

Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

Business *Link*

MAGAZINE



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Spring/Summer 2025

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As Georgia's resort getaway, Lanier Islands is a 1,200 acre paradise. Set to open this spring, the Sara D. Williams Chapel and Mendy Williams Bowling Memory Garden will offer a breathtaking venue for weddings, vow renewals, and celebrations of life.



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Healthy Hall Awards recognize outstanding healthcare professionals and spotlight those in the healthcare industry making a significant impact on our quality of life through excellence in health and wellness.



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BUSINESS LINK MAGAZINE

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From the President & CEO



Thirty years ago, Gainesville and Hall County leaders had the insight and boldness to invest in a ground breaking community and economic development initiative called HALLTogether, now called HALLmark. The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce has been growing community prosperity ever since.

The focus of HALLmark is to develop a collective vision for the continued success of our community by working in partnership with business, government, education and private citizens. Now concluding, the successful 2020-25 HALLmark initiative included over 100 investors pledging \$2.3 million. Led by co-chairs **Casey Ryals**, *Farm Bureau Insurance*, **Melissa Tymchuk**, *North-east Georgia Health System*, and **Philip Wilheit, Jr.**, *Wilheit Packaging*, the next five-year iteration of HALLmark is underway and will continue to grow on the foundation of community prosperity and quality of life.

Gainesville-Hall County is a business hub that leads the region in trade, healthcare, education, industry, retail, recreation and cultural pursuits. Economic Development will remain a major focal point of HALLmark. Supporting our existing industry and business is the cornerstone of that effort, but it also includes the Chamber's work supporting small business, business recruitment, retail development and workforce development. Our workforce development initiatives seek to build a sustainable workforce that possesses the skills needed by today's (and tomorrow's) employers by collaborating with area businesses, educators and leaders with such programs as Work-Based Learning and Youth Apprenticeships.

Strong leadership is a key ingredient in the continuing development of a thriving community. The Greater Hall Chamber's Leadership Hall and Youth Leadership Hall programs educate emerging and existing leaders to be integral players in the future of our community. These programs are funded through HALLmark.

For over 20 years, Vision 2030 has worked toward our goal to position Gainesville-Hall County as the most enviable community in Georgia by the year 2030 through a set of "Big Ideas." Initiatives have received state and national attention with such programs as the Public Art collaboration that includes over 200 catalogued pieces of art since 2015. Part of HALLmark 2025-2030 funding will include the development of a strategic plan to move us towards the next installment of a community vision initiative for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Evans'.

Tim Evans
President & CEO
Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce

HALLmark is a community investment plan that addresses economic development, education, government affairs and community development through public and private partnerships.



HALLmark
2025 - 2030

Since 2020, some 64 new and expanded businesses have announced 3,700 new jobs and \$1.75 billion in capital investment in Gainesville-Hall County. The Gainesville-Hall County metro area was named the Best Performing Small Metropolitan Area in the Nation, according to the 2025 Milken Institute Best Performing Cities, fostered by strong job and wage growth and a robust high-tech presence.

The new, five-year HALLmark 2025-2030 initiative promotes positive interaction between local, state and federal governments in our business community. In partnership with VISION 2030, it will identify the physical and social infrastructure needs of the community and will provide leadership to address those needs.

Since 2005, Greater Hall Chamber Health and Wellness Initiatives have served as the catalyst for connecting valuable programs to local businesses and residents by providing free health screenings, educational seminars and more.

30 Years of Success

- Jobs From New & Existing Industries
- Growing Commercial Tax Base
- Workforce Development Task Force
- New Business Parks
- Comprehensive Small Business Programs
- Enhanced Health & Wellness Initiatives
- VISION 2030 Big Ideas
- Productive Education Consortium
- Dynamic Public Art Initiatives
- Leadership Hall County
- Youth Leadership Hall
- Wisdom Project Senior Leadership
- Greater Hall Chamber Building Renovation



Nearly 950,000 people are employed in the Greater Hall County labor market area. Our workforce development initiatives seek to build a sustainable workforce that possesses the skills needed by today's (and tomorrow's) employers.



Strong leadership is a key ingredient in the continuing development of a thriving community. The Greater Hall Chamber's Leadership Hall and Youth Leadership Hall programs educate emerging and existing leaders to be integral players in the future of our community.

Investment in HALLmark continues to ensure we maintain a vibrant economy, create new jobs, have an educated and skilled workforce, increase our tax base, support the growth of our small businesses and retail establishments, build partnerships with government entities, and continually improve our quality of life through VISION 2030 and other community initiatives.

Scan the QR code to learn more about HALLmark 2025-2030.



Letter to Members



Glennis Barnes, Georgia Power
Chairman, Greater Hall Chamber

As I step into my final quarter as Chairman of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, I find myself reflecting on this incredible journey and wondering, “Where did the time go?” Serving in this role has been both an honor and a privilege. I inherited a legacy built by outstanding leaders before me, and my goal was simple: to uphold that tradition, contribute where I could, and leave it even stronger than when I took the gavel.

Together, we have continued building on a solid foundation of success by investing in workforce development, expanding economic opportunities, enhancing infrastructure, advancing healthcare, and preparing the next generation through increased enrollment at Lanier Technical College, Brenau University, and the University of North Georgia.

One of the most impactful initiatives for Gainesville-Hall County is the Greater Hall Chamber’s HALLmark Initiative. More than 30 years ago, visionary leaders launched what is now known as HALLmark – an ambitious economic development and quality of life program that has shaped our community’s growth.

As we look ahead to the 2025-2030 HALLmark campaign, I encourage our local businesses to invest in its bold mission of raising \$2.995 million to ensure the continued prosperity of our region. By supporting HALLmark, we sustain a thriving economy, create high-quality jobs, protect existing investments, cultivate a skilled workforce, strengthen partnerships with government entities, and enhance our overall quality of life.

As my time as Chairman comes to a close, I am filled with gratitude. I am thankful for everyone who has invested in the Chamber and its mission to make Gainesville-Hall County an extraordinary place to live, work, play, and thrive. The leadership and dedication of so many has laid a strong foundation, and I am honored to pass the gavel, knowing our community’s momentum will continue.

With Gainesville-Hall County recently recognized as the Best Performing Small Metropolitan Area in the Nation by the Milken Institute’s 2025 Best-Performing Cities Report, I am confident that we have upheld the legacy of excellence set by our predecessors. It has been a true privilege to serve the greatest Chamber and the best community in the universe.



Greg Davis (left) and **Robby Hill** of **Shoreline Transfer** represented the Transportation Career Path at the Student Career Path Fair at the University of North Georgia (UNG), Gainesville Campus. This event was one of five fairs held on the campuses of UNG, Brenau University and Lanier Technical College.

Workforce Development

Over **1,700 students** participated in **Career Path Fairs** coordinated by **Workforce Strategies Group**. Middle school students were introduced to career opportunities by attending classes led by over 50 professionals in marketing, banking, construction, manufacturing and more. Students use this experience to select a career path to follow in high school. Hosts and sponsors included Gainesville and Hall County Schools, Brenau University, Lanier Technical College, University of North Georgia, Greater Hall Chamber, Kubota Manufacturing of America, Carroll Daniel Construction and Lanier Federal Credit Union.



Lanier Islands Chapel & Gardens to Open in Spring 2025



A new landmark is taking shape at Lanier Islands Resort, one that carries deep personal significance for the Williams family, the visionaries behind one of the South's most beloved resorts. Slated for completion this spring, the Lakeside Chapel and Garden will not only expand the resort's renowned wedding and event offerings but also serve as a heartfelt tribute to two remarkable women – Sara D. Williams and Mendy Williams Bowling.

The elegant, non-denominational chapel is the latest vision of Virgil R. Williams, Board Chairman of Lanier Islands Resort, and is positioned at one of the resort's highest points.

"The Lakeside Chapel and Garden will serve as perfect tributes to my grandmother and mother," shared Matthew Bowling, President of Lanier Islands Resort. "This space will provide a meaningful setting for life's most cherished moments."

The chapel's design is both timeless and inviting with a covered porch leading into a warm, light-filled sanctuary, where arched windows, heavy timber columns, and exposed beams create an intimate yet grand atmosphere.

Construction to be completed in May 2025



Adjacent to the chapel, the garden will feature a charming, timber-framed gazebo – an idyllic spot for wedding photos, cocktail hours, and intimate gatherings. This versatile space will cater to a variety of events, including vow renewals, baccalaureates, celebrations of life, and other milestone occasions.



Lanier Islands Resort has long been recognized as a premier wedding destination, earning accolades such as The Knot Best of Weddings 2024 and WeddingWire 2024 Couples' Choice Award. For those interested in hosting a wedding or special event, call 678-318-7859 to schedule a tour. Scan the QR code to explore venue options, packages, menus, and accommodations.



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Lanier
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Member News

Building the Future, One Apprentice at a Time. **Caldwell Electrical Contractors** believes in shaping the next generation of highly skilled electricians and was selected to participate in the **High Demand Apprenticeship Program** administered by the **Technical College System of Georgia**. This opportunity provides a grant for two apprentices enrolled in Caldwell's Accredited Apprenticeship Program with the Georgia Department of Labor. Congratulations **Jacob Farmer** and **Marc Lofton**! The grant will offset costs associated with training, books, and program implementation — allowing Caldwell to continue investing in the future of the electrical trade. caldwellelectric.com



Caldwell Electric Apprentices **Jacob Farmer** and **Marc Lofton**



Over the Edge

On Friday, June 6, some 90 rappellers will go “Over the Edge” of the Gainesville Downtown Main Street Parking Garage in support of **CenterPoint**, a non-profit providing services and support to community partners, young people, and their families in Gainesville and Hall



County. This inaugural and unique fundraising event is sure to provide lots of public interest, entertainment, bragging rights, and support for an outstanding community organization. Email Elain Ellerbe at elain.ellerbe@centerpointga.org to find out how you can participate.



Nearly 1,000 runners and walkers participated in the 17th Annual Chamber Chase 5K at Riverside Preparatory Academy. Scan below to see finish line results, photos and highlights.



Trainz.com, the nation's leading online model train retailer headquartered in Flowery Branch, has been named a “Great Place to Work” certified company since 2021, and in 2024 was recognized as #17 on Fortune Best Workplaces in Retail™ 2024 (Small And Medium). **Scott Griggs**, Founder and CEO, announces a new executive team to expand leadership and drive growth: **Ken Cummings**, CTO, has been an integral part of the company since 2004 in various roles and now leads Trainz's technology roadmap and marketing strategies; **Cindy Horn**, COO, contributes to the company's success with strong business acumen and extensive knowledge of the model train industry; **Monica Montgomery**, Finance and HR, ensures strong financial oversight built on a solid foundation of HR policies; **Carlisle Maddox**, Procurement and Customer Service, supplies Trainz with collections and provides the outstanding customer service they are known for. trainz.com



Ryan Owen of Kubota Manufacturing of America led a tour of the Gainesville plant as part of the Georgia VIP Tour. In addition to Kubota, area businesses from Germany, Switzerland, Korea, Japan, Netherlands and the Czech Republic participated in the tour visit.

The Chamber welcomed members of the state’s diplomatic community as part of the **Georgia Department of Economic Development 2025 International VIP Tour**. Northeast Georgia was the focus of the tour, and Gainesville-Hall County was a main feature. The group kicked off their visit at The Boathouse at Lake Lanier Olympic Park and observed NCAA Division I rowers in action. Their time here also included a tour of Downtown Gainesville, learning about Gainesville’s thriving medical community, a briefing on international business at Kubota, and a driving tour of the new Blue Ridge Connector with the Georgia Ports Authority.



Rendering of the **Riverwalk** at **Lake Lanier Olympic Park**.

Lake Lanier Olympic Park Foundation’s Legacy Club launched the newest phase of the capital campaign. The project includes the completion of the **Riverwalk** – a board walk that stretches beneath Clarks Bridge Road and creates a one mile loop through Lake Lanier Olympic Park. The goal is to achieve connectivity between the Plaza and Park sides of the venue. Other enhancements include a new picnic pavilion, public art and park benches. Scan the QR code to learn more and support the Legacy Club.



Corporate Storage, headquartered at 1750 Atlanta Highway in Gainesville, earned a SafeQuality Food (SQF) Certification excellent rating for its two facilities in Hall County. The Atlanta Highway facility received SQF certification for the fifth consecutive year. With multiple facilities offering 900,000 square feet of warehouse space, Corporate Storage is North Georgia’s choice for warehousing solutions. corporate-storage.com

Education & Leadership



Youth Leadership Hall's Healthcare Day started at **J's Place Recovery Center** where the students heard from Jordan Hussey and her team.

At the **Northeast Georgia Health System Simulation Lab**, the students participated in Delivery Pediatric Simulation and Stop the Bleed techniques.



Leadership Hall practiced yoga at the **Frances Meadows Aquatic and Fitness Center**.

Thank you Leadership Hall and Youth Leadership Hall health program sponsors:

J's Place Recovery Center
Longstreet Clinic
Northeast Georgia Health System



At **Northeast Georgia Medical Center Gainesville** Leadership Hall toured the new Green Tower along with the Helipad and Trauma Center.



Longstreet Clinic welcomed Leadership Hall where the group practiced suturing with robotic surgery under the direction of **Dr. Chad Copper**, Longstreet Clinic, and co-director of the Hernia Center at Northeast Georgia Medical Center. The class also learned about breast cancer innovations from **Dr. Geary Bush** and toured the Longstreet Clinic Breast Center.

Healthy Hall Awards



Front, L-R: **Tara Jernigan**, Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS); **Mary Martin**, NGHS; **Margaret Alisa Davis, MD**, Longstreet Clinic; **Christy Payne**, Longstreet; **Marcy Adams**, Northside Hospital Diagnostic Clinic (NHDC); **Kristen Crea**, NHDC; **D'Anna Cain**, Longstreet. Standing, L-R: **Nosleivys Falcon**, The Hub at Gainesville High School; **Alan Edwards**, Good News Clinics; **Todd Britt, DMD**, Soseby & Britt; **Chad Copper, MD**, and **Ron Lewis, MD**, Northeast Georgia Medical Center Hernia Center; **Jack McGuire**, Longstreet; **Jonathan Nix**, Dermatology Associates of NEGA; **Margaret Alisa Davis, MD**, Longstreet; **Dr. Dave Westfall**, NGMC GME.

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce presented its 2025 Healthy Hall Awards at Lanier Technical College in March. In its eighth year, Healthy Hall Awards recognized outstanding healthcare professionals and spotlighted those in the healthcare industry making a significant impact on our quality of life through excellence in health and wellness.

Healthcare Education

Mary S. Martin, DNP, MBA, RN, CENP, CPHIMS
Northeast Georgia Health System

Outstanding Achievement in Behavioral Health
The Hub at Gainesville City Schools

Advanced Practice Providers of the Year
Laura Van Hook, BSN, MSN, FNP-BC
Northside Hospital Diagnostic Clinic

Jonathan Nix, PA-C
Dermatology Associates of Northeast Georgia

Dentist of the Year
Todd Britt, DMD, Sosebee & Britt Orthodontics

Healthcare Worker of the Year
Christy Payne, Longstreet Clinic

Nurses of the Year

D'Anna Cain, FNP-C, Longstreet Clinic

Marcy Adams, RN, Northside Hospital Diagnostic Clinic

Community Impact

Northeast Georgia Medical Center's Green Tower

Alan Edwards, Good News Clinic

Corporate Achievement/ Innovation

Northside Hospital Diagnostic Clinic

Physicians of the Year

Margaret Alisa Davis, MD, Longstreet Clinic

Ron Lewis, MD, & Chad Copper, MD

Northeast Georgia Medical Center Hernia Center of Excellence

Visionary Leader

Jack McGuire, CNM, Longstreet Clinic

Lifetime Achievement

Carol Burrell

Northeast Georgia Health System



Scan to learn more about
Award Recipients

Vision 2030



“Home” (tempera) by **Oliver Villanueva**, a 4th grade student at Tadmore Elementary, is on display at the Hunt Tower on the Square in Downtown Gainesville.

Vision 2030 Public Art is volunteer driven and aims to revitalize and renew all corners of Hall County by infusing artistic elements into public spaces. Through murals, sculptures, interactive displays, and art events, the group is transforming the ordinary into extraordinary, breathing new life into our surroundings.



“The Sacred Scarab” (watercolor) by **Angela Slater**, a 12th grade student at Cherokee Bluff High School. The painting is part of a public art project installed at the Hunt Tower in Downtown Gainesville.

A promotional poster for the 5th Annual Public Art Block Party. The poster features a large black circle with the text "block PARTY" inside. Above the circle, it says "MAY 8, 2025" and "PUBLIC ART GAINESVILLE, GA". Below the circle, it says "5TH ANNUAL" and "@HISTORIC CITY HALL". In the bottom left corner, it says "\$60/TICKET". In the bottom right corner, there is a photo of Colleen Leach and the text "Featured Artist Colleen Leach". The background of the poster is a colorful abstract painting.

Vision 2030’s **Public Art Block Party** is **Thursday, May 8** at the **Historic Gainesville City Hall** with food trucks, music and art by local artists for sale for \$100 or less. All proceeds go to place a new piece of public art in Hall County. For event info and tickets, scan the QR code or visit publicartgainesvillega.com.



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Powering Industry

▲ Pictured left to right: Karen Reece, Vice President, Eskimo Cold Storage; Tate O'Rourke, Senior Business Development Manager, Jackson EMC; Steve Williams, President, Eskimo Cold Storage



You have the vision, ingenuity and product to change the business landscape. Our team has the expertise and knowledge to help you every step of the way. Jackson EMC's Business Development Team is your resource to keep energy reliable and affordable now and in the future.

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