



2026 Program of Work (Approved 11.18.25)

Economic Development Division

Business Development Committee

Chair: Marcy Cirlot Kernea, Ringgold Telephone Company

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO

Goal: Develop programs to further the growth of our member businesses and help new businesses identify state and local resources for business startups. Provide information and training to enhance local workforce development. Support and promote funded tourism entities in Ringgold and Fort Oglethorpe and maintain the Regional Visitor Information Center.

- Chamber President will continue to serve as an ex-officio member of the Catoosa County Economic Development Authority and participate in Existing Industry Visits with the Catoosa County EDA, NW Georgia Joint Development Authority, and the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
- Promote the Catoosa Connects brand and lead in marketing efforts to promote and attract Catoosa County businesses while further developing the “Shop Local” program.
- Develop a resource for entrepreneurs and new business owners of “Business 101 - How to Start and Grow a New Business in Catoosa County”. Promote available resources for business startups.
- Workforce Development - Connect employers to local sources of student graduate workforce candidates by working with Catoosa College and Career Academy and the 3 Catoosa County high school work-based learning programs.
- Develop a Manufacturing Council for local manufacturers and/or participate in Catoosa County Government programs for manufacturers.
- Enhance Business University Lunch and Learn offerings for members and non-members, including Artificial Intelligence, Canva, Customer Service, Human Resources, Budgeting, Google Ads, Marketing/Social Media, Advertising/Digital Marketing, Emotional Intelligence, Multi-Generational Workforce, Quickbooks Seminars, SBA Loans/Programs, & Start Up Businesses.
- Continue participation with the Thrive Regional Partnership and Greater Chattanooga Economic Partnership to enhance regional collaboration across county and state lines.
- Continue to develop partnerships with other Chambers in Georgia Region 1, North Georgia, and the Greater Chattanooga area.

Community Service Division

Education Partners and Workforce Development

Chair: Marissa Brower, Catoosa County Public Schools College & Career Academy CEO

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO

Goal: Work in partnership with Catoosa County Public Schools, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, and Dalton State College, as well as engage the local business community to participate in preparing the workforce to meet Catoosa County industry needs.

- Continue to partner with the Catoosa County Public Schools College and Career Academy, promoting partnerships for student experiences and internships in local business environments that may result in future workforce for those companies.
- Plan and hold Project Purpose event for CCPS 12th grade students to train them in soft skills, interviewing skills, resume writing, budgeting, career options, dress for success, and set up tours and interviews to help them identify career opportunities after high school graduation.
- Continue to Partner with the Catoosa County Public Schools to help identify mentors and business partners for the CCPS Partnership Program.
- Partner with the Catoosa County Public Schools and Communities in Schools to provide Chamber member business professionals to work with 9th grade students in each of the three CCPS high schools as part of the RealityU Program, a realistic budgeting program that will help students to learn their individual impact on their future.
- Enhance the Catoosa Young Professionals Program.
- Add “Job Openings” section to Catoosa Connects email newsletter
- Hold annual “Job Fair” to allow area businesses access to local talent

Leadership Catoosa

Chair: Brad Denton, Flegal Insurance

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO

Goal: Enhance the Leadership Catoosa program to create recognized leaders and advocates of civic responsibility, business involvement in the community’s civic and public agenda, the political process, select public policy, and cultivate a pipeline for future Chamber Board of Director members.

- Further improve the quality of Leadership Catoosa as a community awareness program and increase the number of participants. Evaluate and plan Kickoff event in the same location as 2025 or a possible new location for an overnight event.
- Provide Catoosa County Chamber specific information to help participants understand the impact of the Chamber in our area to foster a desire to be a part of the Chamber’s future as a way to be connected in their community.
- Include additional Strategic Leadership training elements and community leaders as speakers.
- Re-engage Leadership Catoosa Alumni with an alumni event and/or an annual Leadership Catoosa Alumni community service event/project.

Membership Enhancement Division

Ambassadors

Co-chairs: Shanda Morton, Reese Enterprises; Russell Fritze, Catoosa Saddle Club

Staff: Debbie Hughes, Membership Coordinator

Goal: Ambassadors function as goodwill representatives at Chamber events and in the community at large, while assisting the Chamber and community partners as needed and requested. The Ambassador program helps to build member participation in the Chamber and provides value-added networking opportunities and services for members.

- Promote Chamber Members through Ribbon Cuttings, Groundbreaking Ceremonies, Catoosa Connects email newsletters, Business Blast emails, Business Spotlight Hosts, Sponsorship Opportunities, Member of the Week, Tourism Partner of the Month, Non-Profit of the Month, Restaurant of the Month, and other programs.
- Continue to host monthly Ambassador Luncheons at area Chamber member restaurants.
- Engage Individual Membership members through the Ambassador program.
- Continue to increase Chamber participation in community events and community volunteering opportunities that promote community and quality of life.
- Continue to coordinate with Chamber member non-profit organizations to provide increased opportunities for Chamber Ambassadors to serve our community.

Member Services

Staff: Debbie Hughes, Membership Coordinator

Marissa Conkle, Communications Specialist

- Continue and enhance social media promotion plan to promote the Chamber, Chamber non-profit organizations, community events and community assets, and all Chamber member businesses.
- Continue new member “Chamber 101” seminars twice per year.
- Produce a New Chamber Member Welcome Video or Email to be sent to new Chamber members immediately upon joining the Chamber, in addition to a letter mailed with info.
- Continue efforts to improve Membership Retention and increase market share.
- Continue to host quality quarterly Catoosa Women’s Networking Luncheons.
- Continue to host quality quarterly Catoosa Men’s Networking Breakfasts
- Continue to hold meaningful and educational Chamber networking events
- Re-evaluate meeting frequency and re-engage participants of the five (5) LEADS groups
- Consider hosting a past Board Chair gathering/event.
- Plan and execute 2026 Member Survey.

Governmental Affairs Division

Legislative Committee

Chair: Marissa Brower, Catoosa County Public Schools

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO

Goal: Be a recognized leader and advocate of legislative and regulatory issues that affect the business community and work toward educating the community on issues, while continuing to improve the relationships with the elected delegation

- Create a strong public policy for local, state and federal issues: Consideration for Strategic Priorities – Education; Workforce; Housing; Infrastructure, including transportation and planning for future wastewater treatment and storm water runoff.
- Host an appreciation dinner for the local commissioner and city council delegations from Catoosa County Government, the City of Ringgold, and the City of Fort Oglethorpe. Attend selected regular meetings of each.
- Act as a liaison between local businesses and legislators with regular meetings, if possible, with local and state representatives.
- Provide opportunities for members to collaborate on community issues and concerns.

Organizational Excellence Division

Amy Jackson, President and CEO and Chamber Executive Board

Administrative

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO

Goal: Create a more efficient framework for the daily operations of the Chamber that will allow the Chamber to grow and provide additional value to members.

- Enhance staff talent development with training opportunities and cross training.
- Maintain staff in a positive work environment w/competitive salary, benefits, & flexibility.
- Hire additional staff as needed as Chamber Member programs and services grow.
- Look at options of adding more benefits for staff in order to be more competitive.
- Maintain US Chamber 3-Star accreditation (received in 2023) and increase to 4 or 5 stars (next re-accreditation is 2028).

Marketing and Public Relations

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO; Marissa Conkle, Communications Specialist

Goal: Continue to implement marketing and communications strategies to promote the Chamber's programs, services and events, as well as Chamber member and community programs, services, and events.

- Update Chamber website as needed to enhance marketing capabilities for Chamber
- Continue to enhance implementation of the Chamber "Catoosa Connects" brand, with testimonials featuring a variety of business people and entities
- Continue social media coverage of Chamber Members and Chamber Events by enhancing the Chamber's use of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Linked In. Add additional video posts and TikTok posts.
- Increase Catoosa Connects email newsletter distribution, open rate, and click rate.
- Continue media trade partnerships to promote Chamber Events and Chamber Members on local television, billboards, radio, newspapers, and magazines.
- Promote and Distribute the Catoosa County Community Guide, available December 2025

Long-Range Planning

Chair: Marissa Brower, Catoosa County Public Schools

Vice-Chair: Brent Williams, Shaw Industries

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO

Goal: Create and publish the Chamber Strategic Plan 2027-2029 in the Fall of 2026

Finance

Chair: Natalie Hunt Levredge, SmartBank

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO; Shirley Watts, Executive Administrative Assistant

Goal: Ensure financial stability of the Chamber by maintaining control through accurate financial statements that monitor collections, cash management, and disbursement. Follow the procedures of the Financial Policies of the Chamber.

- Review the 2027 budget and present for approval to the Board of Directors.
- Maintain a 6-month reserve of Chamber funds.
- Review net financial gain of all programs and events; evaluate cost versus benefit.
- Grow non-dues revenue events.

Signature Events

Staff: Amy Jackson, President and CEO

Celebrate Catoosa Gala & Casino Night Task Force

Chair: Katina Williams, Chasing Down Daydreams Travel

Goal: Organize, plan, and host a successful 2026 Celebrate Catoosa Gala and Casino Night event with changes as needed to ensure increased attendance, participation, and fun, with increased revenue to the Chamber.

Catoosa Golf Classic Task Force

Chair: John Pearce, FirstBank **Vice-Chair:** Andy Johnson, Catoosa County DFCS

Goal: Organize, plan, and host a successful 2026 golf tournament involving members and community, while continuing to meet the goal of a non-dues revenue event.

Showcase Catoosa Business Expo Task Force

Chair: Lacey Cummings, Cadence Bank

Goal: Organize, plan, and host a successful 2026 Showcase Catoosa Business Expo with increased traffic and increased revenue with changes as necessary to benefit the participants.

Run, White and Blue 5K Race (and 1 Mile Fun Run) Task Force

Chair: Geo Mejia, Edward Jones

Vice-Chairs: Ben Friberg, Heritage Funeral Home

Marcy Kernea, Ringgold Telephone Company

Goal: Organize, plan, and host a successful 2026 healthy lifestyle and recreation non-dues revenue community event, celebrating the 250th birthday of the USA. Continue to refine the event for future growth and participation; serve residents, and market to the larger region, including Chattanooga, North Georgia, and Atlanta to increase tourism to our area.