

CHAMBERCONNECT

02

2026

FEB 05 | South Hall Business Coalition

FEB 10 | Small Business Seminar

FEB 17 | Business After Hours

FEB 18 | Economic & Political Forecast

FEB 24 | Business Showcase

FEB 25 | Logistics Forum

Issues Committee



The Greater Hall Chamber's Issues Committee met in January and heard an Education Update from our school systems' superintendents. (L-R) **Will Schofield**, *Hall County School System*; **Dr. Jeremy Williams**, *Gainesville City School System*; Chamber Vice Chair of Government Affairs **David Lee**, *Jackson EMC*; **Tim Evans**, *Chamber*. The Issues Committee meets monthly on topics of interest and importance to our community. The committee will meet on February 18 (9am) at the Chamber with a panel to discuss homelessness in our community. [Email Anna Hester](#) to learn more.

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Tuesday, February 17

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm Brenau

University 340 Green Street |
Gainesville



Join us for Business After Hours at the Jacobs Building at the Gainesville Campus and enjoy a festive and delicious menu provided by Brenau Catering! Meet the College of Business & Communication faculty and hear about the department's new and exciting programs. Come enjoy food, drink and music from Brenau's own WBCX Radio. brenau.edu

Door Prizes | Networking | Cash Prize Drawing

Logistics Forum

Wednesday, February 25

11:30 am Registration/Boxed Lunch

12:00 pm Program

The Boathouse

Lake Lanier Olympic Park

Join us for a panel discussion on the Blue Ridge Connector with updates on surrounding infrastructure improvements. The Blue Ridge Connector is scheduled to open in Spring 2026.



Reservations Required

\$50 Chamber Member

\$60 Non-Member

\$500 Table (seats 8)

Includes Boxed Lunch

Ryan Jackson, 770-532-6206 x 110

rjackson@ghcc.com

Scan to Register



Link [HERE](#) to Register



GREATER HALL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In This Issue

- Meetings & Events
- Member News
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- New Members

From the President & CEO



Tim Evans President & CEO
Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's success is truly a reflection of its engaged members, dedicated staff, and passionate volunteers who work tirelessly every day to strengthen our community.

This year marks the Chamber's 118th anniversary as we continue the tradition of fostering collaboration between business and elected leadership to work together to address the important issues that shape the future of Gainesville-Hall County.

We are proud to offer a range of business programs and events that have become business staples in our community. These events provide invaluable opportunities for networking, professional development, and community engagement.

Last year, we updated how we communicate with you. This issue of *Chamber Connect* marks the one year anniversary of the monthly print-on-demand publication. The purpose of this publication is to keep you informed with timely updates, member news, upcoming events and program recaps.

I am excited about the season ahead for your Chamber, and encourage you to participate. Together, we will continue to build a strong, thriving business community. Thank you for your continued support!



Link [HERE](#) to Register

Whether you're a business owner, a professional looking to expand your network, or a curious community member, this event is your chance to engage directly with local businesses and entrepreneurs. Browse booths, make connections, and see what makes the Greater Hall business community thrive.

INFO

Chamber Member Exhibit \$350

Non-Member \$550

No Entry Fee & Open to the Public

Ellie Cardin, 770-532-6206 x 115

ecardin@ghcc.com

Discover the heartbeat of our local economy at the Business Showcase where businesses from across the region come together to highlight their products, services and innovations.

Tuesday, February 24

2:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Gainesville Civic Center

Showcase Social

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

You'll not want to miss the exciting Showcase Social to keep the conversations going over networking food and drinks!



Small Business



Over 80 Chamber members attended the **Marketing Workshop** on January 21 at the Brenau Downtown Center led by the **Forum Communications** team with tips and strategies on how small businesses can maintain a consistent, authentic brand in an AI-driven environment. (L-R) Forum's **Nick Kastner**, *Director of Brand & Digital Strategy*, **Katie Dubnik**, *President*, and **Missy Burgess** of **Lanier Islands Resort** (event sponsor).

Small Business Seminar Tuesday, February 10

8:15 - 8:30 am Networking | 8:30 - 9:30 am Program
In Person at the Chamber or via Zoom
Preparing for an OSHA Inspection

Join us for a practical session designed to help small businesses understand OSHA regulations and strengthen workplace safety. Experts **Jacob Hansen**, **Matt Thompson** and **Jared Bostrom** of **Burnette Insurance Agency** will walk you through key compliance requirements and introduce helpful tools to support ongoing safety efforts. Whether you're new to OSHA standards or looking to refresh your knowledge, this session offers clear, actionable guidance. Empower your team with the insights needed to stay compliant and protect your workforce. Burnette, an Independent Insurance Agent, represents a carefully selected group of financially strong, reputable insurance companies. burnetteinsurance.com

No Charge for Chamber Members | [Register Here](#)

Small Business Council Sponsors

Anderson Computer Network Services

**Caldwell Electrical Contractors • Cochran Brothers Electric
Gainesville Mechanical • Small Business Access Partners**

Small Business of the Month



Tim Evans, Chamber; **Darin Workman**, Spherion Staffing & Recruiting; Chamber Chair-Elect **Melissa Tymchuk**, Northeast Georgia Health System.



For 27 years, Spherion Staffing & Recruiting has been dedicated to supporting and strengthening local businesses in Hall County and the surrounding region. A pioneer in the staffing industry, Spherion provides companies with the workforce solutions they need while helping people find jobs and build careers. The Spherion team takes pride in building lasting partnerships, understanding the unique needs of our community, and helping local companies thrive by connecting them with exceptional talent. Their recent recognition as the “Best Staffing Agency in Hall County” is a testament to Spherion's unwavering commitment to the businesses and the people they serve.

spherion.com

Economic & Political Forecast Wednesday, February 18 ^{New Date!}

8:30 am **Lanier Technical College**
Ramsey Conference Center

Join us for a panel discussion with local business and political leaders on the current economic and political climate and the effects on business and our community.



Matt Hanley, MD
NEGA Health System



Frank Norton, Jr.
The Norton Agency



Todd Donaldson
Carroll Daniel



Ryan Owen
Kubota

Registration Required | Reservations from Jan 27 are transferred
\$15 Chamber Member | \$25 Non-Member | \$200 Table (seats 10) Ryan
Jackson 770-532-6206 x 110 | [Email Ryan](#) | [REGISTER HERE](#)

Meetings & Events

Marketing Workshop



Many thanks to the team at **Forum Communications** for presenting the Marketing Workshop in January and to sponsors **Brenau University** and **Lanier Islands Resort**. The Forum Team (L-R) **Josh Syler**, *Digital Analyst*; **Morgan George**, *Digital Account Manager*; **Katie Dubnik**, *President*; **Brooke Burt**, *Senior Creative Strategist*; **Glen Kyle**, *Account Manager*; **Nick Kastner**, *Director of Brand & Digital Strategy*. forumspeaks.com

Certified Small Business Partners



Greater Hall Chamber Certified Small Business Partners were recognized at the Chamber's January Board meeting. These individuals attended six or more Small Business Seminars in 2025. (L-R, seated) **Amy Metz**, *Artifice Foundation/Dance for Joy*; **Beth Buffington Curry**, *EMW, Inc.*; **Marsha Hopkins**, *Hopkins Associates*; **Chris Arrington**, *DoubleCakes by Chris*; **Rung Robertson**, *DBR Associates & Industrial Repair*; **Milennys Kight**, *Serma-vica*. (L-R, back) Chamber Small Business Council Chair **Steve Naughton**, *Enterprising Solutions/SCORE*; **Jessica Cordova**, *Office Pros*; **Oliver McClellan**, *City of Flowery Branch*; **Andrew Davenport**, *A New Veteran*; **Terry Merck**, *American Yazaki*; **Rebecca Thurman**, *Georgia Mountain Food Bank*; **Madison Criddle**, *Gainesville Mechanical*.

February 2026

Wednesday, February 4

Health & Wellness Seminar

9-10 am | Chamber or via Zoom

Thursday, February 5

South Hall Business Coalition

9-10 am | UNG | Oakwood

Friday, February 6

Economic Development Council

8:30 am | Jackson EMC | Gainesville

Tuesday, February 10

Small Business Seminar

8:15 - 9:30 am | Chamber or via Zoom

Wednesday, February 11

Human Resource Council

11:45 am - 1:00 pm

Friday, February 13

Network Over Coffee

9-10 am | Peachtree Orthopedics

Tuesday, February 17

Vision 2030 Board of Directors

11:30 am - 1:00 pm | Chamber

Tuesday, February 17

Business After Hours

5-7 pm | Brenau University

Wednesday, February 18

Economic & Political Forecast

8:30-10 am | Lanier Technical College

Thursday, February 19

Chamber Executive Committee

12 pm | Chamber

Friday, February 20

Arbor Day Celebration

10 am | Elachee Nature Science Center

Tuesday, February 24

Business Showcase

2-7 pm | Gainesville Civic Center

Wednesday, February 25

Logistics Forum

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

The Boathouse | LL Olympic Park

Thursday, February 26

Chamber Board Meeting

12:00 - 1:30 pm

Gainesville Civic Center

Happenings

Putting Your Best Foot Forward



A comprehensive look at foot and ankle health was the subject of the recent **Health & Wellness Seminar** (L-R) **Dr. Morgan Ivey**, Resident, Northeast Georgia Medical Center Graduate Medical Education; **Abby and Zack Loggins**, Big Peach Running Co. Braselton; **Dr. Conor Murphy**, Peachtree Orthopedics; Chamber Health & Wellness Committee Chair **Dr. Dave Westfall**, NGMC GME.

South Hall Business Coalition

Thursday, February 5

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

University of North Georgia
Gainesville Campus

Dr. Michael Shannon, President of the University of North Georgia, The Military College of Georgia (UNG), will present the February program. With some 20,000 students, UNG is one of the state's largest public universities with five campuses united by a single mission focused on academic excellence. Dr. Shannon, a retired U.S. Army officer, joined UNG in 2023 and formerly served as interim chief business officer at the Georgia Institute of Technology. ung.edu

Reservations Required | \$8 Member; \$15 Non-Member | [REGISTER NOW](#)
Info: Ellie Cardin, 770-532-6206 x 115 or ecardin@ghcc.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Tuesday, February 24
Business Showcase 2026
2:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Gainesville Civic Center

Wednesday, March 4
Healthy Hall Awards
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Lanier Technical College

Wednesday, February 25
Logistics Forum
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
The Boathouse at LLOP

Thursday, March 19
Chamber Chase 5K
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Riverside Preparatory Academy

Health & Wellness Seminar

Wednesday, February 4

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

In Person at the Chamber or via Zoom

Hospice & Palliative Care

Join **Dr. Mary Keith**, Medical Director for **Hospice of Northeast Georgia Medical Center**, as she explains what hospice and palliative care truly mean, why these services matter long before the final days, and how **Hospice House** offers peace, comfort and connection for patients and families. Hospice of NGMC is changing the way our community understands end-of-life care, from home-based hospice to the region's first freestanding Hospice House, now under construction in Gainesville. nghs.com/hospice



Mary Keith, MD
Hospice of
Northeast Georgia
Medical Center

No Charge for
Chamber Members
[Register Here](#)



The **South Hall Business Coalition** met at the new **INK children's museum in Oakwood**. (L-R) **Matt Shuler**, Gwinnett Stripers; **Phil Dennis**, Georgia Mountain Food Bank; **Gary McKenney**, Mathnasium of Flowery Branch; **Charlie Brackett**, INK Executive Director; **Brooks Turner**, Stifel; **Anna Hester**, Vision 2030/Chamber. The Coalition will meet on Thursday, February 5 at UNG Gainesville for an update from President Dr. Michael Shannon. [Register Here](#)

HEALTHY HALL

Awards of Excellence

Wednesday, March 4

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lanier Technical College
Ramsey Conference Center

The Greater Hall Chamber's 9th Annual Healthy Hall Awards Program will spotlight those in the healthcare industry making a significant impact on our quality of life through excellence in health and wellness. [Register Here](#) nominate your favorite health & wellness

INFO

Reservations Required Lunch
Included \$30 per person
Table Sponsor \$500 (seats 8)
fdarquea@ghcc.com



Member News

Echols named Chair of State Economic Development & Tourism Committee



Senator Drew Echols (R-49) has been appointed to serve as the **new Chairman of the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee**, stepping down from his role as Senate Floor Leader. Senator Echols served as Chairman of the Senate Study Committee on Making Georgia the #1 Place for Tourism, where he led efforts to evaluate how the state can strengthen opportunities for tourism growth

across all regions. As Chairman, his focus will remain on expanding economic development, supporting existing Georgia businesses, and ensuring our state continues to be the best place in the nation for tourism, entrepreneurship, and job creation. Senator Echols represents Georgia's 49th District, which covers most of Hall County, and continues to operate his family farm, Jaemor Farms, in northern Hall County.

New name for Schlieman Wealth

The Gainesville branch of Sullivan & Schlieman Wealth Management is now operating under the new name, Schlieman Wealth. The firm continues to be led by founding partner **Josh Schlieman**, alongside his brother and partner **Austin Schlieman**, with the same team, philosophy and commitment to client service. Josh Schlieman, who recently was recognized as a Forbes 2025 Best In State Wealth Advisor, established the Gainesville office in 2014. Together, the Schlieman brothers and their team, have more than 65 years of combined experience helping clients thrive while navigating ever-changing financial and investment landscapes. schliemanwealth.com

Humane Society hires new Executive Director



The **Humane Society of Northeast Georgia** (HSNEGA) announced **Sandy Holiday** as new executive director. Holiday brings decades of experience in nonprofit leadership and legal counsel to the role. She most recently led North Fulton Community Charities, which serves over 10,000 individuals through educational programming and workforce development. Prior to that, she served as the Executive Director of Atlanta Children's Shelter for more

than a decade. Holiday also holds her Juris Doctorate from Emory School of Law and provided counsel for both the Georgia Council of Juvenile Court Judges and the state's Division of Public Health. Since 1913, HSNEGA has advanced animal welfare in Northeast Georgia and beyond by providing placement of companion animals, humane education, affordable veterinary care, community outreach, resources for pet owners, statewide initiatives and other opportunities. hsnega.org

- **DCCM** announced that all 14 company divisions (including **Rochester | DCCM**) are transitioning to a single, unified brand as DCCM. The rebrand reflects the evolution into a fully integrated organization, bringing together formerly separate divisions to better serve clients and partners. Headquartered in Houston, Texas, with locations throughout the country, DCCM has 1,100+ employees delivering integrated engineering, surveying, architecture, and consulting services. dccm.com

- The **Hall County Library System** (HCLS) was named the **2025 Georgia Public Library of the Year**. The Georgia Public Library Service noted that under the leadership of Director **Lisa MacKinney**, the HCLS "serves its community, promotes literacy, collaborates with community partners and local schools, and has expanded services despite facing significant financial challenges brought on by the 2008 recession." They recognized the strength of the library's staff, several expansion and renovation projects in the last decade, and the wide range of programs for all ages throughout the year. hallcountylibrary.org

- The **16th Annual Junior Achievement Northeast Georgia Business Hall of Fame** is Thursday, February 5 at the Ramsey Conference Center at Lanier Technical College and will feature the induction of the **Syfan Family** (Jim, Greg and Steve) as well as **Dixie Truelove and Mike Smith**, as they join the prestigious list of laureates who have enriched the Northeast Georgia community through their business leadership and exemplary civic and professional achievements. The honorees are selected based on their business accomplishments as well as their extensive support of our community. Reservations: JAHallofFame.org

- *Newsweek* magazine lists **Brenau University** at #21 in the U.S. on its "**America's Best Colleges for Women**" survey. The magazine evaluated U.S. colleges across four critical categories: leadership, pay and policies, safety, and opportunity. Brenau is ranked second among Georgia's schools behind only Spelman College of Atlanta, which is the #1 overall college in the survey. brenau.edu

- **Lanier Christian Academy** (LCA) in Flowery Branch announces the appointment of **David Roberts** as new head of school effective July 1. The leadership transition follows the retirement of current Head of School **Dwayne Daniels**, who has been with the school since 2013. David Roberts has been serving the LCA school community for 18 years, beginning his career as a teacher and coach in 2008. He later served as Athletic Director and most recently as Director of Advancement. Lanier Christian Academy is a private K-12 Christian school with Christ-centered education, arts, and athletics. lanierchristianacademy.org

Openings & Groundbreakings

789 Nail Bar Salon

Ryan, Andy, Wendy, John, Chin, Nick, Chau, Paul, Theresa, Lee, Jenn and Selena cut a ribbon at **789 Nail Bar Salon** that opened in December 2025. The newly renovated space has evolved from an empty shell into a vibrant destination offering premium nail care and Japanese head scalp treatments. Conveniently located in the heart of Gainesville, they are proud to be a part of this dynamic community and are dedicated to supporting local causes and collaborating with nonprofit organizations to give back. Their mission is to provide exceptional services while making a positive impact on the community. 789nailbar.com



Town Pilates

Kate Odell, Owner and Lead Instructor at **Town Pilates**, cuts the ribbon surrounded by family, fellow instructors, and beloved clients. Located on Main Street in Gainesville, Town Pilates is a boutique equipment Pilates studio offering small-group and private classes. The studio is a welcoming space for mindful movement, building strength and confidence through personalized attention and hands-on assistance by well informed and certified instructors. Town Pilates' community is vibrant and growing! townpilates.com



Bend Bioscience Groundbreaking

Bend Bioscience, a U.S. based small molecule pharmaceutical CDMO, held a groundbreaking in January to mark the start of a 28,000 square foot expansion of its FDA & DEA approved facility in Gainesville that will enhance commercial spray drying capabilities and increase capacity for complex oral solid dose drug products. (L-R) **David Smithwick**, VP, Operations & Site Head, Bend Bioscience; **Tim Evans**, President & CEO, Greater Hall Chamber; **Owen Murray**, CEO, Bend Bioscience; **Sam Couvillon**, former Mayor of Gainesville; **Zack Thompson**, Mayor of Gainesville. The site's expansion reinforces Bend Bioscience's long-term investment in domestic pharmaceutical manufacturing and positions the company to better serve clients across the pharmaceutical development lifecycle – from early formulation through commercial launch. bendbioscience.com



Membership

Welcome New Members

1 Tom Plumber

Phillip Aliberti
(470) 682-2627
1toplumber.com

Animal Medical Care

Pamela Brazwell
(770) 532-1217
vetamc.com

Arthritis Center of North Georgia

Sabrina Jarrett
(770) 531-3711
arthritiscenternorthgeorgia.com

Body of Health and Life

Julie Mills Watson
(770) 403-3794
bodyofhealthandlife.com

Carrington Academy Braselton

Brittany Meeks
(470) 238-0801
carringtonacademy.com

Chris McCall Realty

Michele Lester
(770) 530-9179
mccallproperties.com

Fidus Cyber Security

John Zendrosky
(301) 661-0224
fiduscyber.com

GO Solutions

Jay Glover
(770) 659-5889
gosolutionsllc.net

Goodwin Recruiting

Jessica King
(943) 299-1301
goodwinrecruiting.com

Insight Media Stream

Susan Harkins
(470) 204-3699
insightmediastream.com

Lanier Luxe Self Storage

Kent Henderson
(770) 861-8880
lanierluxestorages.com

Marine Specialties

Kelly Wright
(770) 531-7735
marinespecialties.net

McKibbon Development

Brett Copeland
(404) 395-7188
mckibbondevelopment.com

Men's Wearhouse

Phillip Bennett
(770) 335-7568
menswearhouse.com

North Hall Earthworks

Niles Corey
(770) 983-5020
NHEWorks.com

Rooted Interiors

Kristina McCalla
(561) 703-7289
rootedinteriors.org

Rusken Pkg

Jeremy Joyce
(404) 977-6141
rusken.com

Schooley Mitchell

Ericka Andersen
(470) 310-0031
schooleymitchell/eandersen

Sterling Seacrest Pritchard

Carson Heinen
(770) 533-0203
sspins.com

U.S. Air Force

331st Recruiting Squadron
Auina Arca Hannant
(972) 207-2534
airforce.com

York Aero

Glen York
(470) 750-6788
yorkaero.com

Arbor Day is February 20



Winning Art by 3rd Grader: Amy Nazari, Enota Multiple Intelligence Academy

The **Annual Arbor Day Celebration** is **Friday, February 20** (10am) at **Elachee Nature Science Center**. Open to the public, the event is coordinated by the Greater Hall Chamber and sponsored by the Hall County Master Gardeners, Keep Hall Beautiful and Georgia Power. Festivities include student contest recognition and a joint City of Gainesville/Hall County proclamation with Tree City USA recognition.

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee and the Georgia Forestry Service will recognize winners of the 2026 Arbor Day Student Art and Essay Contest. Dozens of student art and essay entries were submitted with the topic "I Speak for the Trees."

For information on Arbor Day or other Greater Hall Chamber Community Development programs, including Agribusiness programs and Business & Residential Beautification Awards, contact Robin Halstead, Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, 770-532-6206 x 101. Email: rhalstead@ghcc.com

CONTACT US

770-532-6206

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 **Ellie Cardin**
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 **Robin Halstead**
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