



FY25 Q1  
HIGHLIGHTS

# FIRST QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS FISCAL YEAR 2025

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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On the cover: North Georgia’s vast national forest and state parks span from Black Rock Mountain to Cloudland Canyon, with hidden gems like Lula Lake Land Trust (pictured) nestled in between. This protected natural resource in Walker County is a unique asset that not only attracts visitors but also enhances the region’s overall appeal as a vibrant place to live, work, or start a business.



The Augusta Symphony is a fiscal year 2025 grant recipient. Through its education outreach programs, the Symphony organizes an annual free children's concert and performs interactive demonstrations for students.

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Bridge, Project, and Arts Education grants cover 50 counties

Georgia Council for the Arts (GCA) announced that more than \$3.5 million in competitive grant funding will be distributed to 204 nonprofit arts organizations, schools, libraries, and other nonprofit entities across the state. As part of the [first round of grants](#) for this fiscal year, Bridge, Project, and Arts Education grants alone will directly reach 50 counties to deliver meaningful education and arts experiences. In addition to the GCA announcement, recipients were provided a template press release to share their specific plans for the grant with relevant stakeholders.

### 2. Welcoming new Council members

Governor Brian P. Kemp appointed four new members to the Council as well as a new Council Chair, Colt Chambers. The new members will each serve a three-year term: Karla Redding Andrews, Macon; Michele Arwood, Thomasville; Brandy Barker, Carrollton; and Madia Cooper-Ashrifi, Gainesville.

### 3. County leadership group update

While GCA participates in numerous county-level meetings throughout the year, a highlight of the quarter was a presentation at the Leadership Meriwether annual summit, which in conjunction with Arts Meriwether, helps educate future leaders within the region on topics including tourism, arts and education, and film. GCA's presentation included updates on current efforts and highlighted case studies, best practices, and new and developing partnerships that are helping to bolster arts experiences in rural and underserved communities.

# CENTER OF INNOVATION



The Center of Innovation participated in the Regional Leaders Summit (RLS) Sciences Conference, a sub-national organization designed to advance knowledge and cooperation.

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Logistics Forum highlights Gainesville inland port

The Logistics team partnered with the Greater Hall Chamber for a Logistics Forum featuring an update on the Blue Ridge Connector and Hall County infrastructure improvements around the inland port. By extending the Port of Savannah's reach into northeast Georgia, the facility will spur new investments in the region and support industries like heavy equipment manufacturing, food, and retail distribution.

### 2. Cutting-edge food processing technology

As part of a partnership with the University of Georgia (UGA) to explore Individual Quick Freeze (IQF) technology, Center of Innovation team members visited Peach State Kitchens in Milledgeville. One of the few companies in Georgia utilizing IQF, the visit to Peach State Kitchens provided an up-close view and improved understanding of how this technology can aid agriculture producers in extending the shelf life and value of their crops.

### 3. Energy team leads largest-ever group at RLS-Sciences

The Energy Technology team joined representatives from UGA and Georgia Tech at the Regional Leaders Summit (RLS) Sciences Conference in Québec, the most diverse Georgia delegation to attend since joining RLS-Sciences. This network helps advance international science cooperation among seven regions, including Québec, Bavaria, and Western Cape, in addition to the State of Georgia. The team presented on the evolution of Tech Square in Atlanta, highlighting "innovation districts" and the value of partnerships in driving innovation.

GEORGIA NO. 1 STATE  
FOR FILM & TELEVISION  
TWO YEARS RUNNING  
Business Facilities Magazine State Rankings

273

NUMBER OF COMBINED  
PRODUCTIONS FY24

\$2.6B

ESTIMATED DIRECT SPEND  
OF PRODUCTIONS FY24



GDECD's Marketing and Communications team developed the above brand image, and others throughout this report, as part of a cohesive strategy to deliver recent industry news.

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

1. No. 1 State for Film Production

Georgia earned the No. 1 State for Film & Television Production for the second year in a row from Business Facilities Magazine, demonstrating the state's competitive advantages in the industry. In spite of a union work stoppage at the start of the fiscal year, productions brought a total of [\\$11 billion in direct spend](#) to Georgia over the last three years, supporting thousands of industry jobs and small businesses.

2. Film production, tourism education at Governor's Tourism Conference

The Film Office led a panel discussion at the Tourism team's annual conference for Georgia's travel and hospitality industry. Local film offices and the state's Camera Ready Program manager provided insights to destination marketers on how to work with productions, promote their locations, and navigate permitting, as well as how to leverage sites as travel destinations and harness the long-term economic benefits of film tourism.

3. Sundance Film Festival bid strengthens partnerships, highlights opportunities

The Film Office supported Georgia's bid for the Sundance Film Festival, and helped host the Sundance team during their visit to Atlanta. While Atlanta was not among the final three cities, Sundance's serious consideration strengthened partnerships, spread greater awareness of Georgia's status as a culturally rich, world-class event venue, and highlighted opportunities for future collaboration.

# GLOBAL COMMERCE

SMART GROWTH. GREATER HEIGHTS.  
ENDLESS OPPORTUNITY.

GEORGIA'S ECONOMY IN ACTION

429

FACILITIES

\$20.3B

INVESTMENT

26,900

NEW JOBS



The Global Commerce team continued to demonstrate how Georgia's business-friendly environment fosters sustainable and smart growth to companies looking to locate or grow in the state.

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Georgia maintains economic momentum

During fiscal year 2024, Georgia sustained its [statewide economic momentum](#) and maintained its title as the [Top State for Business](#) by Area Development magazine for the 11th consecutive year. Demonstrating statewide growth across a diverse industry mix, 83% of expansions and new locations are on their way to communities outside Atlanta's primary 10-county region.

### 2. E-mobility moves forward

Hyundai Motor Group showcased the 2025 IONIQ 5, which will be the first vehicle produced at Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America (HMGMA). Suppliers Ajin Georgia, DAS North America, and Seohan Auto Georgia opened their facilities in anticipation of HMGMA's start of production. European-based companies also marked new milestones in Georgia: [Ritz Transformers](#) announced its new manufacturing facility, and Aurubis cut the ribbon on its multimetal recycling facility in Augusta.

### 3. Aerospace in focus

Georgia remains focused on growing its robust aerospace industry, supporting the industry through a variety of methods outlined in a recent GDEcD marketing blog post, "[Georgia: A Premier Destination for Aerospace and Defense Opportunities.](#)" Global Commerce team members also attended the Farnborough International Airshow and Singapore Airshow to advance relationships with aerospace companies.

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## IRELAND AND GEORGIA: PARTNERS IN PROSPERITY

IRELAND TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN 2023\*

**TOP 11**  
TRADE PARTNER

**\$5.5B**  
TOTAL TRADE

**\$272M**  
INVESTMENT



\*Trade data from CY2023 Investment data FY2010-2024.

Ireland is one of Georgia's top trade partners with a strong connection between the Port of Belfast and Port of Savannah.

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Welcoming new Belgian Consul General

Belgian Consul General Katherine Raeymaekers began her tenure in September. She met with Commissioner Pat Wilson and the International Relations team to discuss how to enhance economic ties as well as explore new growth opportunities. With nearly 100 Belgian companies thriving in Georgia, and many Georgia-based businesses finding success in Belgium, both parties are eager to build on this prosperous relationship. The state also welcomed ambassadors from Australia and Argentina as part of efforts to forge new economic opportunities between Georgia and the respective countries.

### 2. Ireland mission highlights logistics, tech

In August, Commissioner Wilson and business representatives traveled to Ireland for an economic development mission focused on areas such as logistics and tech. In addition to meetings in Dublin, a highlight included a tour of the Port of Belfast, where officials discussed how the Georgia Ports Authority and Belfast could better collaborate. Leading Irish and Georgia fintech companies participated in a roundtable discussion with the Georgia delegation on how to further transatlantic connectivity and international relationships.

### 3. Additional European investment opportunities

Commissioner Wilson and a small GDEcD delegation met with several Czech companies as part of a business development mission to the region. Informative meetings with company leaders help identify ways the state can further support international businesses growing in Georgia.



Governor Kemp celebrated the state's unprecedented visitation growth across all regions of the Peach State over the last two years.

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Breaking tourism records for second year straight

At the 2024 Georgia Governor's Tourism Conference, Governor Kemp announced that Georgia [broke tourism records](#) for the second year in a row and maintained its No. 5 market share ranking nationwide, for the fourth consecutive year in 2023. A record 171 million visitors spent \$43.6 billion on Georgia's hotels, restaurants, and local businesses. This visitation generated \$79.7 billion in total economic impact and supported 463,483 jobs statewide.

### 2. Visitor Information Center activation inspires future travel

Georgia's nine Visitor Information Centers hosted Explorer Days in July, a quarterly visitor appreciation event that engages travelers with interactive experiences and special offers, motivating them to plan future trips to Georgia. Statewide, the team interacted with over 4,200 visitors and distributed nearly 2,800 travel guides while driving traffic to the Explore Georgia website for travel ideas and inspiration.

### 3. Hurricane Preparedness Plan updates

In preparation for the 2024 hurricane season, GDEcD strengthened its Hurricane Preparedness Plan. The plan is intended to prepare GDEcD staff - including the Atlanta Office and Visitor Information Centers - to respond to a hurricane and ensure tourism destination partners in the state are informed and aware of emergency plans in a timely and effective manner. In accordance with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, it outlines policies and procedures, with an emphasis on safety, awareness, and preparedness for staff, partners, and travelers/evacuees.





Georgia's delegation to the Southeastern United States and Canadian Provinces (SEUS-CP) Conference included small businesses that met with potential buyers.

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Strengthening business opportunities with Canada

Georgia companies connected with potential buyers and suppliers from Canadian provinces and southeastern states at the annual SEUS-CP Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi. At the two-day forum, small business joined in the B2B matchmaking program for meetings with Airbus, The Coca-Cola Company, and others. Governor Kemp led Georgia's delegation, supporting Georgia's small business community and fostering continued economic growth for the state.

### 2. Introducing exporting to Georgia businesses

The Trade team's close partnership with UGA's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) delivers comprehensive programs to grow Georgia's export community. A key example is the Trade team's recent participation in the annual ExportGa program, which helps local businesses enter global markets. ExportGa attendees often become Trade clients. As a result of a previous ExportGa program, the Trade team met [Teverra](#), a technology firm focused on sustainable energy, and helped the company identify new markets such as South America.

### 3. Ideas exchanged at SIDO Best Practices Conference

The Trade team attended the State International Development Organization (SIDO) Best Practices and Training Forum. The national organization gathers annually to facilitate networking and learning opportunities in the international trade world. The conference includes updates to federal regulations and gives state delegations a chance to discuss best practices regarding exports, business development missions, and foreign direct investment (FDI) recruitment.



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