



Rural Prosperity Summit

University of Georgia Tifton Campus Conference Center | 15 R D C Rd, Tifton, GA 31794

October 1, 2025

8:30 AM REGISTRATION OPENS

Light Breakfast Available

9:00 AM PROGRAM BEGINS

WELCOME REMARKS

Tiffany Holmes, Deputy Director, Georgia Chamber Foundation

PRESENTING SPONSOR REMARKS

Arthur Tripp, Vice President of Economic Development, Georgia Power

SESSION #1

Opportunity at Work: Building Stronger Rural Economies

Introduced by: Arthur Tripp, Vice President of Economic Development, Georgia Power

Bárbara Rivera Holmes, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Labor

Session Description: As Georgia's workforce continues to evolve, rural communities face both unique challenges and opportunities in connecting talent with jobs. This opening session will explore emerging labor trends, the role of opportunity populations such as youth and veterans, and new initiatives shaping the state's workforce. Attendees will also learn how lessons from rural Georgia can inform statewide strategies and discover ways local leaders can engage to strengthen their own economies. Setting the stage for a day focused on resilience, housing, and healthcare, this conversation will highlight both vision and practical opportunities for rural prosperity.

SESSION #2

Strengthening Rural Resilience: Disaster Preparedness for Communities and Economies

- Part I – Featured Session Speaker
 - Josh Lamb, Director, Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency
- Part II – Panel Discussion
 - Emily Courson, Executive Director, Douglas-Coffee County Chamber of Commerce
 - Michelle Johnson, President, Greater Vidalia Chamber
 - Lisa Smart, Executive Director, Berrien County Chamber of Commerce & Development Authority
 - Moderated by: Tiffany Holmes, Deputy Director, Georgia Chamber Foundation

Session Description: Natural disasters and emergencies can devastate rural communities without warning, impacting lives, infrastructure, and economic vitality. This session will explore proactive strategies to help rural regions plan, respond, and recover more effectively. Through insights from experts and a panel of local leaders, attendees will learn best practices for preparedness planning, public-private partnerships, and how to build resilience across sectors. Whether facing hurricanes, wildfires, or long-term recovery needs, this session offers practical tools and inspiration to safeguard your community's future.

10:40 AM – 10:55 AM NETWORKING BREAK

SESSION #3

Foundations for Growth: Tackling the Rural Housing Shortage

- Part I – Panel Discussion Jason Holt, Mayor, City of Fitzgerald
 - Travis Wimbush, Mayor, City of Blakely
 - Tiffany Zeigler, Mayor, City of Pembroke
 - Moderated by: Daniela Perry, Executive Director, Georgia Chamber Foundation
- Part II – Facilitated Discussion

Session Description: The lack of quality, attainable housing in rural Georgia has wide-ranging effects, from workforce recruitment to economic development. This session will examine the systemic challenges and explore creative, scalable solutions to expand rural housing availability. A keynote address will set the stage with a high-level overview, followed by a panel discussion featuring real-world examples of public-private partnerships, funding mechanisms, and community-led approaches. Join this session to better understand the housing landscape and leave with actionable ideas to support growth in your region.

12:00 PM – 1:10 PM GEORGIA CHAMBER RURAL AWARDS LUNCHEON

1:10 PM – 1:25 PM NETWORKING BREAK

SESSION #4

Closing the Gaps: Addressing Rural Healthcare Challenges

- Part I – Featured Session Speaker
 - Caylee Noggle, President and CEO, Georgia Hospital Association
- Part II – Panel Discussion
 - Dean Burke, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Community Health
 - Sally Perry, Divisional Vice President, Universal Health Services, Inc.
 - Scott Steiner, President and Chief Executive Officer, Phoebe Putney Health System
 - Moderated by: Glenda Grant, Executive Director, Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center

Session Description: Access to healthcare remains one of rural Georgia's most pressing concerns. From hospital closures to workforce shortages and limited mental health services, the barriers are complex but solutions are emerging. This session will begin with a featured leader offering a statewide perspective, followed by a panel highlighting innovative rural models, community collaborations, and policy considerations. Participants will gain insight into

how healthcare systems, providers, and stakeholders are working together to improve care access and outcomes in rural areas.

CLOSING REMARKS

Tiffany Holmes, Deputy Director, Georgia Chamber Foundation

2:30 PM Adjourn