Media Guide and Strategic Plan

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Strategic Plan and Media Guide

By

Ella Greer

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Professional Writing in the Department of English

In the College of Humanities and Social Sciences of Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, GA

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On Learning How to Pivot  
An Autoethnography

How did I get here

A writer, a marketing manager, and a graphic designer walk into a bar. The waitress is upset because they are all me, and I just took out my laptop, notebook, and textbook. I’ll be calling this table my office for a while. My original career dream was to become a young adult novelist and be considered the “Sara Dessen” of my time. Aspiring writers are not paid writers, however, so I interned first for the marketing department at Armstrong State University and then Georgia Institute of Technology to support myself through college. My marketing experience helped me land a position as communications coordinator at the Cherokee Office of Economic Development, but the writing was only half the job, the office needed an in-house designer for social media graphics, marketing materials, and event invitations. My experience with graphic design was limited to changing filters on Instagram, but I had pivoted before and was confident I could tackle this new responsibility as well. I have made a career out of pivoting, and my capstone practicum is a reflection of the skills I have learned since enrolling in Kennesaw State University’s Master of Arts Professional Writing (KSU MAPW) program two years ago.

How did I get here? Accidentally is the short answer. The long answer includes finding my passion for writing while working for the high school newspaper. Back in 2005, the television series Gilmore Girls was gaining popularity, and MTV had just premiered its docuseries The Paper. Rory (Gilmore Girls) and Amanda Lorber (The Paper) were both offbeat, hopeful writers who became editors of their school newspaper. I signed up to be on the staff of The PawPrint, my high school newspaper, hoping that my experience would reflect the plotlines
of my favorite television heroines. My first article for *The PawPrint* was a 400-word exposè on the lunch menu—the writing process was painful and the article went unpublished. I pressed on, however, and soon became the Editor-in-Chief for the remainder of high school. My plans after senior year included going to school at New York University (NYU) and becoming an editor for *Teen Vogue*. I had frequently used the magazine as inspiration for layout design and editorial content during my time at *The PawPrint*, and I was confident that as soon as *Teen Vogue* met me and read my work, they would want me. My dream of NYU was brought to an immediate halt when college tuition prices brought me back to reality. I relied on the HOPE Scholarship to help pay for school and would need to stay in Georgia to qualify for the tuition waiver. I was told by my guidance counselor that there were several opportunities for funding through the portal *FastWeb*, an online platform that connects students with scholarships, but I never heard back from the several contests I applied to. I was grateful for the opportunity HOPE would provide and changed my plans accordingly: I pivoted and started small by going to Armstrong State University, a small liberal arts school in Savannah that just happened to be near *Skirt! Magazine*’s satellite office. The move to Savannah felt as great as I thought New York would—I was on my own in a brand new city and I was going to convince *Skirt! Magazine* to hire me on as an intern. I was on my way to becoming a writer.

And then *Skirt!* folded. A decision was made to close all offices other than the headquarters in Charleston, South Carolina while I was in the onboarding process. The closure was only a foreshock of the changes coming to the print industry and many people (mainly my parents) saw this as a sign for me to change career paths—I kept going. A few months into the
semester a position on The InkWell, Armstrong’s newspaper, opened and I began writing for the “Arts & Entertainment” section. I enjoyed the chance to write, but at a rate of ten dollars in PirateCash (accepted at all on-campus vendors) per article published, I had to find another job. I applied to be a student worker and was placed as a front desk secretary for the marketing department. I didn’t have experience in marketing or communications at the time, but the school was undergoing a significant rebranding (a name change from Armstrong Atlantic State University to Armstrong State University) and a new freshman retention program known as “Start Strong, Finish Strong.” The department needed fresh eyes willing to record Google Analytics data and watch the front desk.

This opportunity was the first time I observed how a marketing office worked—the website developer, public relations officer, graphic designer, and social media manager collaborate on projects and create products such as recruitment brochures and event t-shirts. I answered the phone, proofed projects, posted press releases to Meltwater, and monitored Armstrong’s social media pages for two semesters until the rebranding project was completed. The director retired soon after and the sudden departure left the rest of the office in limbo. The public relations manager and social media manager both left over the summer to work for Gulfstream, an aerospace corporation. This move was important to me because Gulfstream is a huge deal in Savannah, the corporation accounts for a majority of the city’s workforce and any position there is difficult to obtain and impressive to hold. This was the first time I saw marketing as a lucrative career and began looking for openings outside of the campus to further my skills. I applied to be an intern for the public relations department at Georgia Institute of
Technology’s Savannah campus. Not only did I get the job, but I also got a three dollar raise. Things were looking up. There I learned how to build programs such as Veterans Education Transition Training (VETT²) and create email marketing campaigns.

Building the program was an essential process for me because I had a seat in the conference room when the team met about the vision and goals of the program and how to design the website. I contributed to the marketing campaign by writing email templates and approaching corporations such as Home Depot and Target for sponsorship opportunities. My time at Georgia Tech helped me understand what a routine day at the office would be when I became a full-time employee. I had the opportunity to contribute to the projects the office worked on such as social media campaigns, annual reports, website design, and event promotions. Because of my experiences as an intern at Armstrong and Georgia Tech, I decided to change my major from English to Journalism with a focus on Professional Communication. I still wanted to be a creative writer, but my experience as an intern made the marketing industry appear as a much more accessible career choice.

When I told people I was an English major they would ask if I planned on becoming a teacher, and when I said no they shook their heads in astonishment. “Well what else is there?” I could hear them say to themselves. That exchange didn’t happen when I told them I was going into marketing. This is interesting to reflect back on because now when I tell people I’m a communications coordinator they assume I scroll through Facebook all day. My undergraduate experience led me to believe that crossing the threshold into a writing career was an impossible task, something only meant for the truly exceptional and well connected. So I pivoted and
changed my focus to marketing and communications instead. The switch from creative writing to communications was a smooth transition. The writing was still creative; it just had a different medium and target audience. I no longer had to create fictional worlds and interesting plotlines—the audience and objective was already in front of me, my only responsibility was to attract their attention.

Graduation day came and went, and my internship at Georgia Tech ended. The Savannah campus transitioned from student-facing to support the school’s online services, and the marketing staff relocated to the Atlanta office. I was left to pound the pavement on my own while I worked as a sales associate at CarMax. I applied to several offices and went on multiple interviews for marketing positions in the Greater Savannah area. There was a common concern over my lack of a portfolio. I hadn’t saved any of my specific work from being an intern, and the interviewer had to take my word for the work I claimed to have executed. This was an unfortunate oversight on my end, I assumed that the degree would be the only proof I need when it came to experience. I never thought to save my work or make detailed notes on the contributions I made. I received a couple of offers downgrading the position from full-time to internship with the intention of promotion after a six-month-to-year trial. By the time these offers came, however, my living expenses would not allow me to consider the opportunity.

The job search continued for about two years. I had always considered my time at the dealership temporary, and it was not until I had enough of working sixty hour weeks that I decided to apply for a graduate school program. I hoped a master's degree would cancel out my lack of full-time experience in the industry and increase my chances of a job offer. After
applying to several programs, I was accepted into Georgia State University’s (GSU) Master of Science in Marketing. The school offered a one-year accelerated degree which was great, but the tuition was thirty-seven thousand, five hundred dollars over three semesters. The amount was staggering. I made the decision to take the chance and enroll in the program, believing that the degree would help me land a career. As luck would have it, I paid my two hundred and fifty dollar registration fee for GSU the same day I found out I was accepted to be Dr. Jeanne Bohannon’s Graduate Research Assistant for KSU’s MAPW program. The registration fee was non-refundable but being a GRA meant my tuition was waived and I would receive a monthly stipend. This opportunity was a game changer.

When asked to select a focus and a minor, I chose Applied and Creative respectively. The selection was simple because the other option was Composition and Rhetoric and I had no interest in teaching. My first class of the program was Technical Writing with Dr. Anne Richards, and our semester-long assignment was creating a “how-to” manual. I was inspired by the writer Sloane Crosley and her popular, self-deprecating personal narratives about her mid-twenties adventures in New York City, and created a “how-to” guide titled #notetoself: becoming an adult and lessons learned along the way. This project had an enormous impression on my time spent in the MAPW program because I had my first experience with writing proposals, designing book layouts, and pitching my ideas. This was the first time during my higher education journey that I was able to see writing as a plausible career choice.
My internship at COED

During my second semester, I had the opportunity to work as the communications intern for the Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED). The office is quasi-government and works with the private and public sectors to create a master plan for land and mixed-use development within Cherokee County. The most recent project was the development of Cherokee 75 Business Park which attracted the adidas SPEEDFACTORY. As the communications intern (now coordinator), my daily tasks include marketing COED to current and potential residents of Cherokee County and creating promotional material for site-selectors and project managers to bring their business to the county. COED had been a team of two (Misti Martin, CEO, and President; Heath Tippens, Vice President, and Project Manager) for years.

The two are Cherokee natives and have worked in the economic development industry for decades. The recession in 2008 caused development to slow down, but offered an opportunity for Martin and Tippens to focus on a strategy for the future. COED hired Boyette Strategic Advisors to assess and identify areas of growth and provide pathways for COED to move forward in its branding and initiatives to develop a workforce pipeline for local residents to find jobs in Cherokee. Even though Cherokee County is considered part of Metro Atlanta, COED struggled to show potential clients that the county had just as much opportunity as Atlanta did. Common misconceptions included the myth that Cherokee was too far away from transit points such as the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and I-75, and that the county did not have enough available workforce to support the larger corporations meaning talent would have to be outsourced from nearby areas.
To correct these misconceptions, Boyette recommended targeting the millennial workforce by cultivating a community for entrepreneurs, developing a workforce collaborative to foster the skilled trade industries, and creating a public-facing platform (now known as Cherokee by Choice) to make the COED brand easier for the public to connect with and understand. The strategy became known as Opportunity Cherokee, and a large portion of the campaign was to hire on more employees to carry out the recommended initiatives. The COED team quickly grew from two to eight employees in less than a year.

The COED team includes:

Misti Martin, President, and CEO
Heath Tippens, Vice President, and Project Manager
Jonathan Chambers, Community Manager of Entrepreneurship
Molly Mercy, Film Project Manager
Krystine Davis, Operations Manager
Shawna Mercer, Workforce and Communications Manager
Ellie Colt, Investor Relations Coordinator
Ella Greer, Communications Coordinator

The COED team oversees several different initiatives:

**Cherokee Workforce Collaborative**—an alliance of education and business leaders to develop a workforce of Cherokee residents for high-quality jobs offered in the county.

**Fresh Start Cherokee**—an educational program that offers resources for entrepreneurs

**The Circuit**—a coworking space for startups and solo entrepreneurs
Camera Ready Community—a program that connects film industry professionals with talent and locations

My first week at COED was spent in several team meetings to plan the following projects: develop the new website, roll out the new public-facing brand, launch the first-ever Cherokee by Choice investment campaign, and organize the Cherokee Workforce Collaborative’s first-ever summer internship program.

Developing large amounts of content while on a tight deadline was not new for me, but the development came to a standstill when I became responsible for the 2017 Annual Report. This assignment became an issue because it required using Indesign to layout the document and I had never used the program before. I was able to use the design template website Canva for previous assignments such as COED’s holiday mailer and a social media graphic for the COED Facebook page. I had learned about Canva from my earlier internship positions, and I used the premade design templates for projects that did not require assistance from Armstrong or Georgia Tech’s art department. Larger projects such as magazine advertisements or recruitment brochures were written by the communications department and sent off to the art department for the design stages. COED did not have this luxury, and I quickly realized I was considered to be both the writer and designer.

Being responsible for the graphics was nerve-wracking for me. I wanted to do well at my job but I also had no idea what I was going when it came to document design. I had a working knowledge of InDesign from my high school newspaper days when we worked with the newspaper templates in Adobe Pagemaker (Adobe’s original document design software), but to
create the design elements from scratch was a completely different ball game. I briefly considered bringing this up to the team and reminding them that I was hired on to write press releases and my graphic design knowledge stopped at using Canva templates for Facebook. I didn’t want to let the team down, but I was definitely nowhere close to being a graphic designer.

After hearing about my struggles with the quickly evolving job description, Dr. Bohannon suggested registering for the Digital and Social Media Certificate program hosted by KSU’s School of Communication and Media. I chose the courses Digital Document Design and Digital and Social Media Content Writing. While my spring semester was intense with the additional course load, the two classes walked me through the Adobe universe and introduced me to resources that have helped me on a regular basis. As a result of this training, the projects I worked on expanded to include event invitations, monthly newsletters, social media graphics, event and tradeshow banners, programs and agendas, and flyers.

My ability to adapt to the needs of the office led to a promotion. I am now the Communications Coordinator for COED and am in charge of the social media accounts and promotional material. The new position came with a work computer and email address, but the crowning moment was when I changed my LinkedIn profile from “intern” to “coordinator.”

**The capstone project**

For the past two years, the capstone project was a looming presence over my shoulder. I wanted to create something great, something I could include in my portfolio and would impress potential employers. Dr. Lara Smith-Sitton suggested creating a Media Guide and Strategic Plan (MGSP) for COED as a practicum, and I agreed—thankful the project wouldn’t require a
lengthy, academic paper. The practicum, however, did require an enormous amount of research. I began by collecting similar documents from other organizations such as the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce, Partnership Gwinnett, Select Cobb Development Authority, Tennessee Economic Commission, and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. I found that many offices did not have strategic plans like the one I was creating, but relied more on white papers of local industries and annual reports that focused more on statistics than stories. I decided to follow through with the strategic plan because a guide outlining a process for content was much needed to streamline the team’s workflow.

The MGSP was long overdue for the office; the team had talked about creating the documents at some point but were pushed aside when other projects inevitably arose. My goal for the MGSP was to explain the different sectors of COED and show how each of them is necessary to create a pattern of sustainable growth for the county. Another goal was to develop a project that would call upon the team to strategize and codify the communications plan. The project would serve as a resource the office could refer back to when the time came to work on the next project. I had an idea of the content from the start but was unsure of what the MGSP was going to look like as a document.

The idea to create a guide to spell-out the design and style elements ranging from color palettes, words, phrases, and editorial calendars for all COED communication came from the struggle of organizing the 2017 Annual Report. COED was in the thick of multiple projects at the time, and I noticed that not having a clear objective, audience, or end product in mind made the creative process quite difficult. There were several long team meetings to discuss the overall
theme and layout and too much time was spent searching for information on achievements made in the past year. I kept thinking to myself that the 2018 Annual Report would be much easier because I would be more intentional in archiving important events throughout the year. This thought process is precisely what the strategic plan would showcase.

The research process

When I began to organize my thoughts for the MGSP, I was taking the Digital and Social Media Content Writing course and was able to develop the elements of the strategic plan over the semester. Based on the assignments in class and the needs of the office, I concluded that the following components would be essential elements to include in the strategic plan:

Editorial Calendar to include dates and content strategy of
  Social Media Campaigns
  Local Media Articles
  Monthly Newsletters

Outline of Objectives

Audience Profile

Social Media Templates

Press Release Guidelines

Organization of Official Documents

With a working outline of the documents in mind, I began my research. Dr. Smith-Sitton recommended keeping a journal to record my daily tasks and experiences as I created the capstone and I kept notes from my research there as well. This practice proved invaluable
because during the review process I found several entries discussing the team’s confusion about key words. These entries showed me the necessity of including a glossary of commonly used words and phrases within the strategic guide. The professional journal was also a great resource when it came time for me to update my resume because I kept track of my daily responsibilities and completed projects.

**Creating the documents**

When I began the project I assumed that the strategic plan would give me more trouble than the media guide; however, the opposite occurred. My research came up short on examples of strategic plans, but I was able to find several template ideas from platforms such as Canva, Pinterest, and Creative Market. Because of my knowledge of Adobe programs I did not have to purchase a template (although I did find that creating and selling document templates is an excellent idea for a side hustle) but could use the layouts as inspiration for my own. The design inspiration coupled with the awareness campaign I wrote for a class assignment made for an easier time creating the strategic plan. As for the copy, I wanted to make sure the content served to make the strategic plan a guide for how to develop the editorial content each year. To achieve that, I included templates and guidelines for social media posts, press releases and feature articles, and an editorial calendar to organize content. The result is a living document that can be adjusted to meet COED’s needs as the organization grows.

Creating the media guide was a different story. I found several samples from similar industries but these examples did not resonate with me and each one made me feel like I could create something better. A vast majority of the media guides I looked at served as simple
“one-sheets” composed of a mission statement, contact information, and related statistics (money raised, distribution numbers, audience demographics, etc.). This method was suitable for other offices, but COED included several different brands under the economic development umbrella (as referenced earlier) and a document with a quick mission statement and contact information was not going to help the public understand how COED served the community.

I wanted the media guide to be public-facing and serve as a document that could be used in public settings to explain the COED brand. I envisioned the material to be versatile, Heath Tippens (Vice President, Project Manager) could bring the guide to site-selection meetings to show project developers the many business parks and mixed-use developments that are available. Jonathan Chambers (Community and Entrepreneurship Manager) could show the guide to potential startups looking for office space and show them why Woodstock is an excellent alternative to Atlanta. Misti Martin (President and CEO) would be able to use the guide as she told the Cherokee by Choice story to investors, explaining all of the incredible work COED has done and will continue to do.

This vision put pressure on creating the media guide, and I went outside of the industry to seek out inspiration. The idea to research other industries came to me while at an Atlanta Hawks basketball game. I was looking through the game brochure—a compilation of player statistics of both teams and a rundown of sponsors—and searched for the Atlanta Hawks website to see what other promotional material was available. The guide is possibly the best example I found and inspired me to search for the media guides of other companies. I landed on the search page for the Vogue UK “2017 Media Guide.” Similar to the Atlanta Hawks, Vogue UK’s guide had
high-resolution photos and explained the brand’s history. I was attracted to the simple layout:
sans-serif text on one half of the page and a picture on the other side and a table of contents that
served as a guide for the document and an explanation of the several platforms that created the
brand. In the guide, *Vogue UK* began with defining the “Vogue Universe” by utilizing a
flowchart to visualize how the print, social media, and online platforms served different
audiences and content yet were united under one brand—everything I was attempting to do for
COED.

**The revision process**

While on my way to meet my capstone advisors Dr. Lara Smith-Sitton and Dr. Anne
Richards I could already hear them tell me that how surprised they were that I made it this far in
school without knowing how to use the em dash correctly. There was plenty of discussion on my
choice of formatting and Dr. Richards suggested creating a style guide to accompany my
documents. The original drafts had several different font sizes, use of bold and italics, and each
text box was a slightly different height and width. I created a master guide to list the appropriate
design of each element such as headings, body text, and photo size to correct the issue. Dr.
Smith-Sitton assisted me with the use of em dashes and pointed out ideas that could be expanded
in more detail. A flaw of mine is the tendency to jump from one idea to the next without
explanation.

**Conclusion**

Organizing a strategic plan for an office with as many brands as there are employees is no
easy feat. I had high hopes that the capstone would be a breeze to create, but guidance for
composing a media guide and strategic plan is about a mile wide and an inch deep. My Google search results yielded millions of useless articles. The article headlines showed promise, however, each article ended with a sales pitch to purchase an e-course in order to access further information. I quickly realized that my project was not going to fit neatly inside a template I found on the internet, I was going to have to figure out how to write and design the MGSP on my own. I had to pivot.

The capstone helped me develop skills such as document design and content writing, skills that I believe will prove useful in my professional writing career whether I become a content strategist for a corporation, a communications director for a nonprofit, an editor for a magazine, or an author of an young adult series.
Works Cited


The Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) is the lead agency for attracting new business investment, encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, aligning workforce education and training with in-demand jobs, diversifying the public revenue base, and promoting Cherokee as a destination for film projects. COED aids in economic growth by working with existing industries to expand as well as by recruiting additional businesses to the community. COED and the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce hold regional meetings around Cherokee County to stay in constant communication with existing businesses in order to serve as facilitators and community liaisons for their business needs.
Cherokee County is about to become a significant archetype for economic development. The future is just now emerging inside the world of Cherokee. We are ahead of schedule but only half way there.

Some economic teams pitch their collections of neighborhoods, site developments, attractions, entertainment venues, beautiful vistas, incredible restaurants, schools and shopping centers... live, work and play... so blasé. Amazing lifestyle and infrastructure is the prerequisite of anyone trying to play in our league.

Cherokee County is not a product for sale; it’s a mindset. It’s the established attitude that values the possibilities the 21st century provides. Cherokee is the people who choose wider access for opportunity and growth.
AWARENESS CAMPAIGN
The Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) exists to promote economic development in Cherokee County by aiding in the expansion of existing industry and attracting new investment and quality employment opportunities. The community focuses on economic development to create economic opportunity for all citizens by diversifying the public revenue base, and stimulating business investment for high quality jobs.

**Cherokee County Awareness Goals**

- COED’s mission and purpose and what the board does to serve Cherokee with business partnerships, educational services, and the film industry.

- The traditional college experience is not the only option. The skilled trades industry offers lucrative career opportunities as well.

- COED is here to serve the community—not turn the county into an industrial park—and make Cherokee an excellent choice to live, work, and play.
AUDIENCE & PUBLICS ANALYSIS

COED uses social media to create awareness within the community about what the team does on a daily basis as well as events that they host. COED attempts to reach the residents of Cherokee County as they are the audience COED has in mind when creating initiatives and bringing industries to the county. The audience remains the same on both platforms, Facebook and Instagram, but small business owners are more likely to interact on Instagram.

COED uses social media to post campaign efforts, office news, share articles from local newspapers, and create event pages. Facebook and Instagram are the most popular accounts. The posts on Facebook receive 0-20 likes with 2-12 shares and Instagram posts see 24-50 likes on average. Posts about casting calls in the area engage the largest audience and receive multiple comments, shares, and likes.

HIGHLY ACTIVE FOLLOWERS

Employees of COED
Board Members
Members of Circuit and Fresh Start Cherokee initiatives

Followers in this category share and like posts most often. They are most likely to be “interested” in attending events.

MODERATELY ACTIVE FOLLOWERS

Residents of Cherokee County

These followers like COED along with other Cherokee organizations such as small business, Chamber of Commerce, and the Historical Society. They most often interact with posts about casting calls, career expo announcements, and posts featuring other local businesses.

NON-ACTIVE FOLLOWERS

Small Business Owners in Cherokee
Local government offices such as the school district, politicians, libraries, and the parks department

These followers like the pages but are not likely to interact with posts.
CONTENT STRATEGY ANALYSIS

COMMON BUZZWORD AND PHRASES ARE:

**Cherokee by Choice** is the new branding platform for COED. The tagline is used to show that Cherokee has always been and will continue to be an excellent choice for those looking to live, work, and play.

**Workforce Collaborative** is an initiative that works to ensure a pipeline of future workers through internships, innovative career preparation, and education alliances.

**Talent Pipeline** is a focus on skilled trade programs to train the residents of Cherokee for the workforce supplied by industries within the county.

**Camera-Ready Community** is a distinction Cherokee received when the county was certified as “camera ready” in 2011. Cherokee has been a hotspot for several major motion pictures. Currently the movie *Being Mary Jane* and the series *Ozark* are being filmed in the county.

**Fresh Start Cherokee** is an initiative of the Cherokee Office of Economic Development designed to provide educational programming and support for startups in Cherokee County. The “Lunch Circuit” and “1 Million Cups” programs are housed under this initiative.

**The Circuit** is Cherokee’s first ever co-working space for entrepreneurs and innovators. The Circuit is the physical space for the “Fresh Start Cherokee” initiative.

**Bedroom Community** is a common term used to describe the lack of business and commercial industries in the county. Studies show that 80% of employed Cherokee residents commute outside the county every day for work. The term is often accompanied by the phrase “forget the commute,” an initiative to bring awareness about jobs available within Cherokee.
PLATFORM ANALYSIS

COED could better utilize its reach by creating a cohesive brand throughout its platforms both digital and print. On the social platforms, calibrating the accounts to project the same image without sharing the same post will increase interest throughout the digital space. COED could benefit greatly by adding a blog to the website like Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) has to create a medium that can expand on the programs, initiatives, and responsibilities of the office. Using mixed media throughout the platforms like the Montgomery Count of Economic Development Commission (MOCO) will refresh COED’s pages and allow followers to be participants rather than spectators.

BRAND VOICE

COED’s tone is enthusiastic. The team is excited to be sharing updates about new corporate developments,
job opportunities, and local business successes. A win for COED is a win for Cherokee and those feelings are translated on COED’s social media pages.

PURPOSE

COED’s social media accounts is to create awareness for the public and drive traffic back to the website which houses the site selection program, job board, press releases, and current tax incentives. The accounts will inform residents, site selectors, corporations, and location scouts of the many opportunities Cherokee has to offer and will provide a link back to the website for them to find out more information.

LANGUAGE

COED will abide by proper English and grammar rules when writing posts. Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook accounts will take on a more conversational attitude and the LinkedIn page will reflect COED’s professional tone. The social media accounts are COED’s outlet to connect and engage with its audience, therefore the team will take on a trendier language with a play on current trends such as viral fads (running man challenge) and national holidays (talk like a pirate day). When creating the editorial calendar, the team will discuss which trending topics would be most appropriate for COED to take part in.
To use all channels appropriately and cut down on identical posts, the COED team will “cross pollinate” posts by using the following guidelines:

Facebook is COED’s central hub for social media and all updates regarding the team will stem from this account. Examples include: Event Announcements, Corporate Awards, Ground Breaking & Grand Openings, Press Releases, Local Business Spotlights

Twitter is COED’s account to collaborate with other accounts to share news about economic development happening across the state and nation. COED will retweet articles and videos, create polls, and “pin” important announcements (such as a reminder for an upcoming event.)

Instagram is COED’s second most popular account and will be used to showcase Cherokee landmarks and events. All photos and captions for the account will adhere to the same photo editing (filters) guidelines to create a sense of cohesion throughout the page.

LinkedIn is COED’s least followed account and will be used to connect the team to other economic development offices and businesses. Much like the Twitter page, the LinkedIn page will share videos and articles about economic development trends.

To keep the audience from being overwhelmed with COED updates, a weekly newsletter will be emailed on Friday mornings to reflect on the week that was and touch on the week that is to come. This format will allow for all
information to be collected in one place and not be lost in the newsfeed. Each story will have a photo, recap, and a link to the website where the full article can be accessed.

EDITORIAL CALENDAR

COED will keep updates to three a week on each account to ensure high quality content and keep posts from being lost within the newsfeed vacuum. The following are ideas for weekly content and future campaigns:

**Guest Takeover**—a local Cherokee influence will takeover a COED platform. The guest can share topics such as:

“A day in the life”
“24 hours in Cherokee”
Restaurant or business spotlights
Cherokee park and trail guide
Selfie tour around famous film spots

**Friday Roundup**—5 links to articles, videos, infographics about any focus on economic development. This post will link back to the website’s blog and will advertise the weekly newsletter.

**Throwback Thursday**—A “blast from the past” post about Cherokee. This theme will allow COED to repost updates of importance (such as the *Cherokee By Choice* kickoff or a popular 1MC Cherokee gathering).

**Cherokee Crush Monday**—a spotlight on anything Cherokee. This theme could be as simple as a photo of a pie from Pie Bar or an article about the Etowah Electric Eagles’ recent wins.
EVALUATION

After signing in to an event, participants will receive a survey card to evaluate our social media presence and branding message. To keep from being repetitive, different questions will be asked at each event.

SURVEY QUESTIONS:

1. Is this your first time at a COED sponsored event?
2. How did you find out about this event?
3. Why did you come to this event?
   Networking | Looking for new job opportunity | Startup advice
4. Are you a resident of Cherokee County?
5. Do you follow us on social media? If so, which accounts:
   Facebook | Instagram | Twitter | LinkedIn
6. How often do you want to see posts from COED?
   1-2 times a week | 3-5 times a week | 7-9 times a week
7. Circle the three topics you want to know the most about:
   Event Announcements | Articles about Economic Development
   Fun Facts about Cherokee | Job Opportunities Entrepreneurship
9. Would you be interested in a weekly newsletter?
10. Are you interested in a COED podcast?
11. How often do you read the press releases and articles that COED publishes?
12. How often do you click on the link COED provides in a social media post?
13. How often do you visit the COED website?
14. What does economic development mean to you?
15. Would you be willing to share your Cherokee by Choice story with us?

By adhering to the above guidelines and survey feedback, COED will better its outreach efforts and create high quality content that is connected to its brand message and objectives.
EDITORIAL CALENDARS
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<th>Platforms for Content</th>
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<td><strong>FACEBOOK</strong></td>
<td>#CBCselfie challenge</td>
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<td><strong>TWITTER</strong></td>
<td>#hotjobalert post for Northside Hospital position</td>
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<td><strong>INSTAGRAM</strong></td>
<td>R&amp;D Mechanical Intern picture &amp; spotlight</td>
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**THURSDAY**

**FACEBOOK**
Share SEDC article, photo of Misti and Gene
link back to annual report

**TWITTER**
Retweet Ozark trailer

**INSTAGRAM**
Boomerang of annual report, link back to SEDC article
Post about Brand Nix takeover on Friday

**LINKEDIN**
Share SEDC article, reshare ARC’s
post about board meeting

**FRIDAY**

**FACEBOOK**
Post about winner of the CBC selfie challenge
Share 1MC recap article

**TWITTER**
#hotjobalert for Yanmar EVO//CENTER position

Friday Roundup post linking back to newsletter

**INSTAGRAM**
Brad Nix Takeover

**LINKEDIN**
Share blog post, ask for job interview tips to be used
in next blog post

**NEWSLETTER**
Send out Newsletter for public and investors
PRESS RELEASES

Written and distributed as needed. The press release will include the COED boilerplate. Include a picture if one is available. Publish the press release on the COED website under the News/Media tab and post an appropriate social media graphic to all channels with a link back to the website attached. Email copies to media contacts at Atlanta Business Chronicle, Cherokee Tribune, Atlanta Business Journal, and Marietta Daily Journal.
The Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) was officially recognized for their award-winning entries in the Communication Awards competition by the Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) at the 2018 Annual Conference in Mobile, Alabama. SEDC, the oldest and largest regional economic development association representing 17 states, hosts the annual competition to recognize communities with outstanding implementation in messaging, marketing, and outreach campaigns. Over 20 categories of marketing work submitted by SEDC members were evaluated within four division size levels. Gene A. Stinson, SEDC President awarding Misti Martin, COED President, with the “Best in Class,” and “Merit,” awards.

COED’s Cherokee by Choice Strategy and Campaign Brochure won the top award “Best in Class” and the 2017 Annual Report received the “Merit” award. This recognition shows a record of excellence as COED previously won “Award of Excellence” for their 2014 Annual Report. “The COED team was happy to work with Stone Ward on the Campaign Brochure and MOJO Productions on the Annual Report to spotlight Cherokee as a sustainable community where you can live, play, and work,” said Misti Martin, President of COED.

“These annual Communication Awards recognize and showcase the leading communication and marketing work done by economic development professionals throughout the south. The Cherokee Office of Economic Development hit the mark this year with these communication pieces. Its entry in the Special Purpose Brochure category titled Cherokee By Choice Campaign Brochure, won an Award of Excellence for the Medium Division. Its entry in the Annual Reports category titled Cherokee Office of Economic Development Annual Report, won an Award of Merit for the Medium Division. These pieces not only showed creativity, but also solid messaging and effectiveness at reaching their target audience. We were wowed by all the entries we received this year and were impressed with the high level of marketing work being done in economic development by SEDC members,” said SEDC President, Gene Stinson, after the ceremony.

To view the annual report, follow the link here: www.cherokeega.org.

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The Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) exists to promote economic development in Cherokee by working with community investors and leaders to attract and retain a wide range of innovative industries, develop a highly-skilled workforce, and diversify the public revenue base. COED facilitates several programs such as Camera Ready Communities, Fresh Start Cherokee, and the Cherokee Workforce Collaborative to implement the Cherokee By Choice strategy. The public-private initiative works to create economic opportunity for all residents and to make Cherokee a sustainable community and an excellent place to live, play, and work.

Media Contact | Shawna Mercer | smercer@cherokeega.org | 770.345.0600
LUNCH CIRCUIT ARTICLE

The Lunch Circuit is a monthly event hosted by Fresh Start Cherokee and held in The Circuit. The article will serve as a recap for the interview and will include a brief introduction. The content will be written in a question-answer format and end with a boilerplate and invitation to attend next month’s event. Include three to five photos from the event. The article will be posted on the COED website under the News/Media tab and shared on all social media channels with a link back to the website.
Ashley Holcomb, youngest of ten, grew up chasing chickens in Ball Ground. Holcomb is now the owner of Landmarx Inc, a land surveying and construction management firm, and a board member of the Development Authority of Cherokee County. Jonathan Chambers, Community Manager of Entrepreneurship for the Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED), interviewed Holcomb about his entrepreneurship journey for the Lunch Circuit—a monthly gathering powered by Fresh Start Cherokee for local entrepreneurs to hear from the visionary behind successful, local businesses. Holcomb shared his origin story from growing up in Ball Ground, becoming a city council member, monetizing his love of the outdoors, and navigating his business career. In true "dig, grind, hatch" fashion, the cornerstone of Fresh Start Cherokee, Holcomb has dug harder than many others around him. As a result, he has gone from a humble beginning of raising chickens to hatching successful business ventures.

“I had my first business venture when I was eight,” began Holcomb. “We had chickens, but we didn’t have a very good system to keep them in the coop so my dad would pay me fifty cents for each chicken I caught and brought back. I paid Jimmy Cowart twenty-five cents for each chicken he caught, and I was able to stay inside and watch cartoons. I remember this clearly because it was a big learning lesson when my dad came in and asked why Jimmy was out there catching chickens. I told him I hired Jimmy to catch the chickens for me. Dad said he was firing me and hiring Jimmy directly, and I was cut out. I told that story to my kids, and they have worked to make their own entrepreneurial opportunities. I remember being at a baseball tournament one weekend and noticing they were going to the concession stand without asking me for money. They had set up shop in a pavilion and were custom ordering colors for those rubber band bracelets that were popular at the time. They even hired salesmen. They made hundreds of dollars that weekend. There’s a lot to not giving them anything; they figure it out.”

How do you define entrepreneurship?

“For me, it’s defined by seeing something you are interested in and deciding to do it yourself. Sometimes you fall into it, and that is my story. I’m not academic; I struggled all through school. I failed every math and English class at least once in high school. I was just happy to get out of there. I graduated high school and began to work for the company I own now for $6 an hour as a line crew member. I watched other developers that we were working for and I had the idea that if they could do it, I could do it and maybe do it even better.”

When did you realize that you struggled with Dyslexia?

“When an early age, around third grade, school got very hard for me. I was never diagnosed with dyslexia, and I didn’t know that I had it until my youngest children had issues with reading. We were getting them evaluated for dyslexia, and I saw an incredible resemblance with what my kids were struggling with and what I struggled with growing up. I hesitate to elevate dyslexia too much because I am glad I didn’t know I had the disorder back then. My mother said many times, “if they had class outside, he would do better; he’s about the outdoors.” So I thought, “maybe I’m not dumb, I just need to be outside.” Being dyslexic, you have a very heightened sense of concepts, emotions, and awareness.”

You’ve mentioned the importance of self-awareness and knowing your weaknesses

“I compare it to driving a car; you have to know your blind spots. The bottom line is
that as individuals you have to know your blind spots. You have to know that you lose your cool a little too quick and be aware of that, so you don’t do it. It’s easy to get frustrated in leadership roles, but it is critical to stop immediately and do your very best to extend grace. People say that you can’t stop making mistakes, but you can minimize it. You can hone your art of business, the art of parenting, the art of friendship or whatever the case may be by knowing your blind spots.

I tell investors that you are not successful by the deals you do but by the deals you choose not to do.”

How do you build credibility with people who think that you need a college degree?

“That was an issue I faced. You have to buy your time and wait until your gray hair comes in. All of my early career I heard that I had to go back and finish school. If you are academically astute, you should go and get a degree. But for the handful of us who are bad at it, you have to figure out another way. I woke up one day and suddenly became the wiser person sitting at the table—all because of my gray hair.

When I graduated high school, my dad gave me $100 and wished me good luck. He said I could live in the house as long as I abided by their rules. He didn’t try to call and get me a job or tell me what I should do.

I wound up going back to school two years after high school, but I still didn’t do well. I was at Southern Tech and had a professor tell me that school isn’t for me. I got the message, and it fired me up. I learned there is more than one way to skin a cat and that was what I had to do. I had to dig deeper and harder.

One night I was watching an interview with a Georgia CEO about the advice they would give to the younger generation. The typical advice was to follow dreams and get an education. They got to Pete Correll, the Georgia Pacific CEO and he said: “just remember this, you can get more done working 60 to 70 hours than the guy working 40.” That clicked for me, I may struggle academically, but I’m going to work longer hours. It takes me three times longer than others to read or write an email; email is the worst thing that has happened in my career. But I work longer hours.”

What was it like living in Ball Ground while ‘American Made’ was being filmed?

“The movie, American Made, helped move Ball Ground forward and everyone was hyped about it. While the film crew was setting up, they came across my mom’s house and thought it would be an excellent location for some of the scenes. The team explained what would be required to move all of the pictures and trinkets, and she has kept every ceramic trinket anyone has ever given her, so there is plenty of them around the house. The crew said that they would set the trinkets and photos out but they would put them back after the filming was completed. My mom replied, “If it were Patrick Swayze I would move my stuff, but Tom Cruise isn’t worth moving my trinkets.” The film crew came back several times, but she turned them down. I hated to inform her that Patrick Swayze is no longer with us.”

Tell us about your political career.

“I have a way of accidentally falling into things and getting in over my head. I had no plans of running, but there was an issue in the city. When I brought it up to the council members, someone encouraged me to run because I was so interested and had great ideas. I was 22 and had to run against the incumbent who had been there for several years, but it was Ball Ground, and I had a big
family, so it wasn’t fair. I campaigned door-to-door. If I’m doing anything, I do it. I usually make it a bigger deal than it is.

I would tell every young person that getting involved, like working with a board, is a great opportunity for the insight and education that it provides. Being a board member is probably one of the most instrumental roles in my career. Cherokee is primed for some of the best economic development opportunities in its history, and I got on the economic development board because I thought I could learn a lot from the other members and make a difference. I believe that anyone who is interested in building a business and learning about their market should make an effort to get involved in those organizations.”

Thinking about my generation and the one below me, we have a reputation for not staying at a job for long, but you have been at yours for the past 30 years, how do you stick with something that long?

“By accident. I would have been game to change jobs, and in fact, I have changed jobs. I started as an employee and then joined a partnership. One partner left, and it was a partnership of two, and then heading into the recession I bought the other partner out, and it was just me. During the recession, he wanted to shut down, but I knew that it wouldn’t be easy to crank the motor back up if we stopped. I looked through the recession, not knowing I was looking way through the recession, but I didn’t want to start all over. I could navigate through it; I just needed to reinvent the process.

Today’s environment is not like any other time in the past. The people and mentors I look up to have defined themselves by their career. The millennials are not defined by their job but by their recreation. For example, a guy who is an attorney will post more pictures of him rock climbing, and people begin thinking of him as a rock climber more than an attorney. I am a little more defined by my career because I don’t have many hobbies. My job is my hobby. Millenials are not seeking to be determined by their careers.”

How do you find your mentors?

“I’ve met my best mentor, Skip Spears, while on the comprehensive land use planning committee back in the 90’s and he and I disagreed about everything. He became a great mentor in teaching me financial literacy. When I grew up, we didn’t talk about investing money; we talked about chickens, not investing millions of dollars. It was foreign to me to hear about those kinds of things but being in the right place and putting myself out there led me to all of the mentors that I’ve had. You have to put yourself in a position to meet the people you look up to and respect. All of my mentors were an accident; they wound up being more casual relationships, most of them began by being partners first.”

Now that you are a CEO, what advice would you give to the younger generation?

“First and foremost, you have to know the numbers. Financial literacy is huge, and it’s important to be transparent about what you can and can’t afford. I owned six percent of my first land venture.

A critical component of the business is understanding the balance sheet. Many people who go into business don’t realize they are set up to fail because they haven’t run the numbers or been honest with the numbers. You may have a great idea that is a terrible business. You have to dig as you have never dug before. A lot of companies have failed because the leader doesn’t have the tenacity to face obstacles. You have to be willing to work longer hours. Once you’re in it, be in it.”
1 MILLION CUPS RECAP ARTICLE

1 Million Cups Cherokee (1MC Cherokee) is a bimonthly event held every first and third Wednesday of the month. The first event is held at The Circuit and the second is held in a different city in Cherokee (the city and building rotate). The recap article includes a brief introduction of the company and a question asked during the Q&A session. The boilerplate will include a link to the video on Fresh Start Cherokee’s Youtube page, and information about next month’s locations presenters. The byline is a play on the company presenting and coffee. Post the recap article to the COED website and share the link to all social media channels.
Adam Baker knows a thing or two about the importance of coaches—especially recruitment coaches. “After my sophomore year, I was cut and had to find a new school. I knew nothing about Division II schools and had two months to make the jump, so I partnered with a recruitment coach and was able to finish out my playing career at the University of North Georgia,” said Baker as he explained his transition from Western Carolina University to the University of North Georgia.

After college, Baker pursued a career in the sales industry but continued to coach baseball for Lassiter High School and King’s Academy. A decade later, Baker grew tired of balancing his job titles of account executive and coach and decided to leave his corporate job to build Rounding Third, a passion project years in the making. From his experience with the recruiting process through high school and college, Baker was able to identify the recruiting industry’s need for a more engaging and transparent process. Rounding Third’s mission is to help high school baseball players and their parents understand and excel in the college recruiting process. “Only 11 percent of high schoolers go on to play baseball in college. Georgia is a hotbed of talent—the issue isn’t lack of talent, it’s a lack of knowledge,” said Baker as he explained the origin story of Rounding Third to the 1 Million Cups Cherokee (1MC CHK) community on Wednesday.

Baker’s startup stands out from other recruitment platforms for a few reasons, one of them being his target audience—baseball. Rather than attempting to be a consultant for all sports, Baker decided to narrow his audience and specialize in one field.

Rounding Third’s process stands out against other similar models because of Baker’s commitment to creating an individual strategy for each player. Baker’s college experience deems him an expert to guide the players and their families through the process of being scouted and making connections with college teams. The foundation of Rounding Third rests on being more than a platform to host a player’s highlight reel. “Some challenges that I have are exposure and a sense of urgency. Many parents don’t know this is a service exists and many think they can put it off until senior year.”

Explaining the importance of adding a recruitment coach to the lineup, Baker compared his process to a personal trainer, “Just like everyone knows they have to get healthy, they don’t want to spend the money now and think they can do it themselves, and that they can do it later.” This especially rings true now as college coaches are looking past high school seniors and scout sophomores and juniors instead. Those expecting the senior year to be the time to reach out to college coaches find that scholarships and spots on time have already been claimed.

During the Q&A portion of the presentation, audience members focused on marketing strategies to get Rounding Third in front of the baseball community.

Who is a good fit for your recruitment process?

“We are trying to work with the kids who are looking to continue their life dream of playing baseball. Our ideal client is the Division II or Division III player who has no idea about the Division II or III schools; there are so many schools out there. 42 schools in Georgia offer baseball programs, but only 8 are Division I. We want to help the kids who think since they are not good enough to play at a Division I university, they settle for ending their baseball career after high school instead. There are so many schools that have scholarship money and Rounding Third helps the players connect with them. I’m trying to help the kids who don’t know the options they have.”

1MC CHK was honored to have special guest Terry Evans, Atlanta Braves’ Chaplain, in the audience of community supporters and baseball enthusiasts. Evans shared his thoughts on the startup, “I believe that with Rounding Third, Adam is building a bridge that can help many high school athletes keep pursuing a dream that would otherwise end at their graduation.”
LOCAL MEDIA ARTICLE

Each month, the COED team writes an article for the local Around About Media magazine. The article is submitted one month in advance (September’s article is submitted by August 5th). The team should meet every 6 months to plan the content of each article for the upcoming 6 months. For example, an article about updating a resume would appear in September (National Resume Month) and include an announcement for March’s Career Expo. The article for December will advertise the Cherokee Film Summit in January, and the January article will announce the MIT Entrepreneurship Program set to launch in February.
Cherokee saw an overall growth of 17,448 jobs in 2017 and 2018 is expected to be no different. To provide a clearinghouse for jobs within the county, Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) has recently launched a brand new website for talent and career development to connect Cherokee’s innovative industries and residents in one place. The website provides an interactive job search platform, a monthly spotlight on local businesses, and a series of resources to help Cherokee residents #forgetthecommute and find their next career. Take advantage of National Update Your Resume Month and set aside time to update your resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile now so that you will be prepared to click “submit” later on!

The Job Description

Often overlooked, the job description is a crucial component of every resume. Think of it this way, the company is giving you a sneak peek into what they are looking for in their next employee, use that knowledge as your cheat sheet as you tailor your resume to emphasize how your experience exemplifies those characteristics and responsibilities.

“During an interview, employers can ask you about information listed on your résumé, cover letter, and supporting documents that are submitted for a position. It is important that you are accurate and honest,” said Annette Sinclair, Chattahoochee Technical College Career Services Coordinator.

To keep your experience on track and relevant, ask yourself these questions: Does the experience show how you are qualified for the position you are applying for and does it account for a significant span of time? If the answer is yes to both, list the experience on your resume and then explain the significance in your cover letter.

Cover Letter

“The cover letter will introduce you as a candidate, clarify the specific position for which you are applying, enable you to highlight your strengths, and ask an employer to take action. This is the closest opportunity to a conversation so be conversational. Do not regurgitate your resume. Research the company and the role so that you can convince them you understand who they are and why the role is important to them.

When writing your cover letter it may be helpful to break it down into three sections:

The first paragraph introduces yourself, identifies the position you are applying for and how you will follow up.

The second paragraph interprets your resume, not repeats it, so the employer understands why you are a good fit for their company and the position. You can cite previous experience in more descriptive terms but remain brief. How does your experience and how are you personally the best fit for them?

The third paragraph is simply a thank you, a request for action to offer an interview and details on how to contact you.” Karen Mathews, Director of Vocation and Career Services at Reinhardt University.

Now that your resume and cover letter are bright and sparkling from your refreshing session, you are ready to create a job profile and start searching for your next career on the COED’s newly launched job search board at www.cherokeega.org/job!

It may be tempting to assume that since you have already updated your resume now, it’ll be ready to go by the time the annual Cherokee Career Expo rolls around in March, but it is important to update and refresh your resume every month or so! This new habit will allow you to access the best version of you at any moment. It will be much easier to remember newly mastered skills and recent accomplishments by making a point to review your resume each month rather than waiting until the very moment a copy of your resume is necessary.
CHEROKEE DEVELOPERS DAY
GOLF TOURNAMENT

The golf tournament is an annual event held in November at the Hawks Ridge Golf Club. Promotional material include:

- a Save-the-Date to be sent out at the end of September
- an invitation to be sent mid-October
- a reminder email to be sent week before event
- and a sponsorship banner (82X33). The banner should be prepared and sent to print shop before November 1st.
SAV E T H E D A T E

14TH ANNUAL
CHEROKEE DEVELOPERS’ DAY
GOLF TOURNAMENT
11.15.18

Hosted By
CHEROKEE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Cherokee By Choice.

Hawks Ridge Golf Club
1100 Hawks Ridge Drive
Ball Ground, GA 30107

Schedule of Events:
9:30 Registration begins and driving range opens for practice
11:00 Shotgun Start for “Texas Scramble” event
11:30 Non-Golfers’ lunch at Clubhouse
12:30 Non-Golfers’ activities in Ben Hogan Cottage
4:00 Awards Reception at Clubhouse with drinks and hors d’oeuvres and great prizes

*Proper golf attire is required; visit www.HawksRidge.com for details.

Thank you sponsors!

Cherokee’s 14th Annual Developers’ Day Golf Tournament

Hawks Ridge Golf Club
1100 Hawks Club Drive
Ball Ground, GA 30107

Activities available for non-golfers
*This invitation is non-transferable
Registration at 9:30am
Shotgun Start 11am
CHEROKEE WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE
SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The program occurs once a year. All promotional material should
be prepared by January. Material should be sent to Cherokee
County School District media content. The school district will then
distribute the materials through appropriate channels.
2018 Summer Internship Program
If you are a junior or senior in high school, you are eligible to participate in Cherokee’s first paid summer internship program!

Apply Today
WWW.CHEROKEEGA.ORG/INTERNSHIPS
and use this summer to gain valuable internship experience:

Six-week paid internship
One-on-one Mentorship
Personalized training
Early Exposure to Career Path
Rewarding job close to home

Don’t miss this opportunity to gain real world experience with Cherokee’s leading employers!
CHEROKEE BY CHOICE NEWSLETTER

A monthly newsletter for the board of directors and campaign investors. Content includes recent COED news, economic development news, COED team spotlight, and calendar of events for the upcoming month.
MONTHLY INVESTOR UPDATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COED LAUNCHES WEBSITE
The new site is up and running! Please check it out, let us know what you think, and send in your #cherokeebychoice story!  
READ MORE

SCHOEN IN THE NEWS

SCHOEN EXPANSION ADDS JOBS
Schoen Insulation Services has expanded its operations with the addition of a 60,000-square-foot facility.  
READ MORE

ADIDAS SPEEDFACTORY OPENS
The facility in Cherokee County is now pumping out shoes using an automated digital manufacturing process.  
READ MORE

GET TO KNOW YOUR PARTNERS

Misti Martin is a native of Georgia and has been in the Chamber and Economic Development field for over 25 years.  
READ MORE

UPCOMING EVENTS

Investor Meeting
Tuesday, October 11th, 8am.  
COED Board Room
RSVP

MSK Grand Opening
Thursday, October 28th, 4pm.  
Cherokee 75 Corporate Park
RSVP

CHEROKEE by Choice
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
cherokeega.org | info@cherokeega.org | 770.495.0600
ANNUAL REPORT

An annual publication, the report will be prepared beginning in late November and will be presented at the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce’s annual State of the County address in early February. In order to keep information organized, save a copy of all press releases, feature articles, and event pictures logged in a folder titled “Annual Report 2018” (date to be changed each year). Upload folder to OneDrive and share with the team. Sections remain the same from year to year but statistics and events should be updated. When the report is published, upload the digital link to the COED website under the Annual Report tab.
ATLANTA BUSINESS CHRONICLE ARTICLE AND AD

COED is responsible for the Atlanta Business Chronicle (ABC) “Market Report” each November. The office is given space to write an article about current projects and economic developments in Cherokee. To accompany the article, COED will provide an advertisement for the county. All content is due to the media contact at ABC by November 1st.
LIVE, WORK & PLAY... so blasé

NO LONGER A UNIQUE SALES FEATURE, IT’S AN EXPECTATION.

Discover the *fastest* growing county in Metro Atlanta.

Cherokee By Choice.
cherokeega.org
FRESH TAKES ON A FRESH START

Monthly graphic for social media channels. A local entrepreneur will give three tips on entrepreneurship (usually relevant to their field.) The graphic may accompany a blog post that expands on advice given.
Your logo is not your baby, it's just a graphic to get the startup off the ground. If you don't have the budget to bring in a designer, do a simple wordmark for the logo instead.

When it comes to branding, it's more important to know your customer's favorite color.

Brand identity needs to be laser focused. You have seconds to capture a customer’s attention so your message must be clear and concise.
THE CIRCUIT TESTAMONIALS

A weekly social media post for all platforms.
The Circuit- #diggrindhatch, quote from member
The Circuit gave us the ability to build a name for ourselves.

MICHAEL CALDWELL, BLACK AIRPLANE
INVESTOR SPOTLIGHT
A weekly social media post for all platforms.
COED- #investorspotlight, photo & county outline
Quote from investor and logo if requested.
#WORKFORCE WEDNESDAY
A weekly social media post for all platforms to promote recent news pertaining to Cherokee Workforce Collaborative initiatives.
“I gained real-world experience and formed relationships with coworkers in a viable company. I now have a more refined and realistic expectation for all future jobs.”

Robbie Alden, R&D Mechanical intern
CAREER EXPO
The expo is held each March and COED partners with GDOL to host and promote the event. COED will change all social media and website headers to an advertisement for the expo and event reminders will be sent on all platforms on a weekly basis beginning in January and leading up to the event.
MARCH 14, 2018 | 2-6 PM  
Resume assistance will be available at 1PM

CHEROKEE CAREER EXPO

Northside Hospital Cherokee Conference Center
1130 Bluffs Parkway, Canton, GA 30114
REPURPOSING CONTENT FOR FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

Content should be published on all social media accounts but should not be the same post for each platform. Each post should be appropriate for the platform it will be published on. Avoid large blocks of text and include a graphic. The pictures should include people whenever possible.
We sure are! Cherokee is excited to be a partner in this growing industry! When it comes to Film & TV, Cherokee is all in!
#cherokeebychoice #filmfriday #gafilmacademy

GA Film Academy's Executive Director Jeffrey Stepakoff was the keynote speaker at the Chattahoochee Technical College's Literature Festival yesterday where he highlighted exciting opportunities in Georgia's Film and Television Production industry.

As a Camera Ready Community since 2011, Cherokee has demonstrated time and again that we are all in!

#cherokeebychoice #filmfriday #filmedincherokee
GLOSSARY OF COMMON WORDS AND PHRASES
1 Million Cups Cherokee: (1MC CHK) A program of the Kauffman Foundation, 1MC CHK works with entrepreneurs, empowering them with the tools and resources to break down barriers that stand in the way of starting and growing their businesses. 1MC CHK is sponsored by each city of Cherokee.

adidas SPEEDFACTORY: adidas’ first American SPEEDFACTORY is located in Cherokee (Cherokee 75 Corporate Park). The factory is completely automated and designed to be able to speedily produce limited runs of customizable product or replenish the hottest product selling quickly during the same season. Because of this innovative process, adidas can get shoes to market three times faster than traditional means.

Bedroom Community: A common term used to describe the lack of business and commercial industries in the county. Studies show that 80% of employed Cherokee residents commute outside the county every day for work.

Cherokee Career Expo: The annual expo is Cherokee’s largest career fair. The program is hosted by COED in partnership with Rhinehardt University, Chattahoochee Technical College, and Georiga Department of Labor. The career expo is exclusive to Cherokee industries and offers resume help for job seekers.

Cherokee by Choice: The branding platform for COED. The tagline is used to show that Cherokee has always been and will continue to be an excellent choice for those looking to live, work, and play.

Cherokee By Choice Campaign: A $2 million economic development fundraising campaign. The five-year public-private partnership reinforces Cherokee’s role as a leader in economic development focusing on three
specific goals to grow the business and tax base, the local workforce for existing employers, and build inventory for commercial investment.

**Cherokee County Development Authority (CCDA):** A board of elected officials representing each city of Cherokee County. This board serves as the constitutional authority that oversees COED and the DACC. This board meets quarterly on the last Monday of every month. These meetings are not open to the public.

**Cherokee County Economic Impact Report:** Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute, the nation’s largest and most comprehensive university-based program of business and industry assistance, technology commercialization, and economic development, analyzed the Cherokee by Choice initiative and quantified the overall impact (both directly and indirectly) of COED’s efforts.

**Cherokee Workforce Collaborative:** An initiative comprised of leaders within the local education and business community. COED facilitates the connection between these two sectors as the committees work to develop programs such as high school internships, school counselor externships, and career expos to develop talent within the county.

**Cherokee 75 Corporate Park:** A business park at the intersection of Highway 92 and I-575. The light industrial zoned park is home to international business such as Jaipur Living, MSK Covertech, adidas SPEEDFACTORY, Oechsler Motion, and thyssenkrupp.

**Camera Ready Community:** A program directed by the Georgia Film and TV Production department housed under the Georgia Department of Economic
Development (GDEcD), Camera Ready Communities is a service that provides trained liaisons to help with scouting, permitting and other production needs.

The Circuit: Cherokee County’s first-ever coworking space for entrepreneurs and innovators. The Circuit is the physical space for the “Fresh Start Cherokee” initiative. The Woodstock Economic Development office and Chattahoochee Technical College are also partners for the space. The Circuit is open to the public but has separate, private offices and desks for those who pay a membership fee.

Coworking: A coworking space is often a cafe-like collaboration space, but it could also be an office-like setting or even someone’s home or loft. The main idea is that individual workers come together in a shared place to enjoy greater productivity and a sense of community.

Creative Problem Solvers: Biweekly gathering for entrepreneurs in The Circuit to share problems and brainstorm solutions. More than networking and beyond passing referrals, this is a community designed to deep dive into entrepreneurial business challenges in hopes to ask deep questions, challenge assumptions and innovate real solutions, together.

Dedicated Desk: A dedicated or reserve desk is a non-shared, private desk used by only one member. Dedicated desks get six hours meeting space per month.

Development Authority of Cherokee County (DACC): A board of elected officials that serve as a voting body to oversee COED. This board meets monthly on the last Monday. The public is invited to each meeting.

Developers Day: COED hosts an annual golf tournament held in October.
Project managers, site consultants, and commercial real estate agents, and CBC investors are invited to play golf and enjoy dinner together. The event is sponsored by a private business and is held to thank COED’s partners.

“Dig, Grind, Hatch”: Reflective of Cherokee’s history, this tagline is used to describe the Fresh Start Cherokee program. Dig for Cherokee’s start as a mining community, grind in reference to the Canton Mills, and hatch for Cherokee’s once held title as the poultry capital of the world. Dig, Grind, Hatch is now used to describe the process of being an entrepreneur.

**Economic Development**: The development of economic wealth of countries, regions or communities for the well-being of their inhabitants. From a policy perspective, economic development can be defined as efforts that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs and supporting or growing incomes and the tax base.

**Film Summit**: A premier exhibition to celebrate Cherokee's success in the film industry. The summit offers panel discussions and networking opportunities with subject matter experts.

**Fresh Start Cherokee**: Educational programming designed to provide support and resources for entrepreneurs in a wide range of ages and industries. Monthly gatherings such as 1 Million Cups and The Lunch Circuit are housed under this initiative.

**Forget the Commute (#forgetthecommute)**: An initiative to connect Cherokee residents to high-quality jobs closer to home. 85% of employed
residents leave the county each morning for work, COED has partnered with community leaders to provide resources to show residents that quality jobs are available within Cherokee.

**Georgia Economic Developers Association (GEDA):** A non-profit association of professionals and volunteers who are involved with the economic development of the cities and counties of Georgia. GEDA was organized to increase the effectiveness of individuals involved in the practice of economic development in Georgia by encouraging cooperation, exchange of information, and upgrading of professional skills.

**Georgia Film Academy:** The Georgia Film Academy is a collaborative effort of the University System of Georgia and Technical College System of Georgia supporting workforce needs of the film and digital entertainment industries. The academy will certify workforce ready employees in needed areas, connect students and prospective employees with employers, and offer a unique capstone experience for top students that will provide them a path to employment in Georgia.

**Georgia Office of Economic Development (GDEcD):** is the state’s sales and marketing arm, the lead agency for attracting new business investment, encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, aligning workforce education and training with in-demand jobs, locating new markets for Georgia products, attracting tourists to Georgia and promoting the state as a destination for arts and location for film, music and digital entertainment projects as well as planning and mobilizing state resources for economic development.
**Hot Desk:** A level of membership for The Circuit. A hot desk is a shared workspace offered on a first-come-first-serve basis. Our hot desks are the eight blue and eight green chairs located at the left side of The Circuit under both sides of the scoreboard.

**Incubator:** Collaborative programs providing businesses with the nutrients needed to grow at their own pace. Incubators support startups by providing working space, collaboration, and mentorship.

**International Economic Development Council (IEDC):** An association to help economic developers do their jobs more effectively and to raise the profile of the profession. IEDC’s mission to help members improve the quality of life in their regions by providing information on trends and best practices, networking opportunities, professional development courses and numerous other services.

**Lunch Circuit:** A monthly gathering of local entrepreneurs. Each month, Jonathan (Community and Entrepreneurship Manager) interviews a Cherokee native entrepreneur in front of a live audience to learn about their origin story and business model.

**Private Office:** A level of membership for The Circuit. A private office is an 8x8 square foot space that is offers a larger space that is more personal and quiet over the hot or dedicated desk. Private office members get ten hours meeting space per month.

**New Company Reception:** An exclusive yearly convocation to recognize companies that have moved into Cherokee County or have expanded within...
the last twelve months.

**Opportunity Cherokee:** A research study conducted by Boyette Strategic Advisors completed to determine target sectors and marketing campaigns for COED to expand over the next five years.

**Quarterly Implementation Meeting:** Reserved for *Cherokee by Choice* investors, this quarterly forum includes business driven conversations and the latest in economic development news.

**Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC):** the oldest and largest regional economic development association in North America. SEDC represents 17 states in the southeast.

**Talent Pipeline:** A phrase commonly used when speaking about workforce development and Fresh Start Cherokee. COED partners with community leaders to create educational resources for middle and high school-aged students who are interested in a career in skilled trades.

**Target Sectors:** The five target markets identified in Opportunity Cherokee, as well as the areas of focus for each. Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Entrepreneurship, Information Technology, Film and Media, Commercial Developers, and Corporate Operations.

**Workforce Collaborative:** A committee spearheaded by COED, the task force is focused on connecting the business and industry leaders with leaders in the community and education sectors. Three committees are housed under this initiative: Innovative Prep, Internships, and Business Education Alliance.
CHEROKEE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
The Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) is the lead agency for attracting new business investment, encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, aligning workforce education and training with in-demand jobs, diversifying the public revenue base, and promoting Cherokee as a destination for film projects. COED aids in economic growth by working with existing industries to expand as well as by recruiting additional businesses to the community. COED and the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce hold regional meetings around Cherokee County to stay in constant communication with existing businesses in order to serve as facilitators and community liaisons for their business needs.
THE BLUFFS AT TECHNOLOGY PARK
700-acre mixed-use community located in Canton
Adjacent to a 400-acre reservoir
Surrounded by high-quality residential developments
Located within a State Opportunity Zone which allows for a $3,500 tax credit per job, per year for five years for two or more jobs created

CHEROKEE 75 CORPORATE PARK
200 acres
All utilities and infrastructure in place
Home to five international companies
Located two miles from I-75 on Highway 92
Three tracts remain, totaling roughly 40 acres
Mixed use opportunities available
CHEROKEE COMMERCE CENTER
Five Class A Buildings
686,000 square feet
Located at the intersection of I-75 and Highway 92
Located within a State Opportunity Zone which allows for a $3,500 tax credit per job, per year for five years for two or more jobs created

CHEROKEE COMMERCE CENTER WEST
Two Class A Buildings
352,000 square feet
Located at intersection of I-75 and Highway 92
Located within a State Opportunity Zone which allows for a $3,500 tax credit per job, per year for five years for two or more jobs created

CHEROKEE 75 BUSINESS CENTER
Class A Building
312,500 square feet
Two miles from I-75
Adjacent to Cherokee 75 Corporate Park
CHEROKEE WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE
The Cherokee Workforce Collaborative was developed in direct response to the needs identified in Opportunity Cherokee which served as the blueprint for the Cherokee Workforce Collaborative Implementation Plan—a robust economic development strategy designed to close the skills gaps and strengthen Cherokee’s workforce.

The collaborative meets regularly and consists of the three committees to focus on internships, innovative career preparation, and business and education alliances.

Achievements over the past year include the development of internship templates for local employers, the creation of a comprehensive database of local industry sectors hiring work-based learning students, and coordination with the Cherokee County School District to ensure Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) program offerings match current and future industry demands.
FRESH START
CHEROKEE
Fresh Start Cherokee is an initiative COED designed to provide educational programming and support for startups in Cherokee. Whether you’re a first-time entrepreneur, a student looking to learn more, a seasoned entrepreneur or a successful executive with advice to give, we invite you to join us in building your startup community close to home.

Weekly gatherings hosted by community leaders include meetups such as Creative Problem Solvers, Digital Marketing Workshop, Wordpress Workshop, and a book club focused entrepreneurial concepts. Twice a month Fresh Start Cherokee hosts 1 Million Cups (1MC CHK)—a program that gives startups a platform to share their business model and receive feedback from the community. The Lunch Circuit is a monthly lunch gathering for local entrepreneurs to hear from the visionary behind successful, local startups.
THE CIRCUIT
The Circuit is a brand new concept in coworking that combines a student center, the local community, and coworking membership for entrepreneurs and startups. Cherokee’s first ever coworking space is housed in the recently renovated Woodstock Elementary School gymnasium and is a partnership between Chatahoochee Technical College, COED, and Woodstock Office of Economic Development.

The Circuit isn't just another “rent a desk” type of space but provides innovators a fresh start. We are passionate about creating a culture of entrepreneurship throughout Cherokee.
COED serves as an ambassador to the film and television industry, assisting production companies find locations and use Cherokee's beauty, workforce, and businesses in this growing sector.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:
93 prospects/inquiries and 25 works filmed this year
200 “camera ready destinations” have been registered

Four major motion pictures have been filmed and five major motion pictures have been released in theatres this year.

Ozark (Netflix series) filmed at Lake Allatoona

The Film and Media industry is projected to grow 9.5% between 2017 and 2022 in the Cherokee Market Area. Currently 11,700 employees within the area are employed in the Film and Media industry.

Chattahoochee Technical College offers a degree program in design and media production technology and television production technology, and all 5 high schools in Cherokee have broadcast media production classes.
CHEROKEE BY CHOICE
Cherokee County is about to become a significant archetype for economic development. The future is just now emerging inside the world of Cherokee County. We are ahead of schedule but only half way there.

Some economic teams pitch their collections of neighborhoods, site developments, attractions, entertainment venues, beautiful vistas, incredible restaurants, schools, and shopping centers...live, work, and play...so blase. Amazing lifestyle and infrastructure is the prerequisite of anyone trying to play in our league.

Cherokee County is not a product for sale; it’s a mindset. It’s the established attitude that values the possibilities the 21st century provides. Cherokee County is the people who choose wider access for opportunity and growth.
CHEROKEE BY CHOICE STRATEGY AND CAMPAIGN
The new five-year public-private partnership reinforces Cherokee’s role as a leader in economic development focusing on three specific goals:

GOAL ONE
Comprehensive Economic Development
Execute core economic development strategies in order to sustain and strengthen Cherokee’s economy by focusing on business recruitment, retention and expansion, branding “Cherokee By Choice,” and fostering entrepreneurship.

GOAL TWO
Talent Development
Showcase Cherokee's highly skilled and educated population and work to improve workforce quality and availability.

GOAL THREE
Infrastructure and Product
COED serves as a catalyst to ensure Cherokee has the infrastructure, land, and buildings needed to attract investment and support overall economic growth.
COED TEAM
PRESIDENT
Misti Martin

SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER
Heath Tippens

OPERATIONS MANAGER
Kristyne Davis

FILM PROJECT MANAGER
Molly Mercer

COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP MANAGER
Jonathan Chambers

WORKFORCE & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
Shawna Mercer

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
Ella Greer

INVESTOR RELATIONS COORDINATOR
Ellie Colt

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THANK YOU