

TRIPBOOK



Americas Competitiveness Exchange

May 10-15, 2026



City of
MEMPHIS

EDGE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
GROWTH ENGINE
FOR MEMPHIS & SHELBY COUNTY

START C9



OAS

RIAC



E.D.A.
U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

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STAY CONNECTED

City of **MEMPHIS**



Dear Delegates,

As Mayor of the City of Memphis, I am honored to welcome you to the 23rd Americas Competitiveness Exchange in Memphis. In partnership with the Organization of American States, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Department of State, along with local partners EDGE and StartCo, as well as many other local institutions and host venues, we have planned a week of experiences designed to foster new connections and partnerships.

Together, we look forward to showing you the Greater Memphis region, where industry and innovation meet on the banks of the Mississippi River. Memphis is foundational to so much of what the world thinks of as American culture, from music, to food, and movement. Our innovative spirit has also shaped some of the biggest and most important economic ideas in the world. From overnight delivery to self serve auto parts, and from music to technology and medical breakthroughs, Memphis is a place where creativity and ingenuity turn ideas into industry and global impact.

We welcome you to a city where collaboration drives competitiveness and where the future is being built every day. On behalf of the residents of Memphis, thank you for your participation in ACE Memphis, and we wish you a productive and memorable visit.

In partnership and progress,

A handwritten signature of Paul A. Young in blue ink.

Mayor Paul A. Young
City of Memphis

WELCOME FROM THE ACE COMMITTEE

Dear distinguished leaders from the Americas and beyond,

It is our great honor to welcome you to the 23rd edition of the Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) – Memphis 2026. ACE continues to serve as a unique platform for cooperation, innovation, and strategic partnership-building to advance competitiveness and economic development across the Americas.

ACE Memphis is convened by the Organization of American States (OAS) in partnership with the City of Memphis, with the support of the Government of the United States, through the Department of State – Permanent Mission to the OAS, and the Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration.

From May 10 to 15, 2026, you will discover a city uniquely positioned at the crossroads of global commerce, innovation, and regional transformation. Throughout the program, you will engage with leaders and institutions driving progress in logistics, trade and global commerce, advanced mobility and electrification, artificial intelligence and frontier technologies, healthcare and life sciences, and ag-innovation and food systems.

ACE Memphis offers a valuable opportunity to connect with public- and private-sector leaders, universities, research institutions, and innovation hubs that are shaping the future of competitiveness in the region. The relationships built during this week can lead to meaningful collaboration in trade, investment, entrepreneurship, research and development, and workforce development.

This Tripbook is designed to support your experience by providing essential information about the agenda, participants, and key contacts, and by serving as a practical guide for identifying opportunities and strengthening partnerships throughout the week.

The ACE Committee extends its sincere appreciation to the City of Memphis and all partner institutions whose vision and commitment have made this edition possible.

We look forward to an inspiring and productive week together in Memphis.

Sincerely,

The ACE Committee





WHY MEMPHIS, WHY NOW?

☛ Memphis sits at the convergence of three states, five Class I railroads, the Mississippi River, and the second-busiest cargo airport in the world, placing it at the heart of the global economy.

☛ In a time of global transition, Memphis stands out as a city rewriting the rules of economic development and as a high-growth region actively shaping the future of logistics, advanced manufacturing, electrification, artificial intelligence, and health innovation.

☛ Memphis stands apart as one of the most strategically positioned and globally connected cities in the United States and is widely recognized as the logistics capital of the country. Home to FedEx's global hub, a multimodal freight system, and extensive infrastructure supporting international trade.

☛ With over \$10 billion in recent investments in electrification, research, infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing, Memphis is accelerating its transformation into a next-generation innovation hub.

☛ Memphis has momentum that includes bold bets on the future. Through transformative investments from companies like Ford Motor Company, FedEx, and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis is becoming a national model for how legacy industries and emerging technologies can thrive side by side.

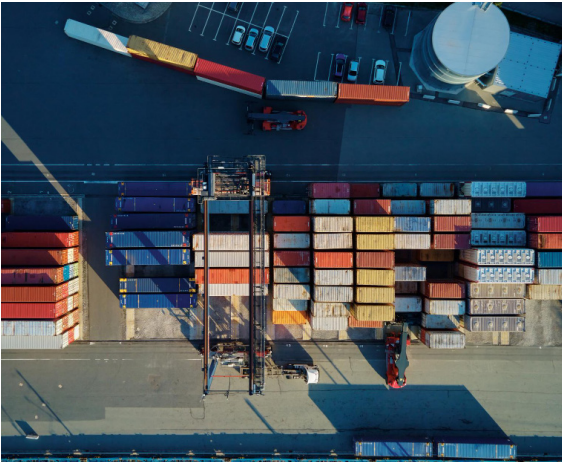
☛ With a commitment to cross-sector collaboration, innovation, and regional competitiveness, Memphis offers the perfect stage for dialogue, connection, and co-creation.



WHAT SETS MEMPHIS APART?

- ✓ **Strategic geographic position:** Located within a 600-mile radius of nearly two-thirds of the U.S. population, enabling rapid national and international market access.
- ✓ **Logistics capital of the U.S.:** Home to the Western Hemisphere's busiest cargo airport and one of the world's top cargo hubs.
- ✓ **Unmatched multimodal connectivity:** Unique convergence of air, rail, river, and road infrastructure, including five Class I railroads, the nation's third-busiest trucking corridor, and the second-busiest port on the Mississippi River.
- ✓ **Scale-ready infrastructure:** Availability of large industrial sites, reliable energy capacity, and a business environment designed for rapid deployment and expansion.
- ✓ **Major transformational investments:** Blue Oval City; xAI's selection of Memphis for a large-scale private-sector supercomputing facility supported by more than \$1 billion in fiber infrastructure and \$1.5 billion in energy investments; and ongoing FedEx expansion, including a \$1 billion hub investment.
- ✓ **Innovation and technology momentum:** Significant fiber and energy investments supporting advanced manufacturing, AI, and next-generation logistics.
- ✓ **Collaborative economic model:** Strong coordination among public, private, academic, and philanthropic partners to ensure regional growth.
- ✓ **Regional connectivity:** Positioned at the crossroads of three states, linking urban and rural economies into a unified workforce and investment ecosystem.
- ✓ **Distinctive identity:** Combines infrastructure scale, innovation velocity, collaborative leadership, and cultural authenticity to convert global investment into long-term economic impact.

PRIORITIZED CLUSTERS



Logistics, Trade, and Global Commerce

Memphis is a global logistics powerhouse, anchored by FedEx's world headquarters and global air hub, one of the most sophisticated multimodal freight networks in the world, and direct access to river, rail, road, and air infrastructure. The region is also emerging as a leader in supply chain resilience, automation, and trade-enabled innovation, offering valuable insights into how logistics ecosystems can adapt to evolving global commerce dynamics.

Advanced Mobility and Electrification

The region's leadership in advanced mobility is being reshaped by advanced battery innovation at Amplify Cell Technologies and SK Innovation as well as the Industry University Cooperative Research Center at the University of Memphis. The region is seeing high-end manufacturing and supply chain innovations within the electrification spectrum. The City of Memphis has also coordinated industry and academic research and development investments across the full value chain of mobility solutions. Memphis is prime for this activity with its global leading supply chain, logistics, and geographic attributes.



Artificial Intelligence and Frontier Technologies

Memphis is rapidly positioning itself as a hub for frontier technologies and applied innovation, underscored by xAI's major supercomputing investment in the region. AI applications are expanding across key sectors—including logistics optimization, healthcare delivery, public services, and advanced analytics—demonstrating how emerging technologies can be deployed at scale to improve efficiency, competitiveness, and decision-making.

ACE MEMPHIS HOSTS AND SITES

CITY OF MEMPHIS



Memphis, Tennessee, is a strategic U.S. business hub with a metro population of approximately 1.3 million and a regional GDP exceeding \$85 billion. Renowned as a global logistics center, it is home to FedEx's worldwide headquarters and Memphis International Airport—one of the busiest cargo airports globally—offering unparalleled access to North American markets. The city's economy is driven by transportation and distribution, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and agribusiness, supported by its prime location on the Mississippi River. Competitive operating costs, strong multimodal infrastructure, and a pro-business environment make Memphis an attractive destination for international companies seeking efficient market entry and expansion in the United States.

Website: <https://memphistn.gov/>

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/city-of-memphis

Mayor Paul Young



Paul Young was sworn in as mayor of Memphis on January 1, 2024, with a commitment to creating a stronger, safer, and thriving community for all Memphians. Young earned a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering from the University of Tennessee, a Master of Science in urban and regional planning, and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Memphis. Young has spent the last decade improving the quality of life in Memphis by advancing housing security and fostering healthy neighborhoods where families can thrive. As the former President of the Downtown Memphis Commission and Director of Housing and Community Development for the City of Memphis, Young applied a holistic approach to unifying the city through public and private partnerships and targeted investments in our future.

Contact information:

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mayor@memphistn.gov*

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/memphis-paul-young/

EDGE - Economic Development Growth Engine for Memphis & Shelby County



EDGE is the primary economic development agency for the Memphis region, focused on attracting, retaining, and expanding business investment. It offers a range of competitive incentives – including tax abatements, tax increment financing, small business loans, and workforce support – to facilitate corporate relocation and growth. EDGE has supported billions of dollars in capital investment and the creation of thousands of jobs across key sectors such as logistics, manufacturing, and technology. For international companies, EDGE serves as a strategic partner, providing market entry guidance, site selection assistance, and streamlined access to local and state resources to ensure efficient and successful investment in the Memphis market.

Contact information: Dr. Joann Massey

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www.linkedin.com/in/joannlewismassey/

Start Co.



Start Co. is a Memphis-based venture development organization focused on supporting high-growth startups and fostering innovation across the region. Through its accelerator programs, investment initiatives, and extensive mentor network, Start Co. has helped launch and scale dozens of early-stage companies, particularly in sectors such as logistics, healthcare, and technology. The organization plays a key role in strengthening Memphis's entrepreneurial ecosystem by connecting founders with capital, corporate partners, and talent. For international stakeholders, Start Co. offers a valuable platform to engage with emerging innovation, explore partnership opportunities, and access a pipeline of scalable ventures in the U.S. market.

Contact information: Andre Fowlkes,

andre@neverstop.co, leann@neverstop.co

Website: <https://www.neverstop.co/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/start-co-/about/>

FedEx



FedEx Corporation, headquartered in Memphis, is a global leader in transportation, e-commerce, and logistics, connecting more than 220 countries and territories worldwide. With its primary global air hub located in Memphis, FedEx plays a central role in the city's economy and its position as a major logistics gateway.

Through its integrated network of air, ground, and freight services, FedEx enables businesses of all sizes to move goods efficiently and reliably across global markets. The company is also at the forefront of innovation in supply chain management, automation, and data-driven logistics solutions.

As one of Memphis's largest employers, FedEx is deeply invested in the region, supporting workforce development, community initiatives, and economic growth across the Delta.

Website: <https://www.fedex.com/en-us/home.html>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/fedex>

University of Memphis



The University of Memphis is a leading public research institution and a key driver of talent and innovation in the region. Known for its strengths in business, engineering, health sciences, and logistics, the university plays an important role in workforce development and applied research.

Through strong industry partnerships, including with FedEx, the University of Memphis supports economic growth and advances innovation in areas such as supply chain management and data analytics.

Website: <https://www.memphis.edu/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/uofmemphis/>

FedEx Institute of Technology



The FedEx Institute of Technology at the University of Memphis is a hub for advanced research, innovation, and industry collaboration. Focused on areas such as data science, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and intelligent systems, the Institute brings together academic expertise and private-sector partners to address real-world challenges.

Through applied research, workforce development, and technology commercialization, the Institute plays a key role in driving innovation and supporting the growth of Memphis's technology and logistics ecosystem.

Website: <https://www.memphis.edu/fedex/>

Orion Financial



Orion Financial's headquarters in Memphis is a compelling example of how historic preservation and community investment can work hand in hand to drive modern development. Originally built in 1921 as a Wonder Bread bakery, the building was thoughtfully renovated by Orion in 2019, transforming it into a dynamic, collaborative workspace while maintaining its historic character.

This revitalization reflects Orion's mission of strengthening the communities it serves. By reinvesting in a landmark property, the credit union has contributed to the renewal and growth of the surrounding neighborhood. Today, the headquarters serves not only as a workplace, but as a community asset that fosters innovation, connection, and pride among employees and members.

By bringing the ACE Delegation to the headquarters in Memphis, Orion Financial aims to showcase both the strength of our city and the role a mission-driven financial institution can play in advancing community growth. Through our efforts to reinvest in neighborhoods, support local initiatives, and create meaningful spaces for employees and members alike, we are actively contributing to Memphis' continued progress. Visiting participants can help advance our objectives by sharing insights, best practices, and global perspectives on community development, innovation, and financial inclusion. Their collaboration and ideas can help us refine our approach, strengthen our impact, and continue positioning both Orion Financial and Memphis as leaders in building vibrant, forward-looking communities.

Contact information: [Patrick Galpin, pgalpin@orionfcu.com](mailto:pgalpin@orionfcu.com)

Website: <https://orionfcu.com/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-orion-financial/>

Instagram: [@theorionfinancial](https://www.instagram.com/theorionfinancial)

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital



St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is a world-renowned pediatric treatment and research institution dedicated to advancing cures and prevention methods for catastrophic childhood diseases. Guided by the vision of its founder, Danny Thomas, St. Jude ensures that no child is denied treatment based on race, religion, or a family's ability to pay. The hospital specializes in some of the most complex pediatric cases, combining compassionate, patient-centered care with cutting-edge scientific research and innovation.



**St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital**

St. Jude's impact extends far beyond the United States. Through the St. Jude Global initiative, the institution collaborates with partners in more than 60 countries, sharing knowledge, technology, and best practices to improve survival rates for children worldwide.

Contact information: [Nicholas Thompson, *nicholas.thompson@stjude.org*](mailto:nicholas.thompson@stjude.org)
Website: <https://www.stjude.org>

National Civil Rights Museum



Established in 1991, the National Civil Rights Museum is located at the former Lorraine Motel, where civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Through interactive exhibits, historic collections, dynamic speakers and special events, the museum offers visitors a chance to walk through history and learn more about a tumultuous and inspiring period of change. To accommodate public demand for further educational opportunities, the museum underwent a \$27.5 million renovation in 2013 and 2014, adding more than 40 new films, oral histories and interactive media to the already robust galleries.

The National Civil Rights Museum seeks to leverage the visit of the ACE delegation to position the museum as both a historic site of reflection and a contemporary platform for dialogue, learning, and action around leadership, and social impact. By bringing the delegation, the National Civil Rights Museum aims to highlight how the lessons of the Civil Rights Movement continue to inform present-day approaches to economic development, civic engagement, and systems change.

Contact information: [Arlinda Cathey, *acathey@civilrightsmuseum.org*](mailto:acathey@civilrightsmuseum.org)
Website: <https://civilrightsmuseum.org/>
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-civil-rights-museum/>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ncrmuseum>

Epicenter



Epicenter Memphis serves as the innovation hub of the Delta, supporting entrepreneurs and fostering the growth of high-impact businesses across the Mississippi Delta region. As a leading entrepreneurship support organization, Epicenter ensures founders have access to the resources, networks, and capital needed to launch and scale their ventures.

Its flagship programs include ZeroTo510, a nationally recognized medical device accelerator, as well as industry-focused initiatives such as the Logistics Opportunity Challenge and the Medical Device Operations Challenge—each designed to drive innovation and strengthen key sectors of the regional economy.

Opportunities for ACE Memphis include strategic partnerships for economic development, business collaboration—particularly in the medical device and logistics sectors—investment opportunities, and access to cutting-edge technologies emerging in biotech and advanced manufacturing.

Contact information: Nate Smith, nate@epicentermemphis.org
Website: <https://www.epicentermemphis.org/>

FedExForum



FedExForum is a premier sports and entertainment venue located in downtown Memphis and home to the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies and the University of Memphis men's basketball team. Opened in 2004, the arena serves as a central gathering place for the city, hosting major concerts, sporting events, and community activities.

As a key anchor in Memphis's downtown revitalization, FedExForum contributes significantly to the local economy and cultural landscape, drawing visitors from across the region and supporting nearby businesses and development.

The ACE Memphis innovation showcase will take place at the FedExForum.

Rose Creek Farms – Memphis Region

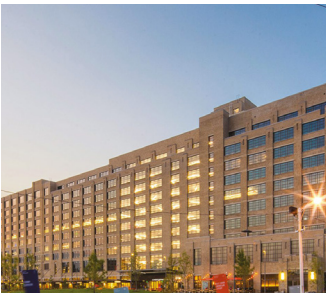


Rose Creek Farms is a community-centered agricultural initiative focused on sustainable farming, local food production, and environmental stewardship. The farm expands access to fresh, locally grown produce while creating opportunities for education, workforce development, and community engagement.

A key aspect of its work is an innovation-driven approach to agriculture, using data-informed practices, modern growing techniques, and continuous experimentation to improve yield, sustainability, and resilience. Through partnerships and hands-on programming, Rose Creek Farms serves as a model for strengthening regional food systems and advancing innovative solutions in agriculture.

Website: <https://rosecreekfarmstore.com>

Crosstown Concourse



Crosstown Concourse is a mixed-use community hub in Memphis created through the adaptive reuse of the historic Sears Crosstown building. Its mission is to create unexpected connections that improve how people experience their lives, their neighborhood, and their city. The site brings together arts, health, education, housing, retail, dining, and public gathering space in one shared environment. Its primary areas of expertise include placemaking, arts and culture, wellness, community development, entrepreneurship, and collaborative programming. Crosstown Concourse is designed to serve as both a neighborhood anchor and a citywide destination, supporting residents, visitors, creatives, students, entrepreneurs, and mission-driven organizations.

By bringing the ACE delegation to Crosstown Concourse, the organization wants to demonstrate how a single historic asset can be transformed into a high-impact platform for economic development, civic renewal, and cross-sector collaboration. Crosstown Concourse is a working model of how arts, health, education, entrepreneurship, nonprofit activity, and neighborhood investment can be intentionally combined to create a more connected and resilient city. Hosting the delegation here allows Crosstown Concourse to showcase Memphis as a place where adaptive reuse, community development, and innovation are integrated in a visible, practical, and scalable way.

Contact information: Erin Shelton, erin@crosstownconcourse.com

Website: <https://crosstownconcourse.com/>

Orgill Innovation Center



ORGILL

The Orgill Innovation Center is a dynamic space where retail solutions are brought to life. Designed to accelerate innovation across the home improvement industry, it functions as a collaborative hub where Orgill customers, vendors, and partners come together to explore cutting-edge technologies, test new concepts, and shape the future of retail. Whether it's showcasing next-generation merchandising strategies, piloting operational enhancements, or hosting immersive events, the Innovation Center serves as both a proving ground and an inspiration point — turning ideas into scalable success stories.

Orgill is hosting the Americas Competitiveness Exchange delegation at its Innovation Center to demonstrate how a purpose-driven, distribution-led model can drive economic growth, retail innovation, and support for small and medium-sized businesses. The visit highlights scalable solutions in merchandising, supply chain efficiency, and store design, while fostering dialogue on strengthening community-based retail and sustainable development. It also provides an opportunity to exchange best practices, explore international collaboration, and position Orgill as a strategic partner for advancing competitiveness and excellence across global markets.

Contact information: Velvet Graham, velvet.graham@orgill.com

Website: <https://www.orgill.com/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/orgill-inc./>

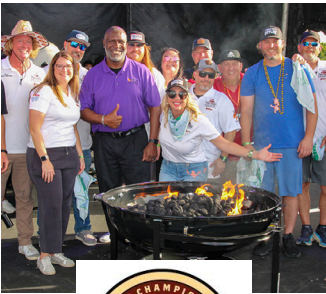
The Works, Inc.



The Works, Inc. is a community development corporation advancing neighborhood revitalization in Memphis through a holistic, place-based approach. Their work focuses on expanding access to healthy food, affordable housing, and economic opportunity through initiatives such as urban farms, community orchards, housing development, and local food systems.

Website: <https://www.theworkscdc.org>

Memphis in May World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest – Memphis



The Memphis in May World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest is one of the largest and most prestigious barbecue competitions in the world, held annually along the Mississippi River as part of the Memphis in May International Festival. Drawing hundreds of teams from around the globe, the event celebrates Memphis's rich barbecue heritage and culinary excellence.

Beyond the competition, the festival serves as a vibrant cultural experience, featuring live music, local food, and community gatherings. It is a major driver of tourism and economic activity, showcasing Memphis's hospitality, creativity, and global appeal.

Website: <https://memphisinmay.org>

ACE MEMPHIS DELEGATION



**Americas
Competitiveness
Exchange**
May 10-15, 2026

ACE Memphis Hosts



Paul A. Young
Mayor
City of Memphis



**Dr. Joann
Massey**
President & CEO
EDGE Economic Development
Growth Engine for Memphis &
Shelby County



Special Guests



**H.E.
Leandro Rizzuto**
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of the
United States to the OAS



**H.E.
Carlos Cherniak**
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of
Argentina to the OAS



**H.E.
Raul Florentin
Antola**
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Paraguay to the OAS



**H.E.
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Chair of the Inter-American
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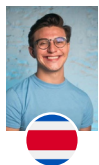
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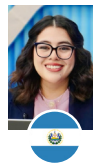
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Fausto Gurrea

Director of Strategy
Mexican Business Council
Mexico



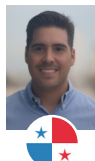
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City of Memphis



Queen Keskessa

Community Outreach
Manager, Multicultural
Affairs
City of Memphis



Gremesha Session

Chief Marketing
Officer
EDGE



Trey Moore

Small Biz Specialist
EDGE



Beth Wilson

PR and
Communications
Consultant
EDGE



Terri Harris

Neighborhood
Development
Specialist
EDGE



Organization of American States (OAS)



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Innovation Exchange Coalition (IEC)



Natasha Main

Co-Founder
Innovation Exchange Coalition



Ryan Ramkhelawan

Co-Founder
Innovation Exchange Coalition



SOCIAL MEDIA

OAS

 **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/organizacion-de-los-estados-americanos/posts/?feedView=all>

 **Instagram:** https://www.instagram.com/oea_oficial/?hl=es-la

English:  **X:** https://x.com/OAS_oficial **Spanish:**  **X:** https://x.com/OEA_oficial

OAS Development  **X:** https://x.com/OAS_Development

OEA Desarrollo  **X:** https://x.com/OEA_Desarrollo

Américas Competitiveness Exchange

 **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-americas-competitiveness-exchange-ace>

 **Instagram:** https://www.instagram.com/ace_the_americas_exchange

 **X:** <https://x.com/riacnetorg>

 **Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/riacnetorg>

City of Memphis

 **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/city-of-memphis>

 **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/citymemphis/>

 **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/MEMCity/>

 **X:** <https://x.com/CityOfMemphis>

Mayor Young

 **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/memphis-paul-young/>

 **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/mayorpaulyoung/?hl=es-la>

 **X:** <https://x.com/mayorpaulyoung>

EDGE

 **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ecogrowthengine/posts/?feedView=all>

 **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/edgememphis/?hl=es-la>

 **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/edge.memphis.3>

 **X:** https://x.com/edge_memphis

Start Co.

 **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/start-co-/>

 **Instagram:** https://www.instagram.com/start_co?igsh=MzB5YWFnCXl3dGJr

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We will take your changes into consideration as the online version is updated.



Americas Competitiveness Exchange

May 10-15, 2026

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