



2 0 2 5 A N N U A L R E P O R T

As we reflect on 2025, the Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA) celebrates a year defined by growth and unprecedented community engagement. This year, ACEA deepened its work with municipalities, local business organizations, chambers of commerce, and community development partners—broadening our reach, strengthening local capacity, and helping communities advance meaningful economic development initiatives. Together with our many partners, we delivered results across Atlantic County, strengthened our aviation and aerospace ecosystem, and set the stage for long-term prosperity.

ACEA's expanded engagement produced measurable outcomes. In the historic Ducktown section of Atlantic City, we coordinated public–private investments, improved infrastructure, supported small business expansion, and enhanced walkability, housing stability, and neighborhood vitality. Across the county, ACEA increased direct collaboration with local governments and business groups to support redevelopment planning, help companies navigate challenges, and connect communities with state and federal resources.

A major milestone in 2025 was the launch of ACEA's first college internship cohort. We welcomed an exceptional group of students from Stockton, Rutgers, and Cornell Universities. Their contributions—ranging from developing business intelligence tools and strengthening outreach systems to advancing research, community engagement, and industry analysis—served as a true force multiplier, bringing fresh perspectives that elevated our work. The interns also researched, selected, and supported the installation of ACEA's first Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, a significant upgrade that will enhance business outreach, improve data management, and increase overall organizational efficiency. Their energy, professionalism, and insight set a high standard and helped strengthen how ACEA delivers on its mission.

In aviation and aerospace, ACEA continued collaborating with the National Aerospace Research and Technology Park (NARTP) to strengthen Atlantic County's position as a leading center for next-generation research and innovation. Looking ahead, we expect the William J. Hughes Technical Center for Advanced Aerospace to play a key role in developing the nation's \$30-\$50 billion "Brand-New Air Traffic Control System" (BNATCS)—a once-in-a-generation modernization effort that is expected to generate significant R&D investment and high-quality job growth in our region.

We're also pleased to report on the start of transformational development at Atlantic City International Airport. Industrial Realty Group's Atlantic Logistics Center—a multi-phase, 2.6-million-square-foot air cargo project—continues progressing through the environmental review process and is expected to support 1,500 jobs while establishing a regional hub for intermodal logistics and innovative last-mile and middle-mile solutions. Construction of NARTP Building #2 remains on schedule for a spring 2026 opening, adding 40,000 square feet of cutting-edge R&D space to bolster New Jersey's growing aviation ecosystem.

Looking ahead, ACEA will continue to deepen community partnerships, pursue opportunities tied to emerging aerospace technologies, and refresh our organization's strategic priorities to keep Atlantic County competitive. We congratulate Mikie Sherrill on becoming New Jersey's next governor and look forward to working with her administration to advance the economy of Atlantic County and southern New Jersey.

To our Board of Trustees, members, partner organizations, political leaders, municipalities, local businesses, and community organizations, whose advocacy and support make this work possible—your leadership and collaboration drive our success. Together, we are demonstrating that Atlantic County is a place where ideas and opportunities converge, and where the future of aerospace, industry, and community development is taking shape today.

With gratitude,

The ACEA Team



Lauren H. Moore, Jr.



Max Slusher



Noel McGuire



Francine Palumbo



The Atlantic County Economic Alliance is governed by an independent Board of Trustees who represent a variety of business and community interests.



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**David Zappariello**  
*South Jersey Transportation Authority*



**Mitch Zitomer**  
*Greater Atlantic City Chamber*

Atlantic County's neighborhoods and commercial districts experienced significant progress in 2025, with ACEA supporting key initiatives across numerous municipalities. Together, these projects highlight ACEA's strong dedication to uplifting communities, boosting local economies, and creating more opportunities for residents and businesses alike.



### Ducktown (Atlantic City)

The historic Ducktown district delivered a successful year, securing major investment through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (\$950,000), the Neighborhood Preservation Program (\$125,000), New Jersey Department of Transportation grants (\$1.23 million total), and contributions from private partners, including Atlantic City Electric. These resources strengthened infrastructure, expanded district capacity, and advanced regional projects such as the Venice Park expansion. Ducktown upgraded seven business façades, increased housing stability through four home purchases and six rehabilitations, and improved walkability with new sidewalks and lighting. The area further enhanced its cultural and commercial appeal with murals, planters, bike racks, trees, and branded banners.

ACEA extends a sincere thank you to SVP-Senior Commercial Relationship Manager **Wendy Bartlett** of Fulton Bank, and **Vito Pantilione**, President of Parke Bank, for playing a critical role in purchasing Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credits, and to **Michael Cagno**, President of the Ducktown Community Development Corporation, for his leadership and extraordinary vision in driving this revitalization effort forward.

### Somers Point

ACEA is helping support community development by assisting Somers Point with its application to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, which manages the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) Program. The NRTC offers a 100 percent state tax credit to businesses that donate funds to nonprofit organizations implementing comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans. ACEA helped with application development, clarified program requirements, and contributed to shaping the city's vision for future revitalization and community investment.

by Cindy Fertsch | Mar 16, 2025



Atlantic County Economic Alliance Awarded \$992,750 Neighborhood Revitalization Grant to Support Ducktown and Venice Park

### Municipal Web Portals

To further strengthen municipal engagement, ACEA reached out to all 23 Atlantic County municipalities and assisted 10 of them in updating their municipal website portals hosted on ACEA's website, ensuring that businesses and residents have access to reliable, up-to-date information that supports local economic development.



## Northfield

ACEA played a key role in funding the creation of an economic strategy, which became a vital part of Northfield's municipal master plan. This strategy outlines steps for business retention, economic growth, and enhancing commercial areas. Now, ACEA is actively involved in its implementation, focusing on strengthening the city's "Golden Mile" along Tilton Road, with improved aesthetics, business attraction strategies, and targeted infrastructure upgrades.



## Borough of Folsom

ACEA supported the Borough of Folsom by conducting an economic analysis to evaluate the potential designation of an Area in Need of Rehabilitation within the community. This work helps position the Borough to attract reinvestment, strengthen the local business environment, and support broader regional growth.



## Egg Harbor City

In Egg Harbor City, ACEA is providing financial support to help the City develop a new economic strategy to attract future investment, strengthen its commercial districts, and guide long-term community growth.

by Cindy Fertsch | Jan 28, 2025



Egg Harbor City Poised for Revitalization with Brownfield Program Designation



## Mullica Township

Aiding the community in planning for sustainable growth and increased commercial activity, ACEA is also providing financial support to Mullica Township for developing a new economic strategy.



## Municipal Partnership Spotlight: Thank You, Triad Associates

ACEA sincerely thanks Michael Zumpino and Caroline Zumpino of Triad Associates—along with the entire Triad team—for their expertise and hands-on guidance in supporting ACEA's municipal assistance efforts, helping communities across Atlantic County improve planning, revitalization, and implementation of their economic development strategies.

## ACEA to hold free business-to-business mixer

### Expanding Our Reach Through Events, Engagement, and Visibility

In 2025, ACEA expanded its regional and statewide presence through enhanced outreach, collaboration, and public engagement. The organization hosted eight major events that drew more than 1,400 participants, highlighting Atlantic County's growing leadership across the business and community landscape.

These expanded efforts were strengthened by the invaluable support of **Dr. Mark Rizzo**, whose leadership as Regional Director of the New Jersey Small Business Development Center at Stockton University helped advance ACEA's outreach objectives. Through his subject-matter expertise and close collaboration with our organization, Dr. Rizzo supported the local business community and helped organize and host well-attended small-business events that broadened participation, strengthened connections, and elevated the region's profile throughout the year.

ACEA also played a key role in planning the inaugural AIR: Aviation Innovation Research Conference hosted by the New Jersey Department of Transportation in April, where ACEA President Lauren Moore and NARTP President Howard Kyle delivered important presentations highlighting the momentum and opportunities within the Aviation District based in Atlantic County.

Building on the momentum of the AIR conference, ACEA staff represented our organization at 28 regional and statewide events, delivered remarks at more than 20 business and economic development forums, and shared their expertise on 14 boards, committees, and working groups. These activities increased Atlantic County's visibility and ensured the county's priorities were included in key policy and planning discussions. ACEA President Lauren Moore further amplified these efforts through six media interviews, highlighting progress on priority initiatives and boosting the organization's public profile.



Dr. Mark Rizzo

### Meet the Lenders

The **Meet the Lenders event** at NARTP brought together entrepreneurs, small business owners, and financial professionals for an informative and collaborative discussion on business funding. The program featured a panel of lending experts who shared insights into financing options, lending requirements, and strategies for positioning businesses for long-term growth.

Attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with lenders and funding resource partners, ask questions specific to their business needs, and gain a clearer understanding of available capital solutions.



ACEA's continued success in securing competitive grants and public appropriations remains critical to advancing the Alliance's economic development mission, enabling our organization to expand its impact and leverage public investment for regional growth. The Alliance extends its sincere appreciation to **Mike Rennick** for managing more than \$17 million in active, pending, and recently completed grants, ensuring strong oversight, compliance, and effective deployment of these resources.



**Total Grants: \$17,616,600**

### ACTIVE GRANTS

- **Ducktown Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC)**
  - FY22, NJDCA: \$521,000
  - FY24, NJDCA: \$990,900
  - FY25, NJDCA: \$992,750
- **Atlantic City Food Security Grant – Ducktown & C.R.O.P.S.**, NJEDA: \$499,950
- **Atlantic County Economic Alliance Plan**, State Appropriation Legislative Grant FY25 (State Senator Polistina): \$1,850,000
- **State Appropriation Legislative Grant FY26** (State Senator Polistina), NJDCA: \$1,000,000
- **Special Project Support (SPS) Grant FY25**, County History Partnership Program, NJ Historical Commission, administered by the Atlantic County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs: \$2,000
- **Congressionally Directed Spending for Airborne Test Range** (Congressman Van Drew): \$2,100,000

### COMPLETED GRANTS

- **Somers Point Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC)**, NJDCA: \$50,000
- **Atlantic County Economic Diversification Support Project, State Appropriation Legislative Grant FY24** (State Senator Polistina): \$250,000
- **State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) Program – Building #2 Grant**, (State Senator Polistina), NJDCA: \$5,000,000
- **Veterans Drone Pilot Apprenticeship Program**, Congressionally Directed Spending (U.S. Senator Booker): \$150,000
- **American Rescue Plan Act Statewide Planning Grant FY21**, USEDA: \$1,000,000
- **Battelle UAV Introduction Education Program – Atlantic City Boys & Girls Club FY24**: \$30,000

### PENDING APPROVAL

- **Ducktown Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC) FY26**, NJDCA: \$800,000
- **Somers Point Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC) FY26**, NJDCA: \$780,000
- **Atlantic City Small Business & Entrepreneurship Training Program**, USEDA: \$500,000
- **Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) FY25**, USDA: \$100,000
- **Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Community Funding – Aviation Academy Project FY26** (Congressman Van Drew); **Transportation, Housing & Urban Development Appropriations**: \$1,000,000

## Driving Innovation, Investment, and Regional Growth

The Aviation District continued its growth in 2025 as one of the nation's leading hubs for aviation innovation, federal research, and economic investment. Anchored by the FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center for Advanced Aerospace (FAA Technical Center), Atlantic City International Airport (ACY), and the National Aerospace Research & Technology Park (NARTP), this ecosystem is increasingly positioned to drive job creation, technology advancement, and long-term regional competitiveness. Its expanding national profile was reinforced by several high-level visits, including U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford, and U.S. Senator Andy Kim, who toured the Aviation District and NARTP to see firsthand the momentum and industry partnerships underway.

This strength is further enhanced by major federal and military assets that support aviation operations, security, and applied research, including the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City, the Federal Air Marshal Service Training Center, the Department of Homeland Security Transportation Security Laboratory, and the 177th Fighter Wing of the New Jersey Air National Guard. Recent U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis county earnings data also indicate accelerating growth in the aviation and aerospace sectors, with aircraft- and avionics-related manufacturing activity increasing sharply in recent years and surpassing broader local and national trends. The sector's trajectory suggests a growing competitive advantage—and a significant opportunity to expand higher-wage jobs, innovation, and economic diversification in Atlantic County.

ACEA thanks our partners at the FAA Technical Center for their guidance and steadfast support, especially Director **Dr. Eric Neiderman** and Deputy Director **Jon Schleifer**, whose leadership and collaboration continue to be key in promoting the Aviation District's growth and national influence.



## FAA Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing Implementation Pilot Program

ACEA and NARTP played a crucial role in a historic effort uniting New Jersey and New York in a landmark application to the FAA's highly competitive Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing Implementation Pilot Program (eVTPP). Through this national initiative, the FAA is expected to select at least five regions to conduct research and planning to integrate emerging aviation technologies—such as Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM/flying cars)—into the National Airspace System.

Over a rigorous three-month period, ACEA and NARTP engaged experts and organized a wide coalition of partners, strengthening collaboration with Original Equipment Manufacturers and other innovators shaping the future of aviation. The effort also showed our state government partners the potential of aerospace R&D as a long-term driver of economic growth and competitiveness for New Jersey.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey served as the principal applicant, alongside the New Jersey Economic Development Authority's Office of Strategic Defense Investment, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, NUAIR, and important South Jersey stakeholders, including SJTA, ACY, and the Cape-Atlantic UAS Test Range.

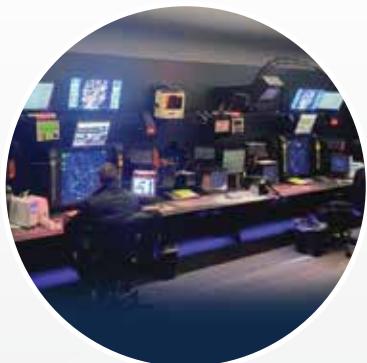


**Federal Aviation Administration**



## Aviation Innovation Partnership Agreement Signed

In 2025, ACEA, NARTP, and the South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a coordinated framework for developing Atlantic City International Airport (ACY) as a Smart Airport Testbed and a strategic hub for aviation innovation. Through this partnership, the organizations will promote ACY as a national site for testing and demonstrating smart airport systems, UAS integration, and Advanced Air Mobility. The MOU also aligns the partners in support of New Jersey's FAA eVTOL Integration Pilot Program (eIPPP) application—committing SJTA to facilitate access and operational support.

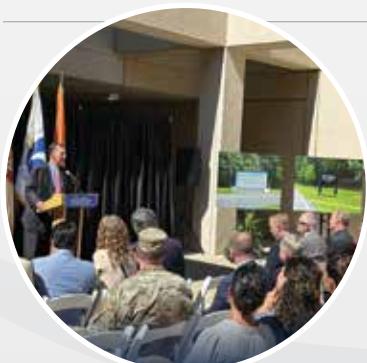


## Brand-New Air Traffic Control System

ACEA plans to leverage the unprecedented \$30–\$50 billion in national funding for the “Brand-New Air Traffic Control System” (BNATCS) to stimulate job creation and economic growth in the Aviation District and throughout the region. In December, the U.S. Department of Transportation designated Peraton as the “Prime Integrator” to lead the development of BNATCS. As the FAA Technical Center prepares to play a vital role in verification, validation, and testing, ACEA is working with NARTP, industry, and government partners to attract companies, researchers, and technology developers seeking proximity to this national R&D hub—positioning Atlantic County for high-skill jobs and long-term private investment driven by this landmark federal initiative.

## Infrastructure Improvements

The FAA Technical Center received \$36 million in federal funding—secured through a proposal by Congressman Jeff Van Drew—to modernize utilities, electrical systems, and research infrastructure. These upgrades will expand the Technical Center's ability to support next-generation aerospace innovation while generating construction jobs and contracting opportunities for Atlantic County and the region.



## Campus Renaming

In October, federal, state, and local leaders formally renamed the FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center campus as the Frank A. LoBiondo National Aerospace Safety & Security Campus, honoring former Congressman Frank A. LoBiondo for decades of leadership and steadfast support for aviation innovation, homeland security, and South Jersey's economic growth. The ceremony highlighted the FAA Technical Center's expanding national mission and reaffirmed the Aviation District's growing role as a hub for high-value R&D.

## New Hangar/Taxiways

Signature Aviation is advancing construction of a new multi-million-dollar hangar that will expand ACY's fixed-base operations (FBO) capacity and support growing corporate and general aviation activity at the airport.

ACY also progressed with major taxiway upgrades and extensions, improving airfield efficiency and preparing the airport to accommodate future commercial service, research activities, and air-cargo growth.





Andrew  
Kennedy, IRG

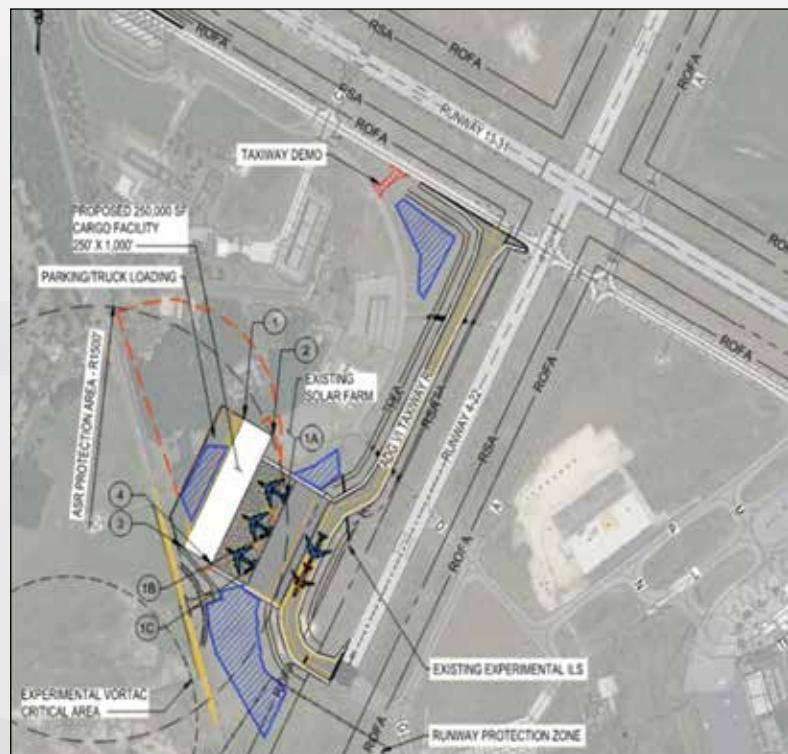
*Concept plans only. Subject to change based on market demand.*

## Air Cargo – Project 1

The 400+ acre Industrial Realty Group (IRG) development at ACY continued to advance in 2025 as it moves through the environmental permitting process for a planned 2.6 million-square-foot aviation, logistics, and technology campus. Once approvals are obtained, the multi-phase buildout—representing hundreds of millions of dollars in investment—is expected to generate more than 1,500 jobs. Designed to support air cargo, maintenance services, advanced aviation training, and emerging aerospace technologies, the IRG development is set to become one of the region's most significant economic development projects. ACEA is providing substantial support throughout planning and review, working closely with IRG, SJTA, and state government partners to move this landmark project forward within the Aviation District at ACY.

## Air Cargo – Project 2

Alterum, LLC—a subsidiary of OST, Inc./Converge—continued advancing its air cargo initiative at ACY to finance, design, construct, and operate new aeronautical facilities. The project will develop a 20-acre site at ACY. As one of the airport's key expansion efforts, the Alterum project supports the broader growth of the aviation district and strengthens ACY's emerging role as a logistics hub.



## Allegiant Airlines

Allegiant Airlines announced new nonstop service from ACY to Orlando Sanford International Airport and St. Petersburg–Clearwater International Airport. This expansion strengthens ACY's commercial offerings, increases passenger traffic, and underscores Atlantic County's growing role in the regional aviation market.



## Beyond Aviation Expansion

Beyond Aviation continued to strengthen its presence at ACY by expanding its flight training fleet and building the local workforce pipeline. The company introduced new, environmentally friendly aircraft equipped with advanced avionics, enhancing both safety and instructional quality. In collaboration with Rutgers University, Beyond Aviation will launch a new aerospace course in 2026 that combines classroom learning with hands-on flight training and creates pathways for students to earn private and commercial pilot licenses.

## 177th Fighter Wing

The FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act provides \$68 million for a new maintenance hangar at the 177th Fighter Wing of the New Jersey Air National Guard, following a funding request from Congressman Jeff Van Drew. This federal investment will allow the 177th to support next-generation fighter aircraft such as the F-35 and F-15EX, create significant construction and contracting activity, and strengthen the long-term security and readiness of South Jersey's most vital defense facility. Although the NDAA provides authorization, official appropriations and project execution will occur through future federal budget processes.



## Airport Hotel and Business Center

Schoffer Enterprises, led by President Leo Schoffer, is advancing plans for a four-story, 111-room hotel within the Aviation District on Delilah Road. The development will feature meeting space, restaurants, and additional amenities designed to support the growing concentration of aviation-related businesses in Atlantic County. As these firms continue to attract visiting scientists and technicians from around the world, the hotel will provide both overnight and extended-stay accommodations.



## A Special Thank You to Our Aviation Subject Matter Experts

ACEA and NARTP are supported by an outstanding group of Subject Matter Experts whose deep knowledge, practical insight, and generous guidance are essential as we work to build and strengthen New Jersey's Aviation District. Their expertise help sharpen our strategy, elevate our credibility, and accelerate progress across multiple initiatives.

We extend our sincere appreciation and a special thank you to:



**David Sweet**  
Retired Boeing Executive



**Chris Seher**  
Applied Research Associates



**Ray Adams**  
Trajectrix



**Dr. Ian Levitt**  
Tapestry RDI, former FAA and NASA Research Scientist



**John Daniels**  
Diakon Solutions

## Building 2 Construction and Beam Signing

NARTP's \$18.5 million Building #2 remains on schedule for completion in 2026. Construction continues steadily, highlighted by a topping-off ceremony in May where partners and officials signed the final beam—a symbolic milestone for Atlantic County's innovation ecosystem. Located adjacent to the FAA Technical Center and ACY, the 40,000-square-foot facility will provide cutting-edge space for aerospace research and next-generation technologies.



## Academic Consortium

In August 2025, ACEA, NARTP, and Rowan University signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a statewide academic consortium of research universities focused on advancing R&D and innovation within the Aviation District. Conversations are ongoing with additional New Jersey research universities—including Stevens Institute of Technology, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, and Princeton University—to join the consortium. The agreement created a formal framework for collaboration among universities, industry partners, and federal agencies, enabling joint research projects and speeding up the development of aviation technologies. In 2026, NARTP will continue working to formalize the consortium and broaden participation.



## Airfield Autonomy

The \$2.24 million Airfield Autonomy Initiative concluded in 2025, marking the successful completion of a multi-year effort to advance automated airfield operations, with field testing conducted at ACY. The initiative focused on deploying robotic vehicles for runway debris detection, perimeter security, command-and-control systems, and automated lawn mowing within an active airport environment. Widely covered by local and national television media, the project brought significant visibility to the region and highlighted the Aviation District as a growing center for innovation.



Airport  
Technology

March 11, 2025

Taking flight: How New Jersey's Air Mobility Corridor is shaping the future of aviation

## Highway in the Sky

Working in partnership with ACEA, NARTP advanced one of its most ambitious initiatives in 2025—the development of a “Highway in the Sky,” a dual-use (civil/military) airborne test range planned with the U.S. Transportation Command. This corridor would connect Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey with Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, creating an unprecedented regional test environment for Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM/flying car) technologies. The effort is intended to position

Atlantic County at the center of aviation research, military readiness, and commercial innovation. To help launch this initiative, a Congressionally Directed Spending request, sponsored by Congressman Jeff Van Drew, was approved—securing \$2.1 million in federal funding to support planning, infrastructure, and early-stage capability development.

## Strategic Innovation Center

The Strategic Innovation Center (SIC) program, established by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), is creating a statewide network of research and commercialization hubs, with 12 SICs approved to date. The SIC opening in NARTP Building #2—supported by an \$8.6 million NJEDA investment—is New Jersey's southernmost SIC. Under the program's requirements, NARTP will manage the facility, attract tenants, run innovation-focused programs, and build partnerships that promote aerospace research and economic growth.

## UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES

Building on our support for Spencer's Gifts in transforming a blighted site on the Black Horse Pike into its new corporate headquarters, ACEA will focus on promoting the development and redevelopment of key underused properties across Atlantic County.

In the coming year, ACEA plans to work with a professional services firm to identify high-impact sites and create developer-ready briefing packages that highlight each property's features, opportunities, and potential challenges. ACEA will also provide developers with comprehensive permitting and regulatory guidance, along with coordinated assistance to help municipalities, property owners, and developers navigate regulatory and infrastructure hurdles and speed up project timelines. This includes ongoing communication and coordination with Amazon and Hamilton Township on the redevelopment of the former Atlantic City Racetrack site, as well as a targeted effort to advance redevelopment opportunities at Hamilton Mall.



## Launching OSDI's First Initiatives

In a major step forward for statewide economic growth, the Murphy Administration, through the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, established the Office of Strategic Defense Investment (OSDI), an effort driven by ACEA. OSDI is dedicated to helping New Jersey organizations and institutions strengthen their competitiveness for federal grant opportunities and key economic development designations by coordinating resources and delivering targeted technical support. OSDI's initial focus is to leverage and align major federal installations in the Garden State—including the FAA Technical Center, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and Picatinny Arsenal—to drive investment, innovation, and long-term economic opportunity across New Jersey.

OSDI's first initiative was working with ACEA and NARTP throughout the fall of 2025 to pursue the FAA's Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing Implementation Pilot Program (eVTPP)—a complex and historic bi-state (New Jersey and New York) application seeking selection as one of five regions in the country to help integrate Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS/drones) and Advanced Air Mobility vehicles (flying cars) into the National Airspace System. A decision from the FAA on eVTPP is expected in spring 2026.



## Gubernatorial Candidate Briefing

In September 2025, ACEA briefed New Jersey's gubernatorial candidates on the expanding economic opportunities in the state's Aviation District, stressing the need to act urgently to stay competitive and calling for a coordinated statewide approach, including a five-year aviation and aerospace growth plan. ACEA underscored southern New Jersey's potential to lead the next wave of aerospace-driven growth—akin to the state's pharmaceutical prominence in the 1980s and 1990s—while emphasizing the importance of protecting Atlantic City's gaming economy by opposing North Jersey casinos and supporting the federal Opportunity Zone program to attract private investment and diversify the regional economy. ACEA also recommended establishing a statewide aerospace structure and strengthening ACY as a designated R&D airport with dedicated innovation leadership.



## State Appropriation

ACEA extends its sincere appreciation to government affairs firm MBI for its steadfast partnership and strategic guidance throughout the year. Their expertise was instrumental in helping ACEA secure a \$1 million appropriation in the New Jersey State Budget to advance key economic development initiatives in Atlantic County. We especially thank MBI's **Rick Wright** for his leadership and engagement, and New Jersey **Senator Vince Polistina** for championing this effort in Trenton, along with **Assemblyman Don Guardian** and **Assemblywoman Claire Swift**. Their combined commitment to our region continues to deliver meaningful results for Atlantic County's economic future.



## State Incentives Review

In 2025, ACEA partnered with the law firm Cooper Levenson and its state incentives experts to conduct a comprehensive review of New Jersey's primary job-creation incentive program, Emerge. Through a detailed assessment of program requirements, eligibility thresholds, and real-world project feasibility, ACEA and Cooper Levenson developed practical recommendations to strengthen the program's effectiveness and ease of use—particularly for high-value investments and job creation within the Aviation District. This effort is intended to help inform potential legislative refinements that would better align Emerge with local project needs and accelerate job growth across the region.



## Atlantic County

ACEA thanks Atlantic County Government for its guidance and support throughout 2025. We especially thank **County Executive Dennis Levinson** for his exceptional leadership and essential backing in promoting key projects that help the county prosper. ACEA also recognizes the Atlantic County Planning Department for its collaboration on roadway improvements and for pursuing important federal funding, and we recognize the valuable contributions of **Ranae Knowles**, **Robert Lindaw**, and **Douglas DiMeo**.



## Atlantic County Improvement Authority

ACEA also proudly recognizes the Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA) and its Executive Director, **Tim Edmunds**, as an outstanding partner in the ongoing development of NARTP's campus. ACIA's leadership and expertise—especially as construction manager for NARTP Building #2—are crucial to advancing this vital project. Collaborating closely with contractor TN Ward, ACIA is focused on completing NARTP Building #2 on time and within budget.

ACEA had another strong year for membership in 2025, with an impressive 95 percent renewal rate. This reflects the trust and confidence our members have in ACEA's mission and the success of our Organizational Advancement initiative, which actively attracts prospective members and highlights the benefits of joining the Alliance.

## Membership Initiative

ACEA is dedicated to building stronger connections with our members to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met. Throughout 2026, we will actively engage with current members through our new "ACEA Momentum" program to share exciting updates and foster closer collaboration. These outreach efforts will spotlight our latest initiatives, key organizational accomplishments, and a lineup of new opportunities designed to add value to our members.

A key focus of these communications is highlighting enhanced membership benefits. Members can look forward to exclusive offerings, including special discounts on a wide range of services from local businesses and professional service providers within our network. These benefits create cost-saving opportunities and strengthen ties within our community. By participating in these expanded programs, members can grow their networks, improve their access to valuable resources, and further their professional goals.

ACEA is committed to preserving open communication and ensuring that membership continues to be a meaningful and rewarding experience. Together, we will build a stronger, more united community that thrives on collaboration and mutual success.



**Kenneth LeFevre**

**We thank our members, whose dedication, partnership, and enthusiasm strengthen our efforts daily. Our organization's progress and achievements are only possible with their support.**



## ACEA Marketing Campaign

In 2025, Performance Marketing partnered with ACEA and NARTP on a comprehensive, multi-channel campaign highlighting Atlantic County's economic momentum.

Website activity significantly grew year-over-year, with a **42 percent** increase in active users, a **30 percent** increase over the previous year. Social media efforts highlighted "Municipality Mondays," ACEA membership, key events, and major regional economic developments.

by Cindy Fertsch | Jun 15, 2025



Galloway | Atlantic County | South Jersey

ACEA and NARTP Proudly Serve as Platinum Sponsors of NAWCAD Lakehurst Industry Day

Marketing support elevated several major events, including NAWCAD Lakehurst Industry Day, Meet the Lenders, and the Rowan University MOU signing. Collateral materials ranged from Business-to-Business Regional Mixer flyers to the brief for the Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing Implementation Pilot Program and other targeted outreach tools.

By Fideri News Network report | Tuesday, June 24, 2025

**Cape May filmmaker brings Hollywood home to Egg Harbor City**

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



September 5, 2025

Rowan to Launch Framework for Academic Consortium in Aerospace Innovation

THE PRESS  
OF ATLANTIC CITY

SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 | Serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland & Southern Ocean Counties | PressofAtlanticCity.com

**Egg Harbor City wants houses built on 200 acres of undeveloped land**



**TECHNICAL CENTER IN ATLANTIC CITY, NJ, DRAWS NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT**

Harry Hurley | Published: April 18, 2025



JUNE 16, 2025 | SNJ Today.com

**New Roots Mobile App Expands Food Access in South Jersey**

## NARTP BUILDING #2 MARKETING CAMPAIGN



In 2025, Performance Marketing executed a targeted marketing campaign for NARTP Building #2, focusing on aviation technology companies, advanced air mobility operators, cybersecurity specialists, and innovators in autonomy and alternative propulsion.

The multi-channel strategy included placements in *Aviation Week* and *Airport Technology*, LinkedIn Sponsored Content, native email blasts, and refreshed web content, generating a database of 700+ contacts from 243 aerospace research companies. Updated leasing brochures and term sheets highlighted a sign-on lease bonus, while market research targeted federal contractors and C-suite decision-makers for precise outreach.

Email campaigns achieved up to 42 percent open rates, and contractor outreach reached 34 percent. Key milestones—including the Building #2 Topping-Off ceremony and the visit by U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy—were amplified across media and collateral, establishing NARTP as a premier hub for aerospace innovation.

**Join the Upcoming Webinar**

**Is the U.S. Ready For Electric Air Taxis?**

Presented by Aviation Week  
Sponsored by NARTP

June 3, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Learn how to navigate eVTOL certification progress, FAA's role in AAM through Innovate 2028, and how airports can attract future air mobility services.

**Register for Free Today!**

AVIATION WEEK NETWORK NARTP  
NATIONAL AEROSPACE  
RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY PARK



### Professional Services Partner Spotlight: Thank You, Performance Marketing

ACEA sincerely thanks Glenn Davila and his outstanding team at Performance Marketing for their vital contributions as one of ACEA's most valuable professional service partners. PM's creativity, responsiveness, and steady support help us strengthen outreach, boost visibility, and ensure our programs and initiatives connect effectively with businesses, residents, and stakeholders across Atlantic County, throughout the state, and beyond.

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



## Film Ready Program

During 2025, ACEA worked diligently to prepare Atlantic County for participation in NJEDA's Film Ready Certification Program. This program is designed to help municipalities attract on-location filmmaking, generating new jobs and stimulating economic growth. To position Atlantic County as a premier destination for film and media production, this initiative involved thorough coordination, detailed research, and strategic asset identification. We're especially grateful for the valuable contributions of our interns, whose support played a key role in bringing this effort to life.

Initially sponsored by a program of the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board, ACEA's inaugural intern cohort strengthened business engagement, enhanced internal systems, expanded research capabilities, and broadened regional outreach.

Together, they developed a business intelligence database for priority industries, modernized ACEA's engagement-tracking tools, and conducted an in-depth analysis of the Atlantic City casino sector to inform a forthcoming strategic white paper. They also led the evaluation and adoption of a HubSpot CRM program, improved communication-tracking workflows, and conducted supervised outreach to local businesses.

The team researched state and federal grant opportunities, evaluated ACEA's website for updates, refreshed the business-engagement services flyer, and supported Atlantic County's Film Ready Certification efforts. They also updated municipal information and managed outreach and attendance tracking for major ACEA events, including the Regional Business-to-Business Mixer and Meet the Lenders Forum.

ACEA appreciates the interns' professionalism, work ethic, and outstanding contributions. The success of this cohort set a high standard for future years and has significantly increased the organization's output and impact.

ACEA staff and Board of Trustees warmly thank **Mayuri Acharya** of Rutgers University and **Sophia Elyakiubi** of Cornell University for their exceptional service and valuable contributions to our mission, as well as **Lindsey Hancock** and **Daniel McCarthy** of Stockton University, who continue to serve with ACEA on a part-time basis.



**ACEA offers a special thank you to Office Manager and Executive Assistant Francine Palumbo, whose creativity, commitment, and leadership are essential to advancing this effort and positioning our communities for future success in the film industry.**



By Fideri News Network report



Friday, April 4, 2025

## ACEA business engagement services support local businesses

ACEA significantly expanded its business outreach and engagement efforts, connecting with companies across the county. We provided support through site visits, meetings, workforce coordination, permitting and regulatory guidance, and referrals to partners such as the Workforce Development Board (WDB), Atlantic County Institute of Technology (ACIT), Cape May County Technical Schools, Atlantic City Electric, and multiple state agencies. These efforts supported a diverse set of industries—from manufacturing and food production to retail, construction, cannabis, digital media, and defense.

Companies engaged throughout the year included Trade Images, Jomar Industries, Polyvel Inc., Comar Industries, Valhalla Boatworks, South Jersey Smokehouse, Kramer Beverage, Hammerbacher, Village Supermarkets, Mercedes-Benz of Atlantic City, Everest Dispensary, Hearts Therapeutic, Car Toyz, and Gurwicz Enterprises, among others. ACEA's work with manufacturers and industrial firms focused heavily on workforce needs, talent development, and expansion planning. Several companies reported successful new hires following ACEA-facilitated collaborations with the WDB and ACIT.

**85**

Business engagements

**10+**

Companies supported with workforce solutions

**30**

Site tours

**30+**Interagency referrals  
(utilities, education, state agencies)

**ACEA extends a special thank you to Business Engagement Officer Gabe Staino, whose leadership and dedication are instrumental in driving the success of our business engagement and outreach efforts.**

## Audit

For the eighth consecutive year, ACEA received a “clean” audit, reflecting strong internal controls and a sustained commitment to fiscal responsibility, transparency, and sound governance.

In fall 2025, certified public accounting firm Ford, Scott & Associates LLC completed its audit of ACEA's financial operations for fiscal year 2024, again issuing a clean audit opinion.

This achievement is a direct result of the diligence and professionalism of ACEA's financial oversight team—Max Slusher, Francine Palumbo, and Deborah Whittaker—whose careful stewardship ensures organizational resources are properly received, accurately accounted for, and responsibly expended in support of our mission.

**Lighter weight, quieter, no emissions.**

**The future of transportation in Atlantic County.**



## 2025 Atlantic City Rail Coalition Progress Report

The Atlantic City Rail Coalition centers its efforts to improve rail service through better scheduling and an enhanced rider experience.

Committee Chair John Heinz took a proactive step by touring Stadler Rail's state-of-the-art factory in Salt Lake City, Utah. This \$150 million facility spans 230,000 square feet on a 62-acre site and employs cutting-edge European manufacturing methods. Impressively, 80 percent of materials are sourced from the U.S., with the remainder primarily from Europe.

The visit also served as an opportunity to explore the potential for a new Stadler facility on the East Coast. Heinz made a compelling case for Atlantic County as an ideal location for expansion.

Exciting developments are on the horizon. A demonstrator version of the FLIRT battery-powered train is scheduled to arrive in Southern New Jersey in fall 2026. Heinz has secured access to a rail line between Richland and Tuckahoe for live demonstrations. The committee's preliminary goal is to collaborate with Stadler Rail on a cost analysis for converting the Atlantic City Line to operate with FLIRT trains.

By aligning stakeholders and preparing key presentations in advance of the 2026 demonstrations, the committee aims to build widespread support and momentum for this transformational project. Progress is steady, and the future of rail travel in Southern New Jersey looks brighter than ever.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development remained central to ACEA's mission in 2025, as our organization supported employers, connected residents to career opportunities, and strengthened the talent pipelines needed for long-term economic growth. Working closely with the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board, the Atlantic County Institute of Technology, and other partners, ACEA referred more than 20 companies for hiring assistance, employee training, and apprenticeship exploration—supporting industries ranging from culinary arts to advanced manufacturing—helping businesses expand and compete.



### Aviation Training

The continued growth of Beyond Aviation, a flight school based at ACY, is an important component of ACEA's workforce initiatives. By opening new pathways into high-wage aviation careers and strengthening the region's talent pipeline, Beyond Aviation is reinforcing ACY's role as a gateway for aviation workforce development in Atlantic County.



### ACIT Expansion

One of the year's most significant workforce development stories was the expansion of the Atlantic County Institute of Technology. The \$53 million, 130,000-square-foot addition represents a major investment in the region's future workforce and positions ACIT as one of New Jersey's premier career and technical education institutions.

The new facility introduces state-of-the-art laboratories in culinary, dental, medical, aviation, welding, and exercise science, each designed to simulate real workplace environments. These resources allow students to gain professional experience and develop skills aligned with employer needs in sectors such as aviation, healthcare, hospitality, and skilled trades.

The expansion enables ACIT to admit 400 additional students each year, significantly increasing the number of graduates prepared for high-quality careers. This investment meets current local workforce demand and strengthens Atlantic County's position as a regional leader in technical training and talent development.



## Airbus Student Challenge

Aviation students at ACIT gained firsthand exposure to the aerospace industry when Pascal Joly, Senior Director of Engineering and Operations at Airbus, visited the campus to launch an industry-driven engineering competition based on real Airbus design practices. More than 50 students engaged in discussions on innovation, artificial intelligence, sustainability, and evolving workforce demands, culminating in a challenge that encouraged critical thinking, teamwork, and application of classroom knowledge in an authentic industry setting.



## Acknowledging the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board

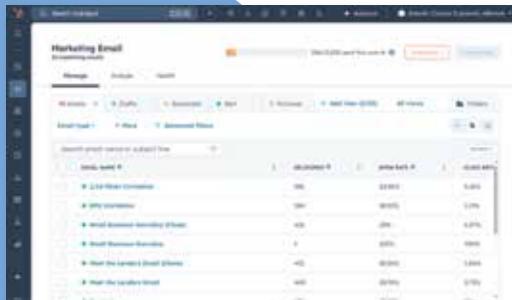
ACEA extends sincere thanks to Executive Director **Fran Kuhn** and the entire team at the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board for their outstanding partnership and support throughout 2025. Your responsiveness and consistent collaboration strengthen our workforce initiatives, help employers access talent and training resources, and advance shared priorities for economic growth across Atlantic County.



## New Bookkeeper

In 2025, ACEA hired Deborah Whittaker as our new bookkeeper. Deborah played a key role in ensuring a seamless transition following the retirement of bookkeeper Roxanne Tosto. Deborah manages day-to-day accounting functions and complex grant and expense tracking for both ACEA and NARTP, helping ACEA earn another clean audit from accounting firm Ford-Scott.

The entire ACEA staff extends a warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to **Deborah Whittaker** for her seamless integration into our organization and for her outstanding work and professionalism.



## Member Relations Management System

ACEA's interns played the leading role in researching, selecting, and installing our first relationship management system, HubSpot. Their work established a modern platform that strengthens ACEA's ability to track business engagement, manage outreach, and support long-term economic development efforts.

## Accounting Conversion

In 2025, ACEA completed a full upgrade of its accounting system to a new, modern financial management platform. This enhancement enables our organization to manage its increasingly complex financial needs, ensuring better oversight and long-term fiscal stability.

ACEA extends a special acknowledgment to professional data analyst **June Joan Kepner** of DataWize LLC in Egg Harbor Township, whose expertise and relentless effort, working closely with ACEA's bookkeeping staff over several months, were vital to our organization's successful execution of this complex conversion process.



## ACEA Website Refresh

ACEA and Performance Marketing are completing a comprehensive website redesign that embodies a new vision for economic development in Atlantic County. The updated site will display regional aviation, business engagement services, and a revitalized commercial properties page that connects investors with opportunities. New insights from the updated AngelouEconomic Report will provide a clear view of the county's economic landscape. At the same time, the "News" section of the website will centralize ACEA press releases to keep visitors informed about the latest initiatives.



Dr. Barbara Gaba, the retiring president of Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC), leaves behind an extraordinary legacy of leadership and service to Atlantic County.

Throughout her tenure, she championed expanded academic offerings and workforce-aligned training, strengthened clear career pathways for students, and deepened partnerships with employers, workforce organizations, and community stakeholders, helping more residents turn education into real opportunities.

Under her leadership, ACCC reinforced its role as a vital institution—enhancing access, supporting student success, and building the talent pipelines that fuel the region's long-term economic growth.

With heartfelt thanks, ACEA celebrates Dr. Gaba's collaboration, vision, and unwavering dedication to the community, and we warmly congratulate her as she begins her next chapter.



ACEA takes pride in aligning our spending practices with our dedication to supporting the local economy. Whenever possible, we prioritize purchasing from local and regional businesses, ensuring our operations have a direct and positive impact on the community we serve. Over the past year, ACEA made substantial investments in the local economy by sourcing goods and services from area vendors. We extend our gratitude and appreciation to the following local partners for their contributions to our mission:

- **Ancero**
- **Andre's Italian Restaurant/Grill**
- **Applied Research Associates, Inc. (ARA)**
- **Atlantic City Convention Center**
- **Atlantic City Country Club**
- **Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA)**
- **Bennett Chevrolet**
- **Communities Revolutionizing Open Public Spaces (C.R.O.P.S.)**
- **Community FoodBank of New Jersey**
- **Cooper Levenson, P.A.**
- **Copiers Plus**
- **DataWize LLC - June Joan Kepner, MSc, Professional Data Analyst**
- **Dollar General**
- **Dunkin Donuts, Buena**
- **Fiesta Mexicana, Hammonton**
- **Fox Rothschild LLP**
- **Fulton Bank**
- **Galloway Cleaners**
- **Glenn Insurance, Inc.**
- **Greater Atlantic City Charities Inc.**
- **Harrah's Resort**
- **Historic Smithville Inn**
- **James M. Rutala Associates, LLC**
- **Jersey Shore Partnership**
- **Josie Kelly's Public House**
- **Linwood Country Club**
- **Marathon Engineering & Environmental Services**
- **New Vista Corp**
- **Noye's Museum of Art of Stockton University**
- **Old Hat LLC**
- **Omega Settlement Solutions, LLC**
- **Outlet Shirts**
- **Parke Bank**
- **Pathfinders Resources, LLC**
- **Performance Marketing & Signage**
- **Primepoint, LLC**
- **Public Relations Council of Greater Atlantic City**
- **Red Hawks Family School Association (FSA)**
- **Roses Garden Café**
- **Roy's Action Landscaping**
- **Sack O' Subs**
- **Sam's Club**
- **ShopRite**
- **Slingshot**
- **Somers Point Business Association**
- **Staples**
- **Sunhill Corporation**
- **Target**
- **The Press of Atlantic City**
- **Triad Associates**
- **Twin Rocks Water**
- **Ventura's Greenhouse, Margate**
- **Vic's Subs**
- **Yianni's Café**



20  
26

## LOOKING FORWARD

ACEA begins the new year with a sharpened focus on advancing economic development and accelerating impactful initiatives. We are updating our decade-old economic strategy to align with current market trends, emerging industries, and Atlantic County's competitive strengths. This refreshed plan sets clear priorities and outlines a practical roadmap for progress.

Locally, ACEA looks forward to increased collaboration with Atlantic County municipalities, offering tailored support for developing and implementing economic strategies. We also plan to launch a micro-matching grant program for regional chambers and business organizations, enabling small businesses to address critical needs quickly. Strengthening B2B partnerships remains a priority, fostering more robust referral networks, procurement opportunities, and employer collaboration.

Redevelopment is another key focus. ACEA will lead efforts to repurpose underutilized and blighted properties by preparing developer-ready materials and assisting with regulatory and infrastructure challenges. Improved roadway engineering near ACY will enhance accessibility and readiness for long-term growth.

The launch of the “ACEA Momentum” program will deepen member engagement and collaboration. This initiative highlights the latest achievements, offers exclusive member benefits like discounts from local providers, and fosters stronger community connections. By participating, members can unlock valuable resources, strengthen relationships, and achieve shared success.



20  
26

## LOOKING FORWARD

To drive growth in aviation and aerospace, ACEA will support investment opportunities at NARTP and ACY. Goals include leveraging energy infrastructure at the FAA Technical Center to reduce costs, advancing air cargo projects to boost the regional economy, and recruiting tenants for NARTP's Building #2 while initiating plans for a third building. We aim to position Atlantic County as a hub for advanced aerospace innovation.

Workforce development remains integral across all efforts. ACEA will work closely with educational partners like Atlantic Cape Community College and the Workforce Development Board to align training programs with employer demand. We'll also continue advocating for a stronger statewide network of workforce development centers.

With the incoming Governor Mikie Sherrill, ACEA is excited to advocate for a comprehensive aviation strategy, securing resources and opening southern New Jersey airspace for advanced research in emerging aviation technologies such as Uncrewed Aircraft Systems and Advanced Air Mobility.

We are deeply grateful to ACEA's leadership, our dedicated members, our political leaders, and the many stakeholders who contribute their time, expertise, and support to this mission. Because of you, ACEA enters 2026 with momentum, clarity, and purpose—and we are energized to keep moving forward, building opportunity, and delivering results for Atlantic County.





A large, solid yellow circle is positioned in the upper right corner of the image. Inside the circle, the year "2025" is written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font.

