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Clayton County Accelerates Economic Momentum at State of the Development Authority, Announces New CEO

Atlanta, Georgia — The Development Authority of Clayton County convened its 2nd Annual State of the Development Authority (SODA) on May 1 at the Delta Flight Museum, bringing together elected officials, regional executives, and industry leaders for an evening that delivered a clear message to the market: Clayton County is entering a new stride of momentum, and the region is paying attention.

The audience reflected a powerful cross-section of leadership, including Clayton County Vice Chair Gail Hambrick, Commissioners Tashe Allen and Demont Davis, and Sheriff Levon Allen, alongside mayors and officials from the cities of Lovejoy, Riverdale, Jonesboro, and Forest Park, as well as developers, corporate executives, and regional stakeholders from across metro Atlanta.

Dr. C.H. Braddy, Chairman of the Development Authority, anchored the defining moment of the evening during his address, where a message of alignment, accountability, and forward momentum made clear that Clayton County is not just growing; it is taking flight. The address highlighted tangible gains across Clayton County's economy:

- Unemployment reduced to 3.1%, down from 4.5% year over year
- More than \$330,000 deployed to local small businesses through the Momentum 500 initiative
- Nearly \$600,000 invested in workforce development training in partnership with regional organizations

“Clayton County has never been in a stronger position to become an economic powerhouse,” said Dr. C. H. Braddy. “The question we must always ask is: what’s in it for Clayton?”

The Chairman’s address also tackled one of the county’s most closely watched developments; a proposed data center project tied to a \$950 million bond inducement, with the potential to generate more than \$100 million in tax revenue over the next decade. At the same time, he emphasized that any incentives must deliver clear community value. “We will not bear this burden on the backs of taxpayers,” the Chairman said. “Any investment must be matched with real benefits for Clayton County.”





“Clayton is open for business.”

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Central to the Authority’s strategy is a renewed emphasis on local business development. “Charity will start at home; Clayton First,” Dr. Braddy said, announcing plans to expand funding for small businesses toward a long-term goal of supporting 500 local enterprises.

The Authority also revealed plans for a first-of-its-kind Economic Integrated Technology App, designed to streamline access to development data, land use information, and investment tools. “This will be a game changer,” the Chairman stated.

The evening underscored a broader shift from isolated initiatives to a coordinated regional strategy driven by partnerships across public, private, and civic sectors. “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,” Braddy said. “Clayton...let’s go together.”

The Authority also recognized leaders shaping the region’s economic landscape, including Southern Regional Medical Center President and CEO Ela Lena, Aerotropolis Atlanta CEO Shannon James, Clayton State University President Georj Lewis, Clayton County Tax Commissioner Danielle Smith, and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport General Manager Ricky Smith.

In the most significant announcement of the evening, Chairman revealed that the Authority has officially selected Maceo Rogers, CEcD, as its next President and Chief Executive Officer; marking a leadership transition designed to accelerate the county’s economic trajectory.

“Momentum is not something we wait on; it’s something we build,” said Dr. Braddy. “When consistency and collaboration come together, business gets done.”

With proximity to the world’s busiest airport, expanding infrastructure, and increasing regional alignment, Clayton County is positioning itself as one of Georgia’s most competitive growth markets. The takeaway from SODA was unmistakable: Clayton County is no longer building momentum; it is converting it into measurable economic impact.

