

More Than a Milestone: Building Columbia County's Next Chapter!

An op-ed by Columbia County Chamber President & CEO, Heath Taylor

July 2026

Every community has moments that shape its future. I believe Google's investment in Columbia County is one of those moments.

We're honored that Google has chosen to invest here. It's a reflection of the many things that make Columbia County special: strong local leadership, outstanding schools, strategic infrastructure, a talented workforce, and a community that believes in planning for the future while staying true to the values that make this such a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

As exciting as this announcement is, it's really just the beginning.



Heath Taylor, IOM
President & CEO
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The real story isn't about one project. It's about what this opportunity makes possible for our community.

It's about creating new opportunities for local businesses. It's about preparing students and workers for careers in technology and the skilled trades. It's about building stronger partnerships between education and industry. It's about continuing to invest in the infrastructure that supports our growth. Most importantly, it's about making sure Columbia County is ready for the opportunities that the next generation of our economy will bring.

That's where the Chamber comes in.

One of our most important responsibilities is bringing people together. We connect businesses, educators, local government, utility providers, workforce partners, and community leaders because the best outcomes happen when we work together with a shared vision.

We also know that projects like this bring questions. Questions about infrastructure. Questions about growth. Questions about how these investments fit into the future of our community. Those are good questions, and they deserve honest conversations based on facts, transparency, and mutual respect.

The Chamber remains committed to helping lead those conversations by providing reliable information, creating opportunities for dialogue, and making sure our business community stays informed and engaged throughout the process.

We also want our local businesses to be ready. Investments like this create opportunities that extend far beyond the project itself. Construction companies, suppliers, professional services, hospitality, restaurants, retailers, technology firms, and countless small businesses all have the potential to benefit from a stronger, more diverse economy. Helping our members understand and prepare for those opportunities is part of our mission.

At the same time, this investment reminds us why workforce development matters so much. Working alongside our school systems, Augusta Technical College, Augusta University, employers, and workforce partners, we have an opportunity to prepare local talent for careers that will shape the future of our region.

Columbia County has always believed in growing with purpose.

Economic opportunity and quality of life go hand in hand. We don't have to choose between supporting investment and protecting the community we love. With thoughtful planning, strong partnerships, and open communication, we can do both.

Together, we have an opportunity to strengthen our economy, prepare our workforce for the jobs of tomorrow, and build a community that continues to attract innovation, investment, and opportunity for generations to come.

I believe our best days are still ahead, and I'm excited about what we'll accomplish together.

Heath Taylor, IOM
President & CEO, Columbia County Chamber of Commerce