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PRESS RELEASE

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Rockdale Chair & CEO JaNice Van Ness Delivers 2026 State of the County Address *200+ Attend Annual Event Hosted by Council for Quality Growth*

ROCKDALE COUNTY, GA – On Tuesday morning, April 28, the [Council for Quality Growth](https://www.councilforqualitygrowth.org) hosted the 2026 State of Rockdale County Address in Conyers. The annual address and breakfast, presented by [Jericho Design Group](https://www.jerichodesigngroup.com) and [Volkert](https://www.volkert.com), featured the Chair & CEO JaNice Van Ness' 2nd address. Over 200 members of the Council, elected officials, businesses, residents, county staff, and partners of Rockdale County were in attendance Tuesday.

In her 2026 State of the County Address, Chair Van Ness introduced the theme “Building Tomorrow, Together,” emphasizing unity, progress, and shared responsibility in shaping Rockdale County’s future. Van Ness opened her remarks by recognizing the Council for Quality Growth, event sponsors, media partners, elected officials, and citizens in attendance, emphasizing that community engagement remains central to Rockdale’s progress. She also highlighted her Board colleagues, Commissioner Tuwanya Smith and Commissioner Dr. Doreen Williams, commending their leadership in advancing initiatives that strengthen quality of life across the county. From senior engagement programs like the Memory Café to arts programming and environmental stewardship efforts, she emphasized the impact of collaborative leadership at the local level.

On the topic of community investment and sustainability, Van Ness discussed continued progress in infrastructure, parks, and public amenities. She noted ongoing transportation and roadway improvements, including major GDOT partnerships on the Courtesy Parkway Extension, Sigman and Salem Road widening, and the I-20 and Highway 138 interchange project. Together, these projects represent a significant long-term investment in connectivity, safety, and economic mobility for residents and businesses.

The Chair also highlighted continued development of the Judicial and Administrative Complex, noting its expected completion timeline and its role in supporting growth in Olde Town Conyers. She emphasized that the project will enhance accessibility, encourage economic activity, and serve as a long-term anchor for revitalization in the county’s historic core.

A major focus of the address was transparency and modernization in county government. Van Ness outlined new tools and initiatives designed to improve communication and civic engagement, including the launch of the “Rock GA” mobile app, a new open records portal, expanded town halls, and continued use of citizen advisory boards and commissions. She emphasized that these efforts are designed to make government more accessible, responsive, and accountable, adding that “good government listens first and takes action.”

Chair Van Ness further emphasized public safety and community well-being, recognizing the work of Rockdale County Fire Rescue and the Sheriff’s Office for measurable performance improvements, operational efficiencies, and continued investment in training and personnel. She also highlighted the District Attorney’s Office for its work improving case efficiency, reducing backlogs, and expanding youth engagement programs such as the Junior District Attorney initiative.

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In addition, she celebrated investments in community spaces and quality of life projects, including new and improved parks, sensory playgrounds, recreational amenities, and upcoming additions such as a splash pad and skate park. She also announced federal funding secured for a new senior center to expand services on the south side of the county, reinforcing a commitment to serving residents across all generations.

Economic development remained a key topic of the address, with Van Ness noting continued job growth, strong employer presence, and new business investment across the county. She highlighted both long-standing industries and new retail and hospitality developments contributing to local job creation and quality of life. She also emphasized the success of the county's Equal Business Opportunity Program, which has significantly expanded participation from small and historically underrepresented businesses in county contracts.

Looking ahead, Van Ness emphasized ongoing modernization of the Unified Development Ordinance as a critical tool for handling growth, preserving community character, and supporting sustainable development. She also highlighted continued implementation of the county's five-year strategic plan, "Reimagine Rockdale," which she described as a roadmap for intentional, community-driven progress. Chair Van Ness concluded by reaffirming that Rockdale County is operating from a position of strength being financially disciplined, strategically focused, and united in purpose. She emphasized that progress is the result of collaboration between county leadership, staff, partners, and residents, stating, "We are not waiting on the future—we are building it."



[Chair & CEO JaNice Van Ness delivers her 2026 State of Rockdale County Address]

The Council for Quality Growth works with Rockdale County and its local municipalities year-round to advocate for our members doing business in those areas. "We value the opportunity to bring the public sector and the business community in Rockdale together for this event," said Michael E. Paris, President & CEO of the Council. "Our ability to collaborate with the leadership here in Rockdale County ensures we all have a voice in the way this region grows and develops."



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The State of Rockdale also featured remarks from Mike Valdes, Vice President of Construction, Engineering, & Inspections with Volkert and a video presentation from Jericho Design Group, as presenting sponsors. Danny Johnson, Managing Director of the Natural Resources Department at the Atlanta Regional Commission, provided an update on the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's regional efforts. Attendees also heard from Steve Bromell, Board Member of the Conyers Rockdale Economic Development Council, and Michael Paris, President & CEO of the Council for Quality Growth.

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 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 2026 Signature Events, including the State of the County/Agency series, can be viewed and downloaded here: [2026 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 41st 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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