



## BUSINESS LEADERS JOIN DECIDE DEKALB TO LAUNCH CAMPAIGN ENHANCING DEKALB COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Advance DeKalb Campaign Announces It Will Raise \$1.5 Million from Private and Public Sector Partners; \$1.18 Million Already Secured

**January 28, 2019** [Decatur, GA] - On Friday, January 25th, leading DeKalb County business and community leaders joined the Decide DeKalb Development Authority to officially launch Advance DeKalb – a \$1.5 million economic development fundraising campaign and five-year initiative.

The new five-year public-private partnership will enhance DeKalb County's future success in economic development focusing on three specific goals:

- Grow and diversify DeKalb County's jobs, business and tax base through business recruitment, retention and entrepreneurship
- Grow the local workforce for existing employers through new talent and workforce development programs
- Grow new investment and redevelopment opportunities designed to improve DeKalb's infrastructure and community development

Campaign Advisory Council Member and Emory University President, Dr. Claire E. Sterk, Decide DeKalb Chair, Don Bolia (Peachtree Government Relations), and Campaign Chair Ryan Millsap (Chairman and CEO of Blackhall Studios), welcomed guests at the Kickoff breakfast at Emory University's Miller-Ward Alumni House.

Both chairs and Decide DeKalb President Ray Gilley unveiled details of the plan and announced the campaign's progress to more than 100 business and government leaders. DeKalb CEO Michael Thurmond also shared his own economic development vision and the importance of strong partnerships.

"Through the collaborative efforts of our business and community leaders, we are pleased to announce that Advance DeKalb has already secured \$1.185 million in five-year private and public sector pledges – an impressive 79 percent of our campaign goal of \$1.5 million. We are grateful for the support of our early investors and look forward to new investors joining us over the next two months," Millsap said.

The initiative is based on feedback and research from the County's 2014 Strategic Economic Development Plan and its 2019 update, as well as a feasibility study conducted in 2018 by POWER10, the Atlanta-based fundraising firm assisting with the campaign.

All Advance DeKalb funds are above and beyond DeKalb County's funding and expands the work of Decide DeKalb over the next five years. It will fund dozens of enhanced, specific strategies to address the county's five biggest challenges to its long-term growth and economic success, including:

- Increased regional and global competition for jobs and business
- Increased competition for a highly skilled workforce
- Income disparity and blighted neighborhoods in parts of the county
- Brand degradation and negative perceptions that don't reflect today's realities
- Lack of one true, inclusive public-private partnership focused on long-term economic development vision for the county

"Advance DeKalb builds on our past success and moves DeKalb County forward, ensuring we will continue to be a place where businesses prosper and find the talent and resources they need to grow and re-invest in our community," Millsap said. "But to do this, we must tackle our challenges and most pressing problems head-on. That's why it's so important for the private sector to step up and support what the public sector has already invested in."

"With the new investment by the private sector, we will be able to launch some exciting and bold new initiatives targeting the specific needs of DeKalb businesses," said Decide DeKalb Chairman Don Bolia. "Just a couple examples include creating a single point of contact for talent and workforce development programs in the county (in partnership with WorkSource DeKalb), a national marketing campaign and site consultant visitation program targeting our industry clusters, an aggressive new branding campaign positioning DeKalb as an ideal location for business, and engaging in smart, proactive re-development and infrastructure investments."

The kickoff marked the launch of the public phase of the campaign being conducted by POWER 10 and dozens of campaign volunteers.

Anyone interested in learning more about the campaign can visit [www.decidedekalb.com/advance](http://www.decidedekalb.com/advance) or contact Campaign Director Demming Bass at 678-414-4508 or [dbass@gopower10.com](mailto:dbass@gopower10.com).

#### **About Decide DeKalb**

Decide DeKalb serves as the primary economic development driving force to attract, expand and retain businesses in DeKalb County, Georgia. Established in 1974 as the Development Authority of DeKalb County, Decide DeKalb works with partners, stakeholders and the business community to spur capital investments, encourage job growth and business sustainability within our target industries as well as the burgeoning Entertainment sector. For more information, visit [www.decidedekalb.com](http://www.decidedekalb.com).

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