

# BRIEFING BOOK



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FY25 Q2

# BRIEFING BOOK

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
SECOND QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS, FISCAL YEAR 2025

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On the cover: Rich in arts and culture, Augusta has been welcoming guests since 1736 and continues to do so with artistic and historic points of interest. The city's downtown features a mural celebrating public art and James Brown in the birthplace of the Godfather of Soul.



The Governor's Awards for the Arts and Humanities celebrate the people and organizations that bolster Georgia's thriving creative industries.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Governor's Awards celebrate community leaders

Eight Georgians and two organizations were honored at the [Governor's Awards for the Arts and Humanities](#). An awards ceremony at the State Capitol presented in partnership between Georgia Council for the Arts and Georgia Humanities recognized honorees for their community involvement, historical preservation work, and long-term dedication to arts and humanities education. Members of the Georgia-based Consular Corps were among the attendees at the event, underscoring how Georgia's diverse arts community and culture contribute to the state's success. Learn more about the awardees [here](#).

### 2. Grants provide community support

GCA announced that 69 entities in 51 counties will receive more than \$1.4 million in funding as part of the fiscal year 2025 Vibrant Communities and Cultural Facilities grant awards. Grantees will use this support to repair spaces, protect heritage, and bring [new opportunities to their communities](#). Combined with grants from the first quarter, a total of 369 recipients in 152 counties were awarded almost \$5 million in FY25.

### 3. Statewide art collection tour to launch

Ten communities will host a traveling exhibition of works from [Georgia's State Art Collection](#). The first showing will open on February 3 in Euharlee, where the exhibit will be on display for six weeks. Showcasing additional works from regional artists, the exhibition will encourage arts and cultural activities that celebrate the local community and spur tourism. Each location received a grant and a marketing toolkit with tips on maximizing their reach, including a teacher's guide that connects the exhibit with State education standards.

# CENTER OF INNOVATION



The Aerospace team partnered with Aerospace Tech Week Americas 2024 to bring the event to Atlanta and highlighted ongoing work in Advanced Air Mobility (AAM).

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Celebrating 'Manufacturing Month'

The Center participated in the 13th annual Next Generation Manufacturing Signature Event in Atlanta. GDEcD Commissioner Pat Wilson provided industry leaders an overview of the Georgia Made® program and the benefits of manufacturing in the state, and Executive Director David Nuckolls provided an update on the Center's initiatives. Held during Manufacturing Month, the event explores best practices and innovations shaping the future of Georgia's manufacturing ecosystem.

### 2. Inaugural logistics and supply chain forum

The Logistics team partnered with World Trade Center Savannah and Georgia Southern University to launch the Savannah Operational Logistics Value Exchange (SOLVE) forum, a one-day event that brought key members of the logistics and supply chain industry together for collaboration and discussion. Attendees heard insights on risk management, best practices for enhancing supply chain efficiency, and leveraging strategic partnerships to solve complex logistics challenges.

### 3. Growing Georgia's AgTech ecosystem

The AgTech team traveled from Griffin and Metter to Jekyll Island and Vidalia, engaging with businesses and community stakeholders and increasing awareness of resources to support growth and innovation in Georgia's largest industry. At the Georgia Farm Bureau's annual convention, the team connected directly with all aspects of the industry. They also joined in celebrating new efforts to drive rural development at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Greater Vidalia Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.



Farrelly brothers' comedy "Dear Santa" was filmed in Atlanta and released on Paramount+ in November.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Georgia shines in 'Dear Santa'

Starring Jack Black, holiday comedy movie "Dear Santa" filmed around Atlanta in spring 2023, including Gas South's 700-seat theater in Duluth. The production hired 468 local crew, 61 security personnel, and more than 900 extras during filming. In addition, more than \$515,000 was spent on catering, \$435,000 on construction, and \$182,900 on lodging. An [Explore Georgia blog](#) features this new release as well as other hit Georgia-lensed holiday movies.

### 2. Enhancing film tourism

Film Office Director Lee Thomas spoke about how film is bringing prosperity to communities in a virtual panel discussion led by tourism research group Future Partners. Future Partners is also working with GDECD's Film, Tourism, and MarCom teams on a study of Georgia film tourism and film travelers' desires, motivations, and priorities. Study insights will be utilized to create a data-driven approach to leveraging Georgia's film tourism product.

### 3. Helping communities attract productions

Thomas spoke directly to Georgia communities looking to attract more films and television shows in a recent edition of Georgia Cities Magazine, a quarterly publication of the Georgia Municipal Association. The [article](#) addressed challenges to drawing productions to locations outside metro areas and ways communities can become more film-friendly through simplified permitting and location assistance.



Since choosing Macon in 2017, Irving Tissue has invested approximately \$1.5 billion into the community and created 400 well-paying jobs, with another 100 jobs on the way.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Site development program launches

The [Rural Site Development Initiative \(RSDI\)](#) aimed at fostering industrial growth in Georgia's rural areas launched with its inaugural round of community grants to further prepare sites across the state. By identifying and developing new industrial sites, Georgia is working to maintain its competitive edge. "Georgia has been the No. 1 state for business by investing in our future," said Governor Brian P. Kemp, emphasizing the importance of ready for development sites.

### 2. Metro Atlanta's talent attracts opportunity

AIG and GreenBox Systems announced a combined total of 900 new jobs in the metro Atlanta region. Both attributed their decisions to Georgia's talent, educational institutions, and connectivity. "Our world-class education institutions, incredible [workforce development initiatives](#) like Georgia MATCH and Georgia Quick Start, and our partnership approach are bringing new opportunities for hardworking Georgians to every zip code," said Governor Kemp.

### 3. Manufacturers continue to reinvest

TMC Transformers in Burke County, SOLARCYCLE in Polk County, and [Irving Tissue](#) in Macon-Bibb County are investing a combined total of \$654.2 million to expand their operations in the state, creating more than 860 new jobs. In the company's announcement, Irving Tissue President Robert Irving highlighted "the State of Georgia's commitment to economic prosperity, jobs, and growth."

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



The annual Consular Corps Holiday Reception brings together members from the 75 consulates located in the state to recognize international economic achievements.

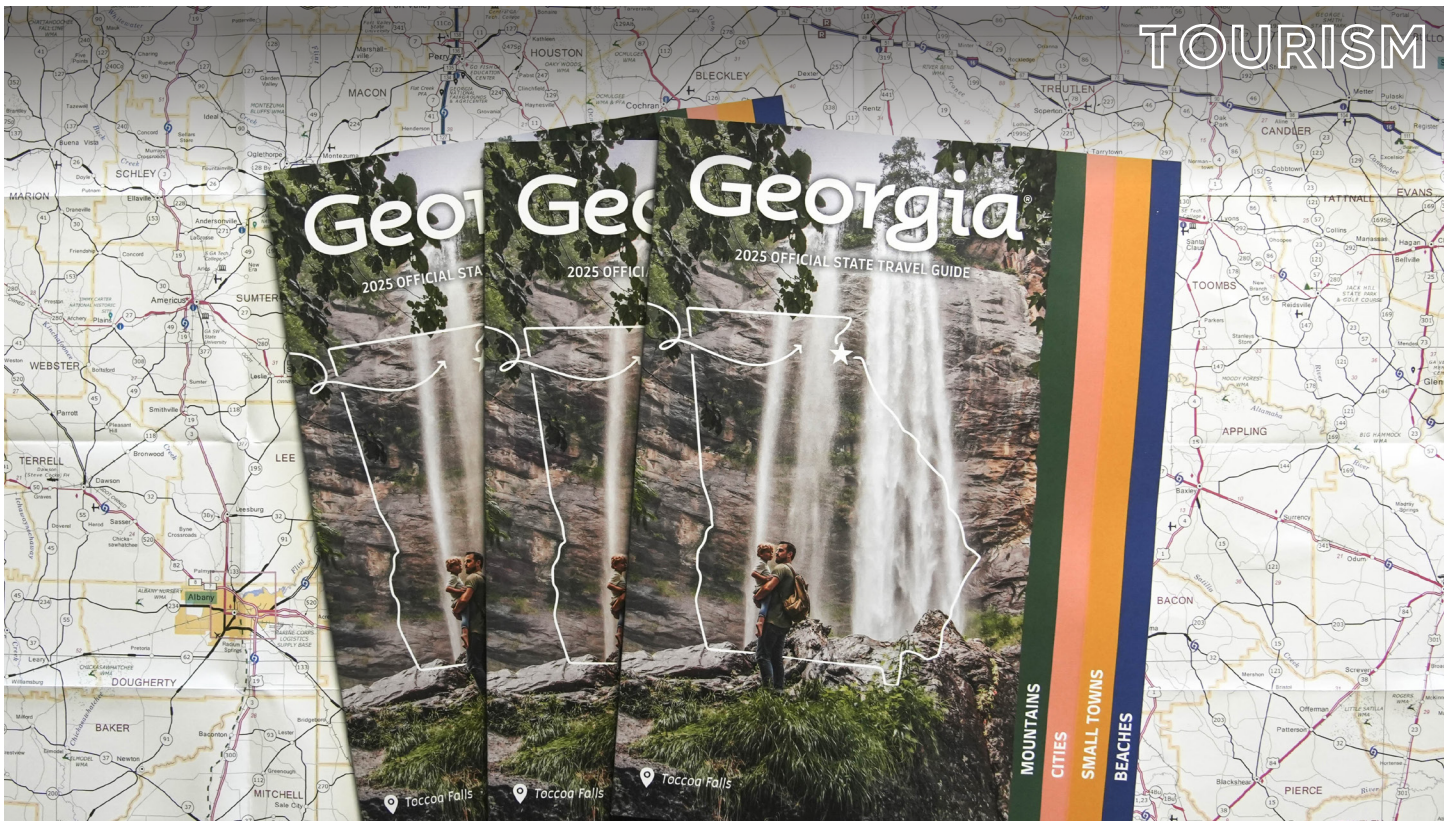
## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Southeast US and Japan relations reinforced

Commissioner Wilson led the Georgia delegation at the 46th annual SEUS-Japan meeting hosted this year in Charlotte, North Carolina. The conference promotes relationship building between Georgia and Japan businesses, dignitaries, and government officials. Japan is one of Georgia's longstanding partners with more than 50 years of economic ties. Japan remains a top international employer as well as investor in the state.

### 2. Consular Corps commemorates 2024

Governor Kemp and First Lady Marty A. Kemp invited members of the Georgia Consular Corps to the Governor's Mansion to attend an annual reflection of the state's economic activities and celebrate international partnerships. Governor Kemp and Commissioner Wilson spoke about the importance of international relationships and how they contribute to [Georgia's continued success](#).



Following two consecutive years of record-breaking tourism in Georgia, the 2025 Travel Guide will continue to inspire visitation and spending across all regions of the state.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. 2025 Official State Travel Guide

The [2025 Travel Guide](#) launched in December, with 130 pages of inspiration for travelers of all interests. The guide features a detailed state map, local tips, and insights into everything from iconic landmarks to hidden gems. New this year, an innovative four-tab cover illustrates the state's varied landscapes and experiences, and represents the key destination types most travelers are interested in visiting: mountains, cities, small towns, and beaches. The free guide is available at Georgia Visitor Information Centers, on [ExploreGeorgia.org](#), and through tourism partners statewide.

### 2. Bringing the world to Georgia

Georgia welcomed over 450 tourism professionals from 18 countries for Travel South's International Showcase in Atlanta, with the goal of driving visitation and spending across the state and the South. At Brand USA's Travel Week in London, the team connected with travel buyers, media, and aviation executives, fostering partnerships and promoting European travel to Georgia. Business conducted at these events contributes to the state's growing international visitation.

### 3. Growing Georgia's presence on the US Civil Rights Trail

Seven partners from across the state joined the Tourism team on a U.S. Civil Rights Connectivity Pilgrimage to Montgomery, Alabama, to learn how this neighbor destination has developed meaningful experiences around their historic sites. The tour provided valuable insights into how Georgia destinations can enhance their own civil rights sites and strengthen their appeal to travelers interested in exploring the state's rich history and cultural heritage.





Georgia's exporters promote the strength of the state's medical industry at an industry trade show in Düsseldorf, Germany.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. Connecting medical companies with global markets

Four Georgia companies interested in expanding into the European market exhibited at Medica in Düsseldorf, Germany. This strategic trade show identified by the Trade team facilitates opportunities for Georgia companies to network with 80,000 participants from 165 countries. GDEcD's European trade representative aided the companies in connecting and meeting with international buyers for their medical technology devices.

### 2. Supporting business growth

Three Trade clients, ProgenaCare Global of Coweta County, CodeMettle of Sandy Springs, and Dr. Noze Best of Atlanta, earned the top three spots at the Metro Export Challenge "[Pitch Day](#)" event, held annually by the Metro Atlanta Chamber. In addition to the winners, all participants selected to compete also receive monetary prizes to support their continued global growth. Competitor TransGlobe shared that the program's initial \$5,000 grant opened doors for the company to earn \$1.5 million in contracts in five months.

### 3. Highlighting a rural business' efforts to go global

As part of GDEcD's mission to support small business exporters from every corner of the state, Trade produced a [new video](#) highlighting longtime GDEcD client Muscadine Products Corporation. Wray, Georgia, based Muscadine Products is a [Small Business ROCK STAR](#) and active Trade client seeking to expand its international sales in Canadian and Southeast Asian markets.



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