

2026 STAFF DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

March 9 – 11, 2026

DALTON CONVENTION CENTER · DALTON, GA

HOSTED BY: THE GREATER DALTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



2026 CONFERENCE AGENDA

Monday, March 9, 2026 – Dalton Convention Center – Dalton, GA

- 1:30pm** **CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS** **Convention Center Lobby**
Please note that hotel rooms may not be available for check-in until 4:00pm.
- 2:00 – 3:00pm** **CHAMBER CONNECTIONS: Welcome & Industry Updates** **Banquet Hall I**
Join your GACCE Executive Committee for this orientation and networking session designed to introduce all chamber professionals to the association and each other.
- 3:15 – 4:15pm** **BEHIND THE CURTAIN:** **Banquet Hall I**
Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
Peek behind the curtain at how one high-performing chamber keeps operations efficient, mission-driven, and community-focused—even in uncertain times. Learn about governance, internal communication, team culture, and how this chamber balances everything effortlessly.
Jason Mock, President & CEO
Dr. Stephani Womack, Chief Talent Officer
Anna Adamson, Executive Director, Believe Greater Dalton
- 4:15pm** **Hotel Check-In – Hilton Garden Inn, Host Hotel**
- 6:00 – 8:00pm** **WELCOME RECEPTION & DINNER** **Banquet Hall I**
Join us back at the convention center for a night of fun and connection with your peers and our sponsors.
Hosted by the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 – Dalton Convention Center – Dalton, GA

- 8:00 – 9:00am** **BREAKFAST BUFFET** **Banquet Hall I**
No formal presentation during breakfast so you can network together.
- 9:00 – 9:15am** **OFFICIAL CONFERENCE WELCOME** **Banquet Hall I**
Jason Mock, President & CEO, Greater Dalton Chamber & 2026 SDC Chair
Christie Moore, President & CEO, Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber & 2025-26 GACCE Chair
- 9:15 – 10:30am** **GENERAL SESSION** **Banquet Hall I**
Why Chambers Matter: A Fireside Chat on Careers, Community, and Impact
Join a candid fireside chat with fellow chamber leaders who have built lasting careers in the chamber industry. They'll share why chamber work matters, the role chambers play in strengthening communities and regions, and how this profession offers both purpose and long-term opportunity.
Moderator – James McCoy, The Chason Group
Panelist – Morgan Law, Georgia Chamber
Panelist – Jason Mock, Greater Dalton Chamber
Panelist – Teri Smiley, Walton County Chamber

10:30am **BREAK** **Sponsor Area – Convention Center Lobby**
Water dispenser sponsored by Lumin Strategies

10:45 – 11:45am **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

Topic 1 – Workforce Development

Banquet Hall I

What's working in workforce development right now? Hear directly from chamber professionals who are leading innovative workforce initiatives in their communities. This interactive breakout session will highlight best practices, lessons learned, and scalable programs.

Moderator – Daniela Perry, Georgia Chamber

Panelist – Dr. Stephani Womack, Greater Dalton Chamber

Panelist – Pam Carnes, Cherokee County Chamber

Panelist – David Bradley, Athens Area Chamber

Breakout Session sponsored by Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education

Topic 2 – Membership Best Practices

Meeting Room A2

Membership models are evolving—and chambers are evolving with them. Join fellow chamber professionals as they share what's working in membership recruitment, engagement, and retention.

Panelist – Sara Ray, Douglas County Chamber

Panelist – Cindy Williams, Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber

Topic 3 – Marketing in the Age of Overwhelm

Meeting Room A3

How Chambers Create Belonging, Relevance, and Engagement in a Noisy World

When everything feels loud, complicated, and crowded, the Chambers that break through aren't the ones producing more marketing; they're the ones telling a clearer story. This breakout session blends high-level narrative strategy with practical, real-world tactics for social media, email, events, and community engagement. You'll learn how to use story to shift perception, build belonging, and communicate in ways people actually notice and value. Walk away with a simple, repeatable system that cuts through noise and strengthens your Chamber's marketing strategy.

Erika Mosteller, Erika B. Marketing

Noon – 1:30pm **SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON** **Banquet Hall I**
We will be presenting our 2026-27 GACCE Scholarships & our 2026 Staff Service Awards.

1:30 – 2:30pm **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

Topic 1 – Small Chamber Operations

Banquet Hall I

How Small Chambers Are Leading Big Change

Learn how small chambers are leveraging creativity, efficiency, and partnerships to lead impactful initiatives and drive meaningful change in their communities.

Moderator – Heath Taylor, Columbia County Chamber

Panelist – Melissa Dark, Fitzgerald-Ben Hill Chamber

Panelist – Jeffrey Fowler, Warren County Chamber

Panelist – Beth Truelove, White County Chamber

Topic 2 – Foundations

Meeting Room A2

Leveraging Chamber Foundations for Community Impact

Foundations are helping chambers extend their reach and deepen their impact. Learn from a seasoned GACCE peer on how his Chamber's foundation supports business and community priorities.

Leonardo McClarty, CCE, Fayette Chamber

Topic 3 – Non-Dues Revenue

Meeting Room A3

Swipe + Deploy: Real Chamber Examples & Ready-to-Use Ideas

In this rapid-fire session, you'll hear what chambers are doing right now—programs, events, and initiatives that are working and can attract sponsorship support. This is a “steal these ideas” session. Learn what chambers are doing to monetize programs, events, and initiatives—and leave with immediate takeaways you can implement. Expect practical examples, plug-and-play ideas, and simple upgrades you can bring back and launch quickly.

Anissa Starnes, YGM

2:30pm **EXTENDED BREAK** **Sponsor Area – Convention Center Lobby**
Water dispenser sponsored by Lumin Strategies

3:00 – 4:00pm

GENERAL SESSION

Banquet Hall I

***Your Strongest Chamber Advantage Is Your Story:
How Stories Shape Economic & Community Development***

Every chamber wants more engagement, more relevance, and more momentum. But none of that happens without a clear story. This keynote reveals how the right story becomes a chamber's most powerful advantage, influencing perceptions, attracting investment, and aligning your community around a shared identity. Learn how to craft your Big Story and reinforce it with Small Stories that make people believe in your place, your mission, and your future.

Erika Mosteller, Erika B. Marketing

5:30pm

RECEPTION & DINNER

Banquet Hall I

We're heading back to the Convention Center for a fun, casual evening of delicious food and even better company. Come ready to relax, connect, and enjoy time together

Wednesday, March 11, 2026 – Dalton Convention Center – Dalton, GA

8:00 – 9:00am

**BREAKFAST SESSION
Boundaries and BINGO!**

Banquet Hall I

Ever feel like your chamber work is sneaking into every corner of your life (including your vacations, weekends and even your dreams)? You're not alone. Setting boundaries at work isn't about building walls—it's about creating smart, healthy habits that help you stay productive, happy, and human. Join us for a fun, interactive session where we'll dive into the magic of saying no (without any of the guilt), setting clear expectations, and protecting your time and energy like the treasures they are. You'll walk away with practical tips, a few laughs, and a renewed sense of control over your work-life balance. Because let's face it—you're kind of a big deal, and it's time to protect your most important resource...yourself.

Anissa Starnes, YGM

9:00am

FINAL SPONSOR BREAK

Sponsor Area – Convention Center Lobby

Water dispenser sponsored by Lumin Strategies

9:15 – 11:15am

CLOSING WORKSHOP

Banquet Hall I

The Profound Role of AI in Revolutionizing Chamber Management

AI is reshaping how chambers serve their members – not someday, but right now. This workshop breaks AI down into practical, real-world strategies that chamber staff can use immediately: smarter membership management, better campaigns, clearer communication, and productivity gains that free up time for truly meaningful work. We'll explore simple tools, real case studies, and step-by-step approaches that show chamber professionals how to build confidence with AI and apply it directly to the challenges they face every day. The goal is straightforward: leave the room with ideas you can use as soon as you get back to your desk, a sense of what's possible, and the momentum to move forward.

Craig Turner, Momentum AI

Thank you to our 2026 GACCE Partners:

