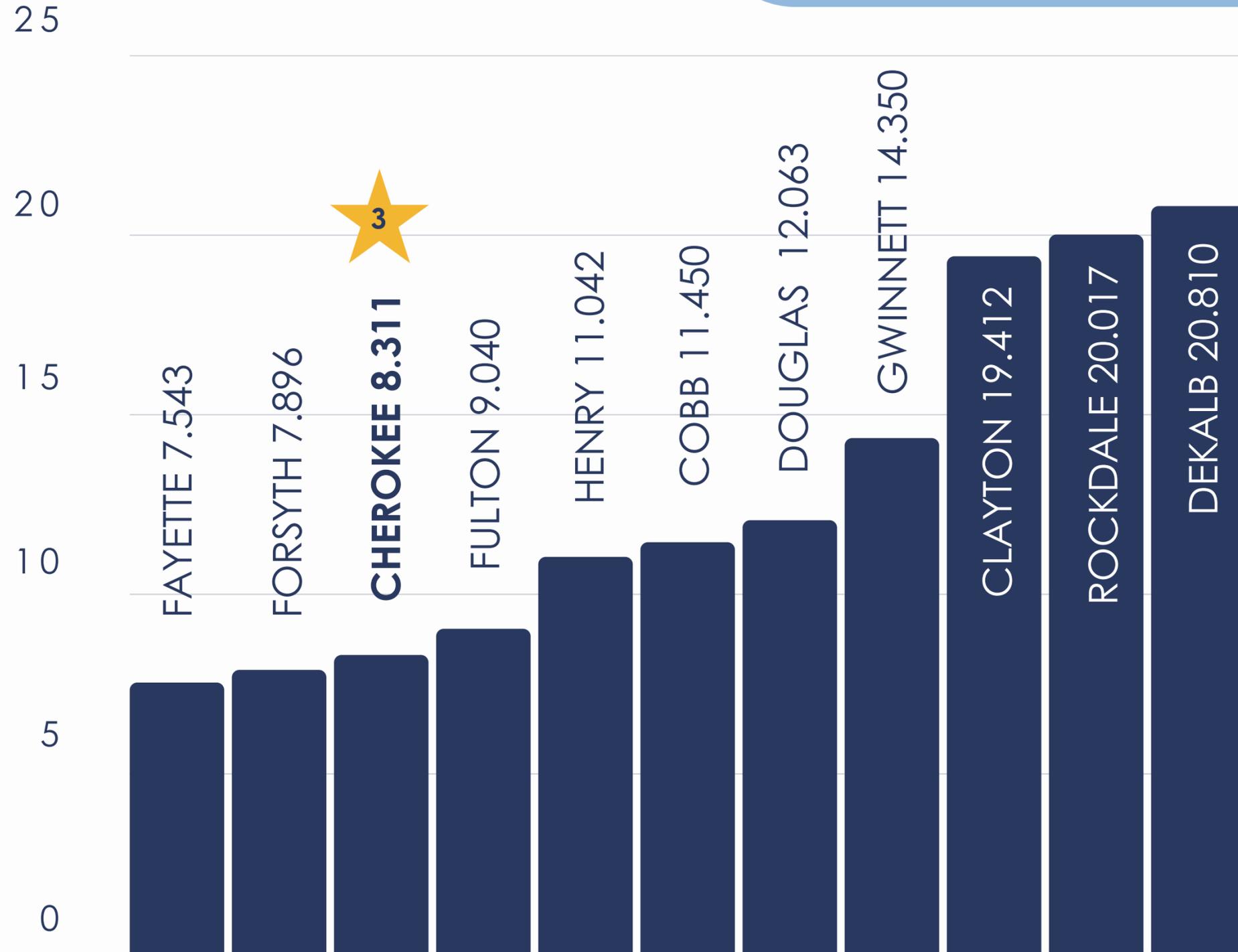
**EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA**



**LONG-TERM DEBT PER CAPITA**

\*DeKalb County data not available.

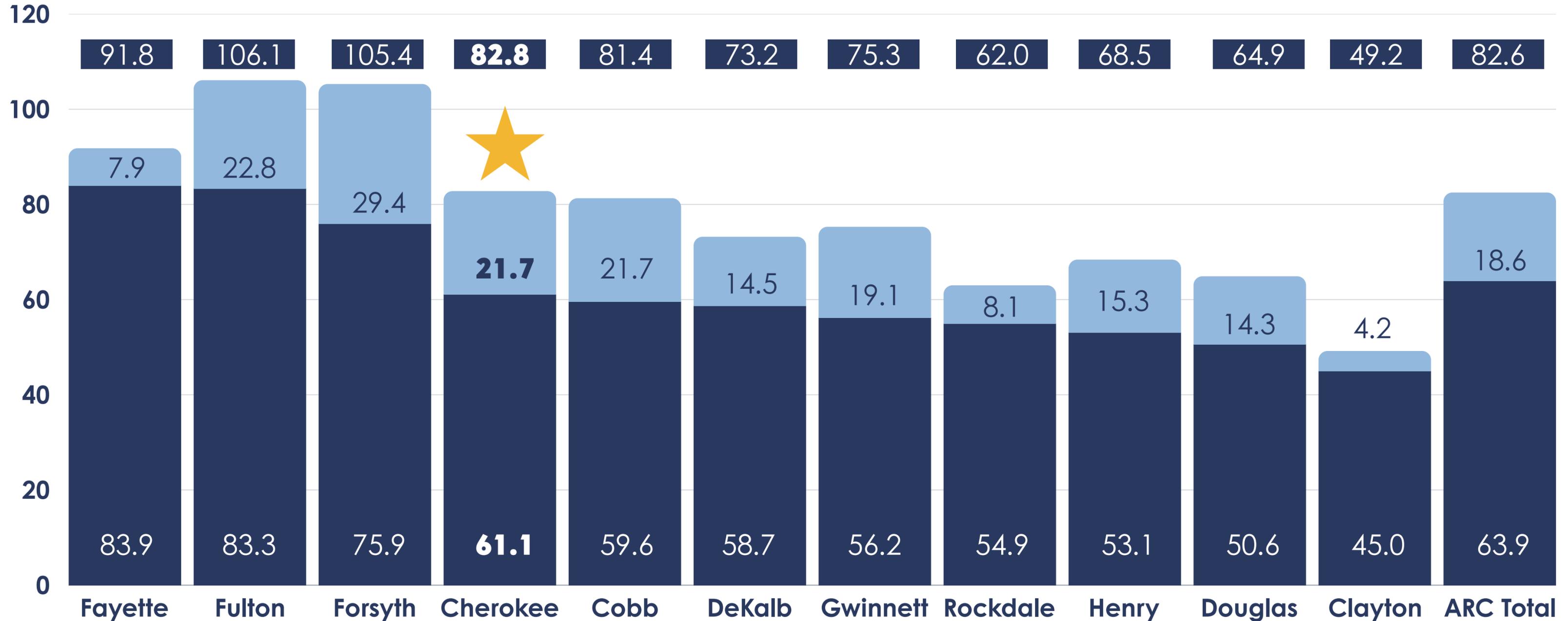
# Property Taxes Rates



**11 ARC COUNTIES | TOTAL BOC-CONTROLLED PROPERTY TAX (2024)**

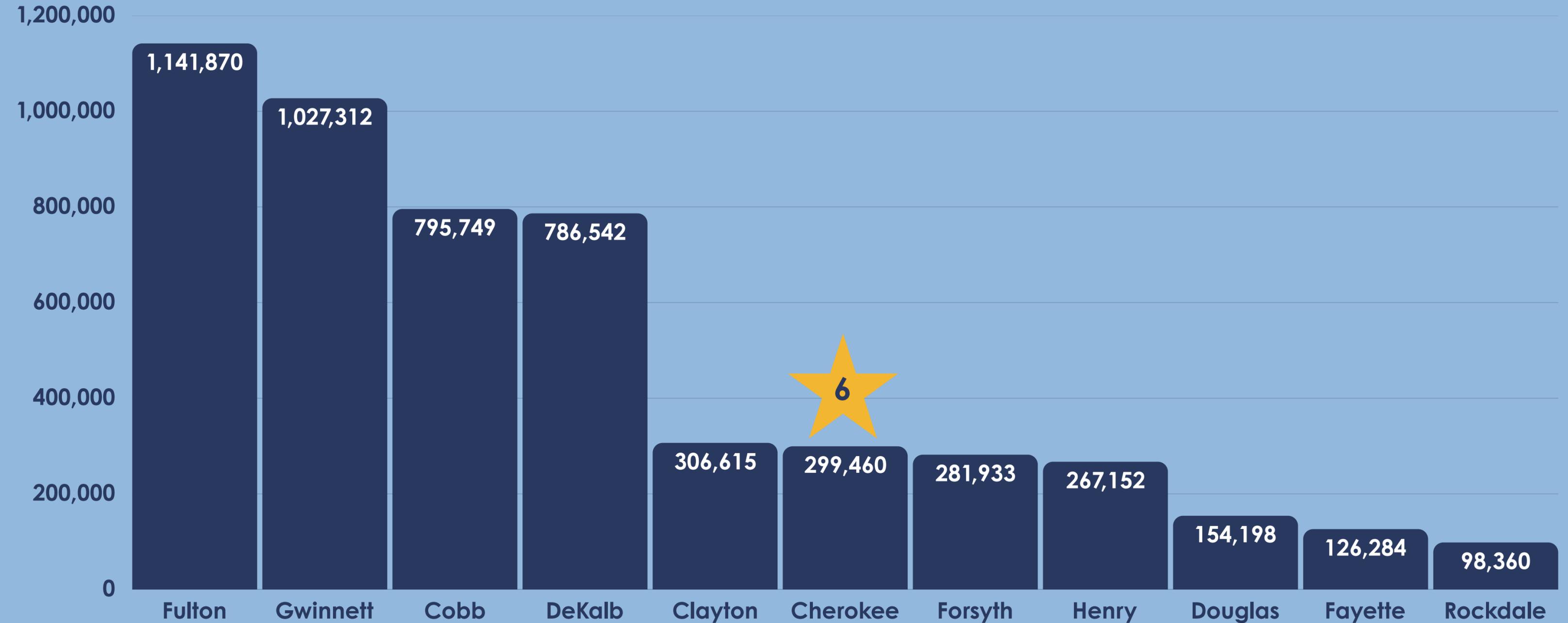
# Gross 40% Tax Digest per Capita (\$thousands)

● Net Digest ● Exemptions

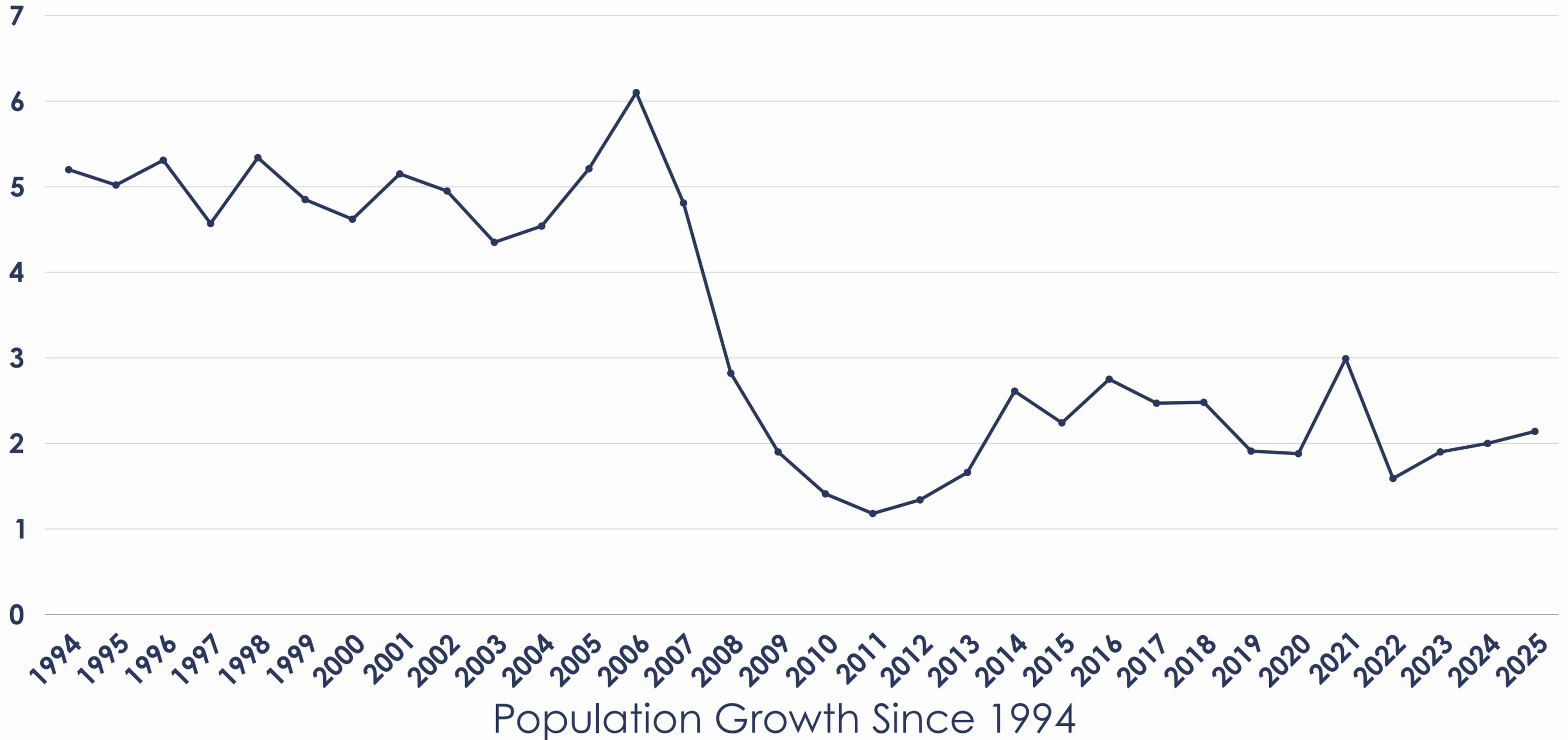


# Population Estimates

ARC 2025



# Population Growth



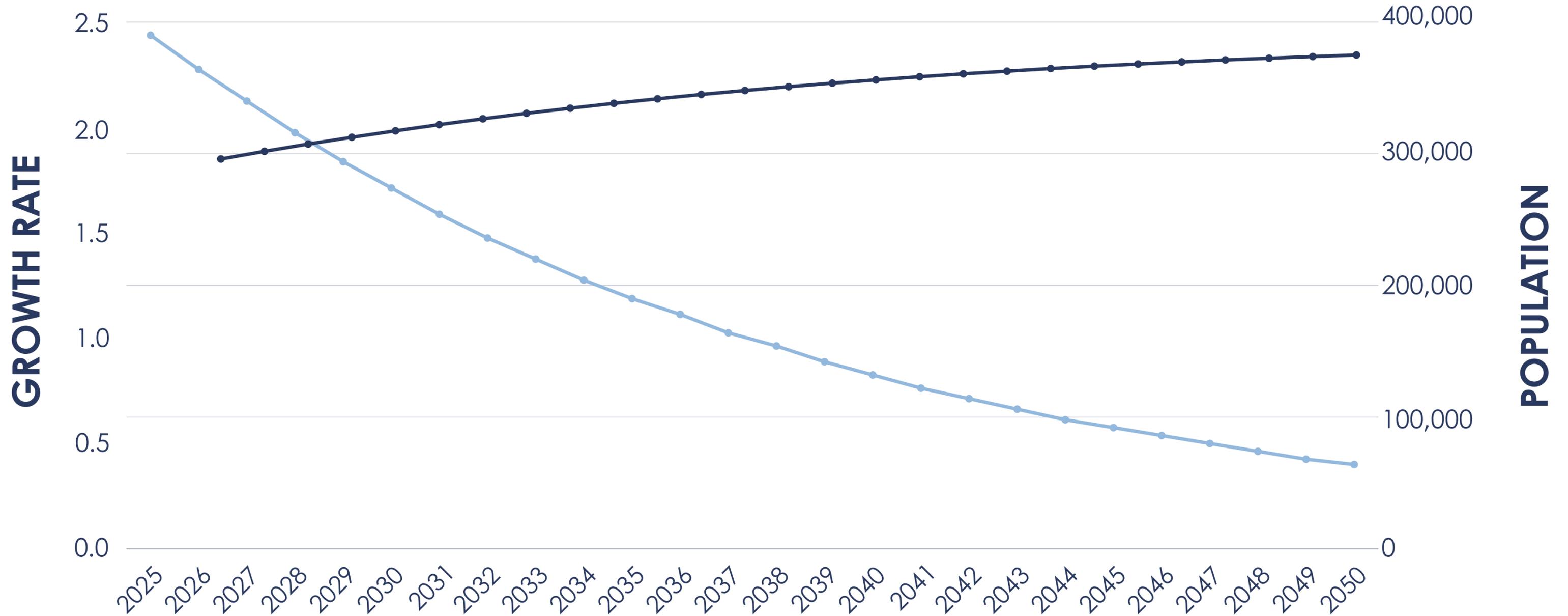
# 25-Year Growth Projection



POPULATION



GROWTH RATE





## **What if?**

- **Cities & County could come together ...**
- **On a plan for a great future Cherokee**
- **Growing, Thriving, Compact Cities**
- **Declining Growth Quantity, Increasing Quality**
- **Protect and Retain Rural Areas**

# T-SPLOST

Voters turn weakness into strength!

## T-SPLOST passed with 60% of the vote in November

- Estimated \$445 Million
  - \$275.4 Million for unincorporated
  - \$169.4 Million for cities
- Sales Tax will go from 6% to 7% in April
- More than doubles road improvement budget
- Projects planned to start in June
- Catch up on road projects and add needed new projects



## Project Highlights

- Old Highway 5 Corridor from Canton to Woodstock
- SR 140 from E. Cherokee Dr. to Charles Cox Rd.
- Butterworth Rd. from SR 20 to Marietta Hwy.
- I-575 at Towne Lake Parkway interchange

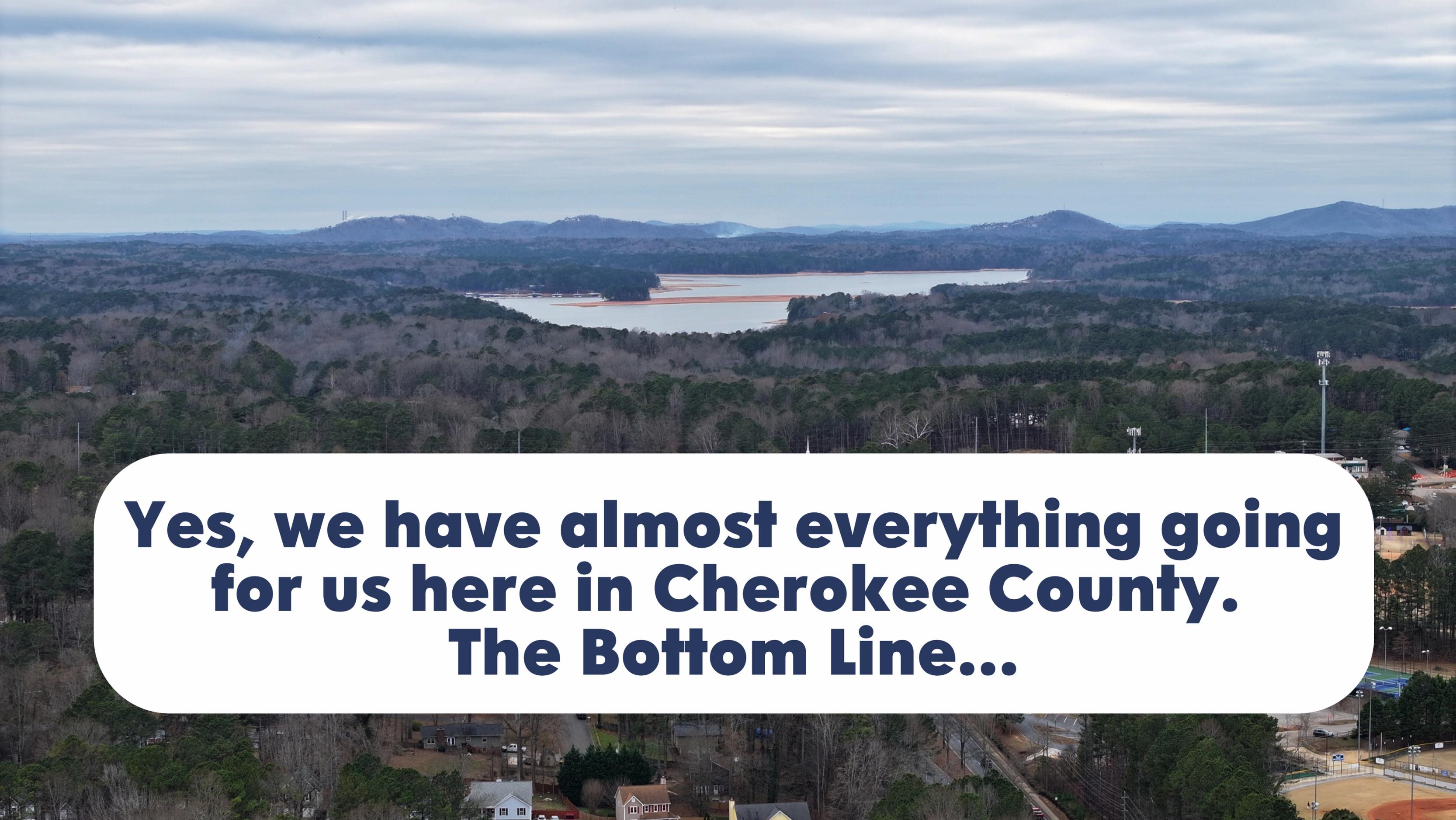
SCAN QR  
CODE



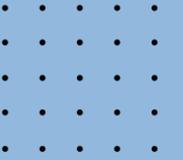
# Housing

- Affordability remains a growing problem
- Slow-growth policies aggravate it
- Solutions difficult
- Hundreds of us working on it
- We must and will find solutions





**Yes, we have almost everything going  
for us here in Cherokee County.  
The Bottom Line...**



**People who care about our county ...  
Have built a county worthy of its people.**