



# 2026

# *State of the County*



CHEROKEE ECONOMIC  
OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

Cherokee By Choice

# OUR *Boards*

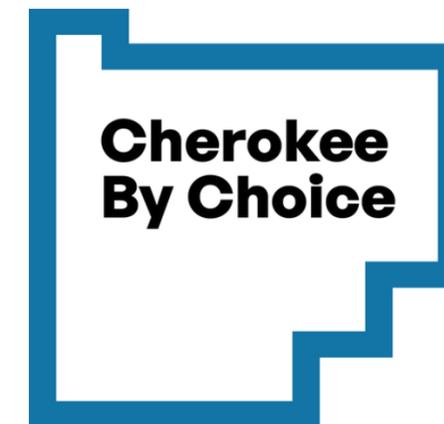
Three boards. One strategy.

## **DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY** *of Cherokee County* **(DACC)**

- Statutory Authority
- Recruitment, Retention, Expansion
- Real Estate Development
- Financing for some projects
- Funded by county & cities

## **CHEROKEE COUNTY** *Development Authority* **(CCDA)**

- Constitutional Authority
- Incentives
- City Representation
- Revenue from fee income



- Public-Private Partnership
- 501(c)3
- Diversifies funding
- Strategic Initiatives
- Takes Cherokee to the next level



# OUR *Team*

**Heath Tippens**

*President*

**Justina Brown**

*Director of Talent  
Development*

**Katie Berg**

*Marketing Consultant*

**Jonathan Chambers**

*Community Manager of  
Entrepreneurship*

**Kristyne Davis**

*Operations Manager*

**Lee Freeman-Smith**

*Program Manager*

**Elise Holcomb**

*Communications &  
Project Manager*

**Laura Lawson**

*Project Manager*

**Amy Leatherman**

*Workforce Programs  
Manager*

**Molly Mercer**

*Director of Film*

**Videssa Ormsby**

*Events Manager*

**Amy Bard**

*Be Pro Be Proud Georgia  
Scheduling Manager*

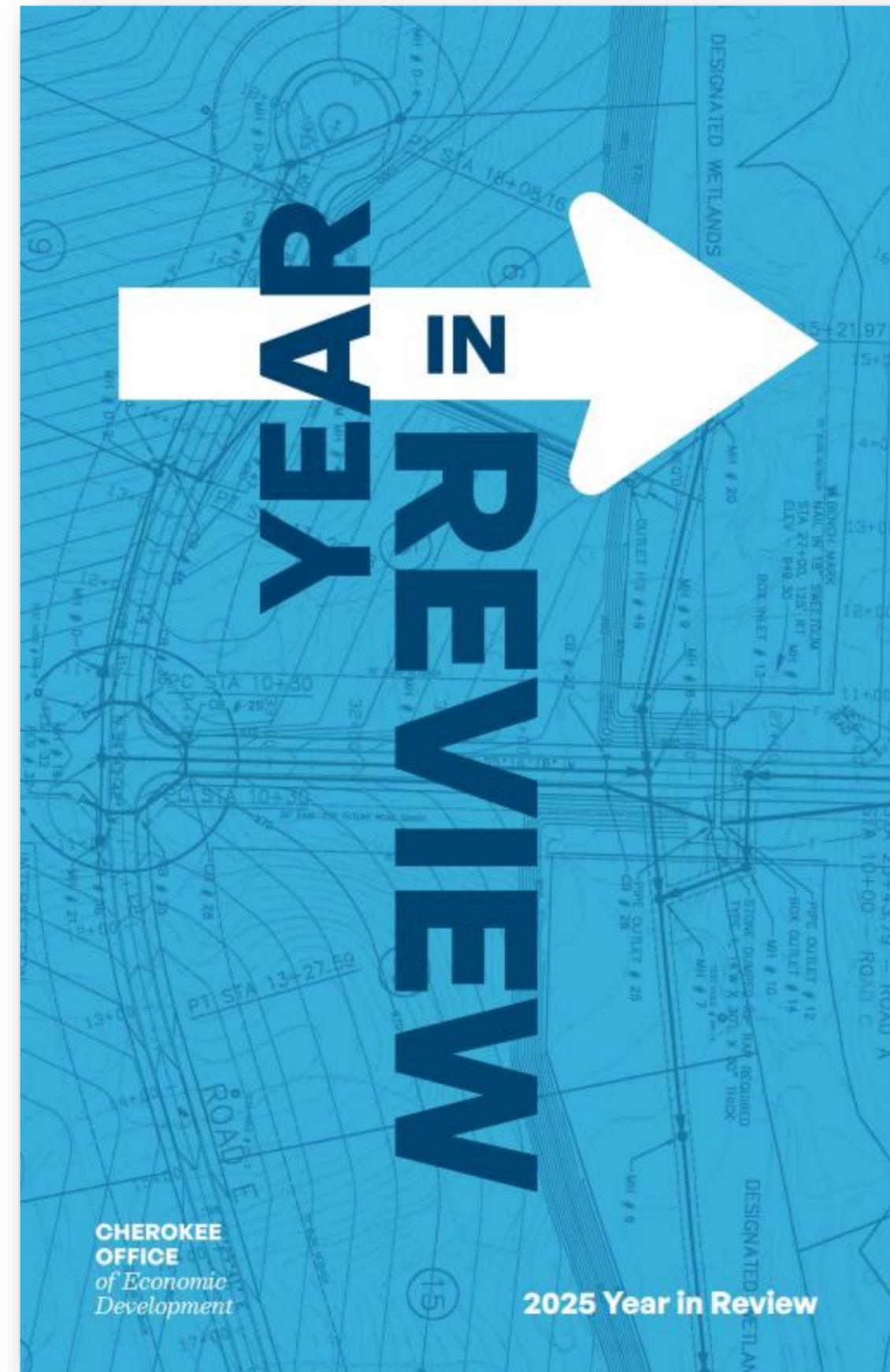
**Reginald LaGrone**

*Be Pro Be Proud Georgia  
Tour Manager*

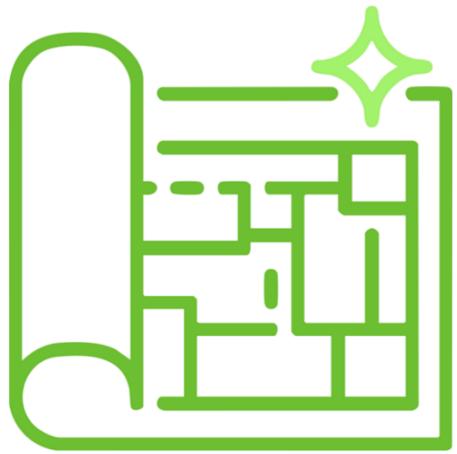
**Antrinell Lamar**

*Be Pro Be Proud Georgia  
Tour Ambassador*

# 2025 *Year in Review*



# GOAL *Areas*



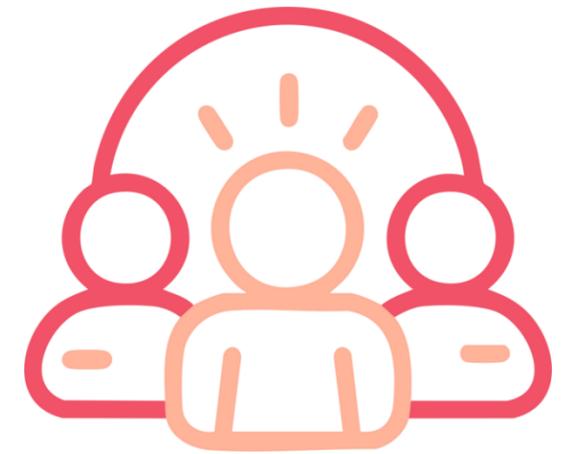
**ATTRACTIVE &  
CONNECTED**  
*Places*



**EDUCATED &  
TALENTED**  
*Workforce*



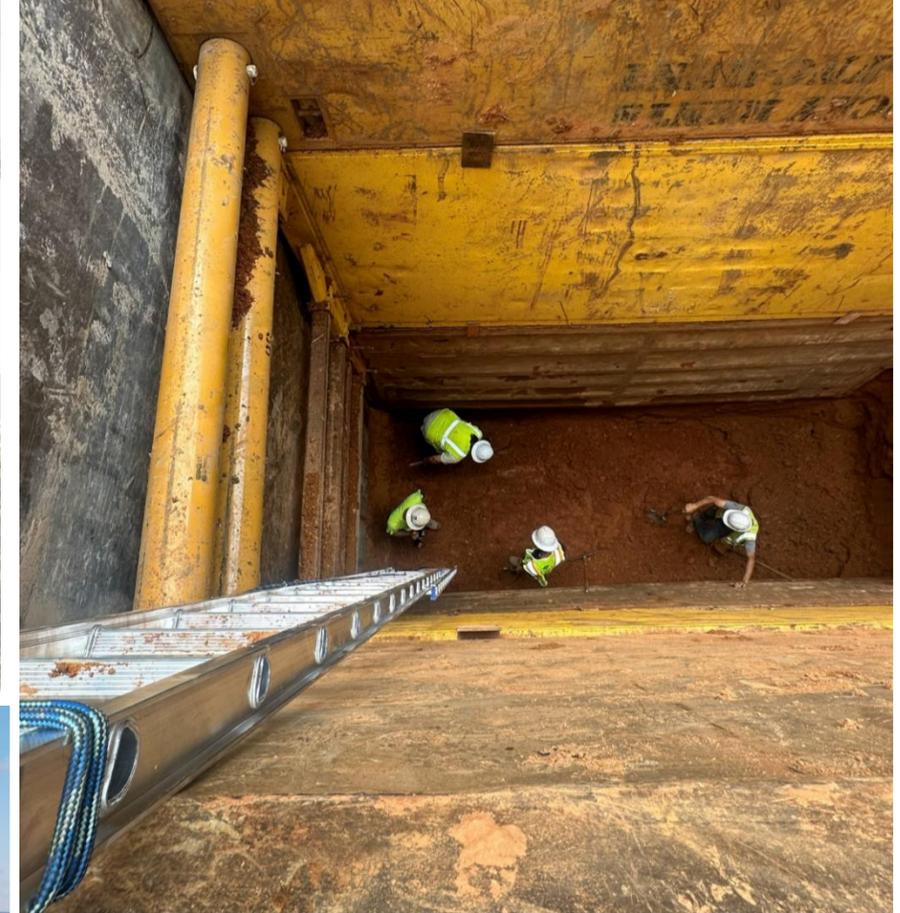
**INNOVATIVE &  
ENTERPRISING**  
*Business*



**VIBRANT &  
INVITING**  
*Image*



# Progress with Product



# THRIVING *Industry*

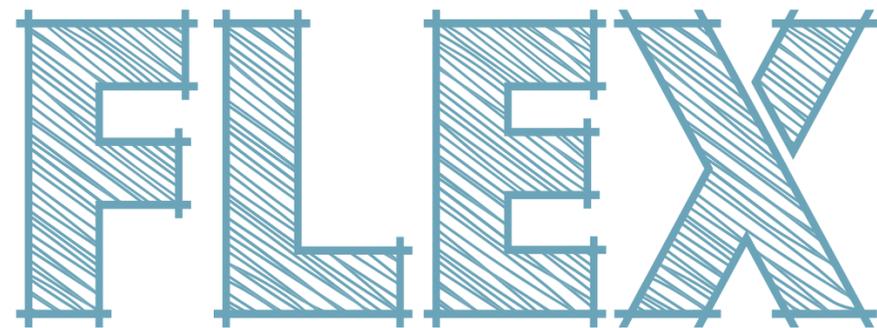


# CONNECTING *Talent to Opportunity*

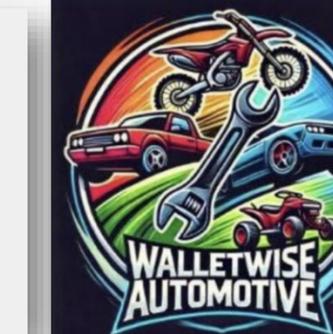


**CHEROKEE**  
*Summer Internship Program*

## *Growing Local Talent Through Entrepreneurship*



FOUNDATIONAL  
LEADERSHIP &  
ENTREPRENEUR  
X-PERIENCE



# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

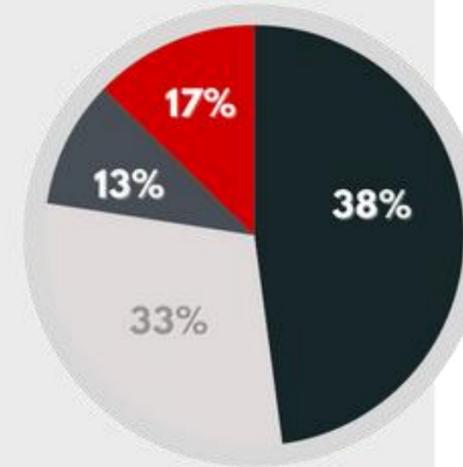
## *Elevating Skilled Professions*

**4,489** CCSD PARTICIPANTS

**22,180** STATEWIDE PARTICIPANTS

### PLANS AFTER GRADUATION

- TECHNICAL COLLEGE
- STRAIGHT TO WORK
- NOT SURE
- 4-YEAR UNIVERSITY



### TOP 5 CAREER INTERESTS

HEALTHCARE TECH

WELDER

ELECTRICIAN

COMPUTER PROGRAMMER

AUTOMATION/ROBOTICS

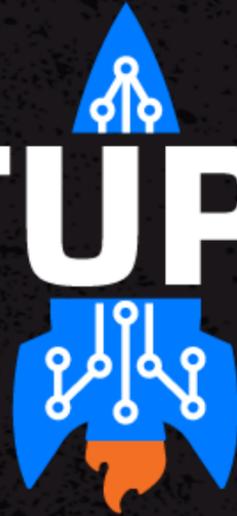


**BE PRO BE PROUD GEORGIA**  
**BEPROBEPROUDGA.ORG**

# COMMUNITY *Behind the Camera*



# STARTUP CHEROKEE



Where innovative ideas get a fresh start.

Our mission is simple – to make launching and scaling ventures more accessible and easier to navigate for entrepreneurs of all stages by connecting them to the education, resources, and community they need.

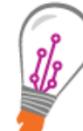


TEAM-BASED  
BUSINESS  
MENTORING



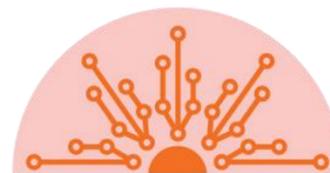
THE  
CIRCUIT

BUDGET-FRIENDLY COWORKING  
SPACE

LAUNCH PAD 

TRANSFORMATIVE BUSINESS STRATEGY  
BOOTCAMP

FRESH START  
MORNINGS



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN EDUCATIONAL  
PRESENTATIONS

# **BUILDING** *On a Strong Foundation*



**“We are so happy to have found the support that Cherokee County offers for small businesses. Having started our journey at home during COVID, we really didn’t start out with a community. Through the Cherokee Office of Economic Development and the amazing programs they offer, we have gained more than just resources – we have gained a community of supportive and engaged small businesses.”**

*– Ericka Axelsson, Inventor & Chief Cloud Maker at The Cloud Makers, former Fresh Start Mornings presenter, LaunchPad Bootcamp graduate, and North Atlanta Venture Mentoring Service participant*



# A FRESH *Look*

CHEROKEE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF Cherokee By Choice

Cherokee By Choice | Locate & Expand | Key Business Sectors | About | Contact | Q

## CHEROKEE *By Choice.*

930 504.3 RAILROAD DRIVE

This screenshot shows the top portion of the Cherokee Economic Development website. It features a navigation bar with the organization's name and logo on the left, and a menu with links for 'Cherokee By Choice', 'Locate & Expand', 'Key Business Sectors', 'About', and 'Contact' on the right. The main visual is a large image of an industrial factory interior with workers and machinery. Overlaid on the bottom left of this image is the text 'CHEROKEE By Choice.' in a mix of bold sans-serif and script fonts. At the bottom of the image, there is a blue graphic element with white text that reads '930 504.3 RAILROAD DRIVE'.

CHEROKEE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF Cherokee By Choice

Cherokee By Choice | Locate & Expand | Key Business Sectors | About | Contact | Q

## LOCATE & EXPAND in Cherokee

Where strategic location meets boundless opportunity.

### With unmatched connectivity, a skilled workforce, and a thriving business

This screenshot displays the 'Locate & Expand' section of the Cherokee Economic Development website. The navigation bar is identical to the previous screenshot. The hero image is an aerial view of a construction site with several yellow excavators and dump trucks working on a large dirt area. The text 'LOCATE & EXPAND in Cherokee' is prominently displayed in white, with 'in Cherokee' in a smaller font. Below this is a tagline: 'Where strategic location meets boundless opportunity.' At the bottom, a white box contains the text 'With unmatched connectivity, a skilled workforce, and a thriving business' in a bold, dark blue font.

THE CIRCUIT

Work Your Way | Community | Know Before You Go | Contact | RESERVE SPACE

## Powering Innovation, Backed by Community.

The Circuit is more than just a coworking space – it's a place where innovative ideas get a fresh start.

This screenshot shows the header and hero section of 'The Circuit' website. The navigation bar includes the logo and name 'THE CIRCUIT' on the left, and a menu with links for 'Work Your Way', 'Community', 'Know Before You Go', and 'Contact' on the right. A 'RESERVE SPACE' button is also present. The hero text reads 'Powering Innovation, Backed by Community.' in a large, bold, blue font. Below this is a sub-headline: 'The Circuit is more than just a coworking space – it's a place where innovative ideas get a fresh start.' The background image shows a person wearing a hat looking out of a window with a decorative glass pane.

NAV NORTH ATLANTA VENTURE MENTORING SERVICE

Ventures | Mentors | About | News | Contact | Apply

## Team-based mentorship for driven founders in North Atlanta

The North Atlanta Venture Mentoring Service (NAV) offers free, team-based mentorship to ventures looking to scale & grow. The first of its kind in Georgia, NAV is powered by Startup Cherokee and principled & trained by the MIT Venture Mentoring Service.

This screenshot displays the header and hero section of the North Atlanta Venture Mentoring Service (NAV) website. The navigation bar features the NAV logo and name on the left, and a menu with links for 'Ventures', 'Mentors', 'About', 'News', and 'Contact' on the right. A prominent 'Apply' button is located on the right side of the navigation bar. The hero text reads 'Team-based mentorship for driven founders in North Atlanta' in a bold, white font against a blue background. Below this is a paragraph of text: 'The North Atlanta Venture Mentoring Service (NAV) offers free, team-based mentorship to ventures looking to scale & grow. The first of its kind in Georgia, NAV is powered by Startup Cherokee and principled & trained by the MIT Venture Mentoring Service.' The background image is a large, stylized blue 'M' graphic.



# CONNECT *With Us*



[cherokeega.org](http://cherokeega.org)



@CherokeeOED



# STRONG *Beginning to 2026*

**CBBE**  
COMMERCIAL BANK & BUSINESS EQUIPMENT



