

BRIEFING BOOK



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FY25 Q4



BRIEFING BOOK

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

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On the cover: Nestled in the mountains of northwest Georgia, Rising Fawn offers luxury stays at Cloudland at McLemore Resort, waterfall hikes in Cloudland Canyon State Park, lavender picking at Lookout Lavender Farm, and the wonders of nearby Rock City Gardens. The region is also home to Georgia Small Business ROCK STAR winner [American Dakota](#). This native American-inspired rug manufacturer is one of the incredible northwest Georgia companies that contributed to approximately \$5.5 billion in exported goods in 2023.



Recognized for their contributions at the 2025 Georgia Logistics Summit, members of the Logistics Industry Advisory Board provide guidance that's shaping the future of Georgia's logistics ecosystem and are [developing a future-ready workforce](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Georgia Logistics Summit returns to Atlanta

Held in April, the [Logistics Summit](#) convened leaders across the private sector, government, and education to hear insights on the intersection of technology and logistics, receive updates on infrastructure investments, and learn how the state is preparing the future workforce to support growth. Organized by the Logistics team, the event strengthens collaboration and inspires new ideas that keep Georgia businesses competitive on a global scale.

2. Driving AgTech innovation

The AgTech celebrated the groundbreaking of the UGA Grand Farm in Perry alongside state and local partners. A collaboration between the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and Grand Farm, a global leader in AgTech innovation, the 250-acre working farm is an innovation hub for advancing precision agriculture, robotics, and sustainable farming practices. As a founding partner, the Center will help businesses tap into this new resource.

3. Supporting small business success

As part of strategic efforts to support small businesses, team members connected with local entrepreneurs at a Small Business Resource Fair in Fayetteville and shared resources the Center provides to overcome business challenges. Additionally, the team hosted an inaugural meeting of Georgia's first Innovation Support Network, an initiative to connect local leaders and innovation hubs as they accelerate entrepreneurship statewide, support small businesses, and spark new ideas to drive growth across Georgia.

COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS



The [Poet Laureate's Prize](#) winner (pictured holding the award) and finalists were recognized with a private poetry reading at the State Capitol and had commemorative photos taken with Governor Brian P. Kemp.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. More than 260 high schoolers submit poems for statewide prize

Georgia Poet Laureate Chelsea Rathburn announced the winner and finalists of the Poet Laureate's Prize, with the winning poems published in [Atlanta Magazine](#). In partnership with GCA, the poetry writing competition enhances essential skills like creativity and self-confidence. In addition to poetry, the winner and four finalists represent a range of talent, including a computer science researcher, a math tutor, and a tenor saxophonist.

2. Greenville, Waycross host traveling exhibition

"Reimagine: Contemporary Georgia Artists," GCA's traveling art exhibit, continued in west central and southeast Georgia. Waycross' Okefenokee Heritage Center highlighted the exhibit during its 50th anniversary celebrations in May. In Greenville, Artisans on the Square gallery collaborated with the Meriwether County School System and a local environmental conservation organization on a workshop to reuse single-use plastics to create art pieces, enriching arts and science learning.

3. Connecting with K-12 educators

As part of its goal to enrich education in the state, GCA promotes participation in Georgia's literary programs for high school students. Recent efforts include presenting to educators at the Woodruff Arts Center Educator Convening and attending Georgia LitLink 2025, the state's literary conference dedicated to classroom teachers. New GCA-branded one-pagers provide the complete picture of GCA's [arts education resources](#), from grants to the Teaching Artists Registry.



Newly enacted updates to Georgia's Film Tax Credit language will help keep Georgia competitive by addressing industry changes and strengthening administrative oversight.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Film tax credit updates address evolving industry needs

In addition to streamlined audit procedures, [two bills recently signed into law](#) by Governor Kemp will modernize Georgia's tax credit application process and reinstate a tax credit for post-production companies. "Georgia, like the rest of the production world, has experienced some bruising years recently, and we've all worked hard to ensure that any issues within our control have been addressed," said Georgia Film Office Director Lee Thomas. "Georgia's film tax credit continues to be reliable and strong, and we are looking forward to keeping Georgia rolling."

2. Peabody Awards reinforce Georgia's film legacy

Established by the UGA Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication in 1940, the 85th Peabody Awards celebration was held in Los Angeles in June. Members of the Film team joined UGA and industry peers at the event, underscoring the state's long history of supporting and shaping the film industry in Georgia and beyond.

3. 'Georgia Exclusives' videos highlight state's advantages

As part of requirements for productions seeking an additional 10% film tax credit, producers, actors, set designers, and directors are sharing why they choose Georgia again and again in exclusive, behind-the-scenes video submissions. A social media campaign to share the videos highlights what big names are saying about Georgia – including advantages like friendly crew, high quality of life, and a variety of locations – to the Georgia Film Office's Facebook audience that's more than 90,000 strong.



Georgia connected with hundreds of international companies seeking to invest in the U.S. market during the four-day SelectUSA Investment Summit.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. The Georgia Advantage on display

The advantages of investing in Georgia were on full display at the 2024 SelectUSA Investment Summit, an economic development trade show dedicated to international companies planning to invest in the U.S., and in the Fortune 500 edition (June/July) of Fortune magazine. Georgia's workforce solutions, connectivity, and business-friendly environment leverage the state's diverse landscapes and collaborative spirit to foster opportunity in every corner of the state.

2. Rural Site Development Initiative grants awarded to 10 communities

The second round of Rural Site Development Initiative grants, supporting site improvements and offsetting the costs of the "Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development" site certification process, were [awarded to 10 communities](#) across the state. The program empowers Georgia's rural communities to develop industrial sites that will maintain the state's capacity for economic growth and its competitive edge.

3. Mercedes-Benz growing Georgia footprint

Mercedes-Benz is centralizing and uniting key corporate functions in metro Atlanta. The company [will move up to 500 jobs](#) to the existing Mercedes-Benz facility, known as "1MB," in Fulton County, and a nearby state-of-the-art Research & Development (R&D) facility. The automotive sector remains in focus for Georgia as the state maintains its place on the cutting-edge of the mobility industry.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CANADA AND GEORGIA: PARTNERS IN PROSPERITY

CANADA TRADE AND INVESTMENT*

TOP 5
TRADE PARTNER

\$13.9B
TOTAL TRADE

\$2.1B
IN INVESTMENT**



*Trade data from CY24. **As of FY24.

Outgoing Consul General Anat Sultan-Dadon attended the meeting with incoming Consul General Eitan Weiss.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Governor Kemp reinforces trade relations with Canada

In June, Governor Brian P. Kemp led an economic mission to Georgia's top trade partner, Canada. In Toronto, Kemp met with Ontario Premier Doug Ford to discuss economic opportunities between the allies. In New Brunswick, Kemp led the Georgia delegation at the Southeastern US-Canadian Provinces (SEUS-CP) trade and investment conference in Saint John. Established in 2007, Georgia is a founding member of the SEUS-CP Alliance.

2. Georgia welcomes incoming Israeli Consul General Eitan Weiss

GDEcD was pleased to welcome Mr. Eitan Weiss, the incoming Consul General of Israel to the Southeastern U.S., to the State of Georgia. Georgia and Israel share a strong economic relationship, built on shared interests in innovation, trade, and investment. The Consul General expressed enthusiasm for continuing this successful partnership and exploring new opportunities with the state.



Georgia destinations of all sizes and from every corner of the state promoted Georgia to international travel buyers at IPW.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Georgia leads largest statewide delegation at IPW 2025

In June, Explore Georgia and 15 destination partners from across the state exhibited at IPW, the U.S. Travel Association's premier inbound international travel trade show. At the event in Chicago, Explore Georgia launched its 2026 FIFA World Cup marketing campaign with an experiential booth designed to engage attendees and convince them why Georgia is the ultimate home base for traveling fans. Georgia's delegation met with more than 400 buyers and 150 journalists worldwide, driving future visitation across the state.

2. National Travel and Tourism Week

During US Travel's National Travel & Tourism Week in May, Georgia celebrated the power of travel to drive economic growth, create opportunity, and strengthen communities. The state's nine Visitor Information Centers hosted an Explorer Days event to thank travelers for choosing Georgia and inspire them to return. The Tourism and Marketing & Communications teams also [highlighted the growth of the state's meetings and conventions industry](#), a segment of travel that is essential to Georgia's success.

3. Highlighting northwest Georgia tourism offerings

McLemore Resort continues to be featured across Explore Georgia's marketing channels, including being named one of the state's "Best Trips of 2025;" national advertisements in AFAR, Travel + Leisure, and Magnolia Journal; and promotions in blog, newsletter, social media, and press release content, generating millions of impressions for the destination. Thanks to Georgia's Tourism Development Act, this project created hundreds of jobs in northwest Georgia and a marketing opportunity to increase Georgia's appeal as a travel destination.



Markets supported by Georgia's International Representatives accounted for 66% of Georgia's exports in 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Georgia's International Representatives help Georgia exporters

The 2025 International Representatives Week took place May 5-9. In addition to participating in training and familiarization sessions, Georgia's International Representatives met with Georgia-based small businesses interested in exporting to their respective markets. These representatives aid hundreds of businesses each year in identifying new markets for their products and services, strengthening Georgia's economy by creating new streams of income for local businesses.

2. Aviation companies take flight at MRO Americas

The Trade team made it possible for six Georgia companies to exhibit at the largest aviation maintenance gathering in the world, MRO Americas, this year in Atlanta. Returning Trade client and exhibitor Aventure Aviation recently received the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Exporter of the Year award for the Southeast and estimates that more of 65% of its sales are exports. This is the second straight year that a Georgia company has earned an Exporter of the Year honor from SBA.

3. Spotlights on success: Georgia flavors with global reach

Shining a light on the success of Georgia-based companies promotes the hard work and efforts of Georgia exporters and encourages other Georgia-based small businesses to consider exporting as a way to increase sales and diversify their customer base. GDECD worked with Trade clients [Rome-based Hydro Dynamics](#), [Muscadine Products Corporation in Irwin County](#), and [River City Beverages in Columbus](#) to tell the stories of their exporting experiences.



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