



Media Contact:

Kathryn Jones

Vice President, Membership & Operations

kj@councilforqualitygrowth.org

770-813-3381

PRESS RELEASE

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DeKalb CEO Lorraine Cochran-Johnson Delivers Inaugural State of the County Address

Council for Quality Growth & DeKalb Chamber Host 800+ for Sold Out Event at Assembly Studios

DEKLAB COUNTY, GA – On Thursday, May 8, 2025, the Council for Quality Growth and the DeKalb County Chamber hosted 800+ for the sold out 2025 State of DeKalb County Address. The annual address was held over lunch at Assembly Studios Atlanta and presented by Amazon, the American Heart Association, and the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority. Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, elected CEO of DeKalb County Government, delivered her first annual address to the county’s business community. Over 800 Council and Chamber members, elected officials, businesses, residents, county staff, and partners of DeKalb County were in attendance Thursday.

CEO Lorraine Cochran-Johnson unveiled the theme of her address with a video presentation titled ‘Mission: Possible – DeKalb Reimagined.’ Highlighting the change in leadership, the CEO said she “accepted the baton” from former DeKalb County CEO Michael L. Thurmond and is taking the charge on investing in infrastructure, housing, economic development, and public safety.

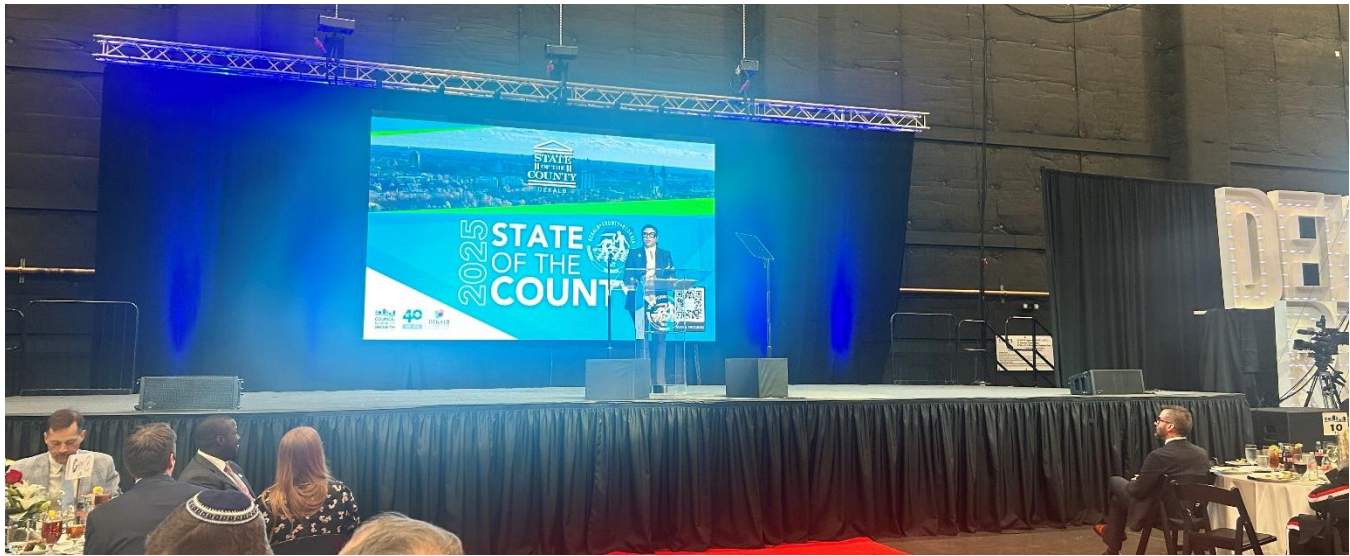
She also noted the county’s need to improve their procurement process, with an emphasis on equity and efficiency, to make sure the county is “committed to ensuring that local, small, and minority- and women-owned businesses are not only aware of procurement opportunities but are equipped to compete for them.” CEO Cochran-Johnson spoke of the importance of an improved procurement process for the advancement of economic development and infrastructure improvement across the county. She expressed desire for making it easier to start a business and invest in DeKalb’s economy, saying, “When DeKalb does business, we want the world to say: ‘They do it right.’”

CEO Cochran-Johnson also touted the county’s recent investment in their water and sewer infrastructure. She described their plan as “a bold, necessary solution—a 10-year water and sewer rate increase of 10% annually, known as the 10x10 Plan.” The plan includes raising water and sewer rates by 10% for the next ten years, totaling a \$4.27 billion investment in the county’s water infrastructure. As the largest infrastructure investment in the county’s history, the plan will help prevent critical system failures, upgrade and expand the county’s water source and treatment plant, and meet the compliance standards of the modified consent decree the county is currently under.

The CEO highlighted the county’s many greenspaces and natural resources. The county is home to both Stone Mountain Park and Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve. Additionally, the county is covered by more than 145 miles of trail network, including the Peachtree Creek Greenway, Arabia Mountain PATH, and the South River Trail. With this widespread network of greenspaces, CEO Cochran-Johnson shared that “residents can walk, bike, and reconnect with nature in their own backyard.”

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The CEO set a bold vision for the County moving forward. She highlighted progress already made in her first 100 days, emphasizing her dedication to transparent and responsible government. She spent her State of the County address commending the work of her executive cabinet and county staff to execute and deliver her vision to voters. Town halls, press releases, internal assessment, and a spending freeze, among other actions, are all ways the CEO and her team executing “Mission Possible” and creating a “DeKalb reimaged.”



The Council for Quality Growth works with DeKalb County and its local municipalities year-round to advocate for our members doing business in those areas. “The Council is proud to partner with DeKalb County in promoting growth and infrastructure investment,” said Michael E. Paris, President & CEO of the Council. “DeKalb is a model of innovation, resilience, and inclusive growth, and the Council remains committed to supporting policies and investments that sustain that momentum,” said Clyde Higgs, Chairman of the Council’s Board of Directors, and President & CEO of Atlanta Beltline Inc. Frankie Atwater, President & CEO of the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce, spoke of CEO Cochran-Johnson, saying “her leadership continues to make DeKalb a dynamic place to live, work, and do business.”

The 2025 State of DeKalb also featured welcome remarks from Justin Campbell, Vice President of Studio Operations for Assembly Studios Atlanta, DeKalb County Presiding Officer Michelle Long Spears, and Mayor Joseph Geierman, City of Doraville. Nick Buford, Southeast Regional Public Policy Lead with Amazon, Peter Pimentel, Community Advocacy Director of Atlanta with American Heart Association, and Jevon Gibson, CEO of the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority, all delivered presenting sponsor remarks. Earl Walker, Chair of the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce, also recognized and thanked each of the sponsors for their attendance. Danny Johnson, Director of the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, delivered remarks on the District’s water efforts, and Martha Revelo, Chief of Intergovernmental Affairs with DeKalb County, recognized



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the elected officials in the audience. The Council for Quality Growth's State of DeKalb County is the last of eight State of the County events held in 2025 and annually convenes the county's business community with its local government bodies, as well as with other local leaders from across the region.

A photo gallery and the recording of the full event will be made in the coming days at <https://www.councilforqualitygrowth.org/news-press/>

About the State of the County/Agency Series

The Council for Quality Growth hosts 10 'State of' events across the region, including 8 counties and 2 agencies. We work in close collaboration with the office of the County Chairs in Cherokee, Clayton, DeKalb, Douglas, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale, as well as with leadership at MARTA and the Atlanta Beltline, to provide a platform for our counties and agency partners deliver an annual update on achievements, projects, and the future that is specifically geared toward the business community and the Council's membership. A full calendar of the Council's 2025 Signature Events, including the State of the County/Agency series, can be viewed and downloaded here: [2025 Programs Calendar](#)

About the Council for Quality Growth

The Council for Quality Growth is a trade organization that works to ensure continued growth and economic success for generations to come by providing advocacy, information, and education to its members. In its 40th year, the Council is committed to the mission of promoting balanced and responsible growth and is proactively involved in the formulation of policy and legislation critical to the growth and development industry. The Council addresses, head-on, strategic economic planning, infrastructure needs, and tough quality-of-life issues throughout the metro Atlanta region and state. For more information, please visit <http://www.councilforqualitygrowth.org>.

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