

STATE OF THE REGION

Southwest Region Economic Development Association

Jorge Ayala

EDA Regional Director for the Austin Regional Office

April 16, 2026

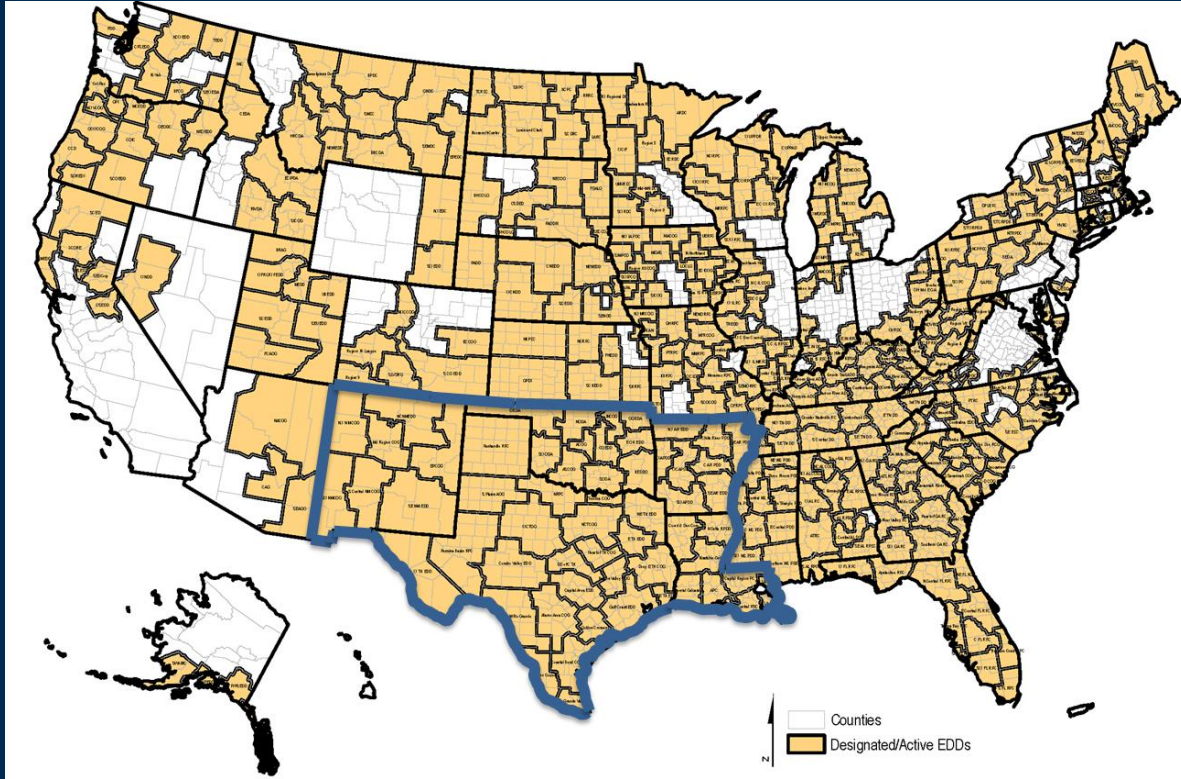
Celebrating 32 Years at EDA



AURO's "Why Statement" since 2015

“By helping distressed communities, we make a lasting and positive impact on people’s lives.”

What I'm most proud we accomplished at AURO



100% of all counties and parishes in the region are part of a designated and funded Economic Development District since 2017. AURO is still the only region with this accomplishment.

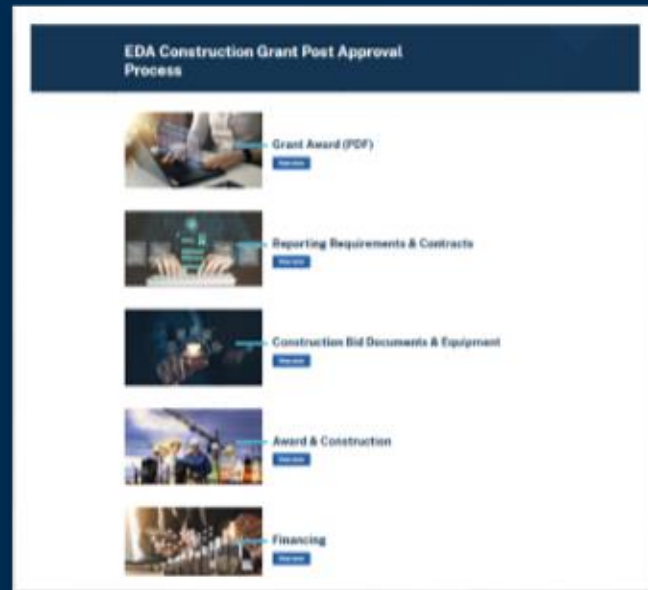
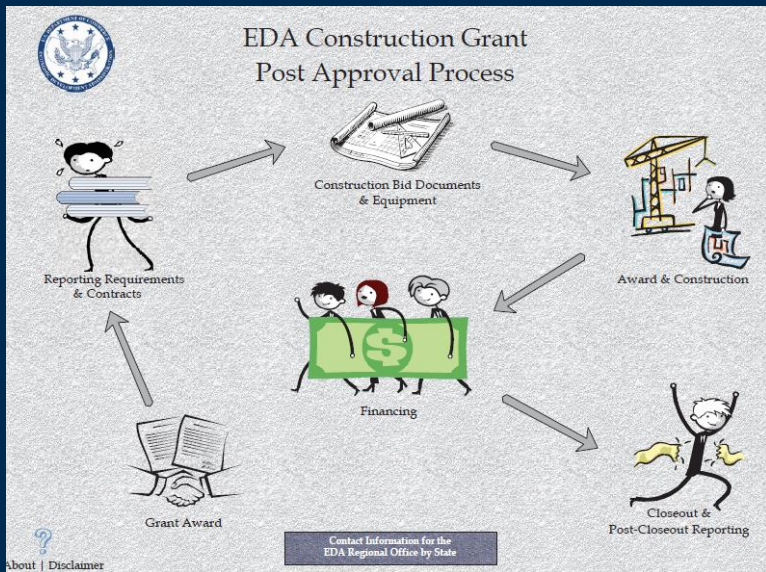
What I'm most proud we accomplished at AURO

EDD Multi-year Funding



What I'm most proud we accomplished at AURO

AURO created and implemented a post approval construction tool in 2007 which became the standard EDA-wide and is now transitioning to an online tool.



What I'm most proud we accomplished at AURO

SWREDA was started in 2007. During my time as RD it has been transformed from an EDA-led event into an EDD-driven event that elevates and shares the region's most effective economic development best practices.



What I'm most proud we accomplished at AURO Emerging Leaders Program



2026 Class Cohort

- Chelsey Baldivia, South Plains Association of Governments, Texas
- Shaharia Jaman Bhuiyan, Capital Region Planning Commission, Louisiana
- Javier Dominguez, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, Texas
- Celia Kirkland, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, New Mexico
- Kalieen McHugh, Capital Area Council of Governments, Texas

This is cohort #8 with a total of 47 participants so far and currently 6 active EDD Executive Directors!

What I'm most proud we accomplished at AURO Working with communities after disasters

AR Tornadoes



NM Wildfires



TX Hurricanes



OK Tornadoes



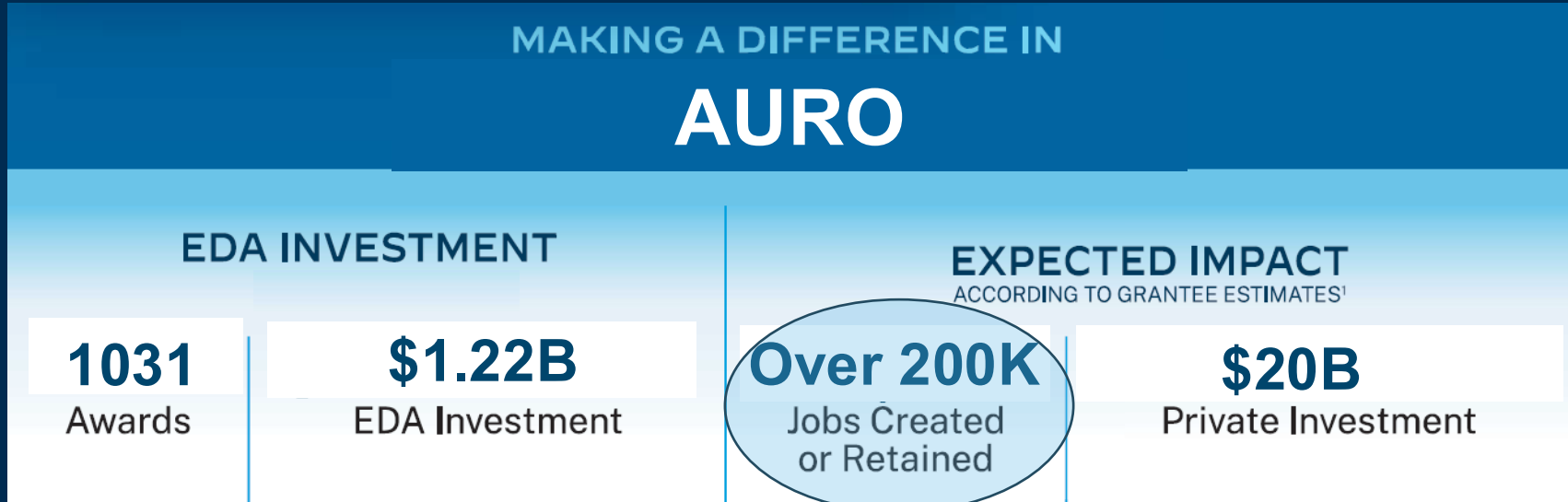
LA Hurricanes



AURO has invested about \$350 million
in disaster impacted communities
since 2015.

What I'm most proud we accomplished at AURO

Total Investments During My Time as Regional Director

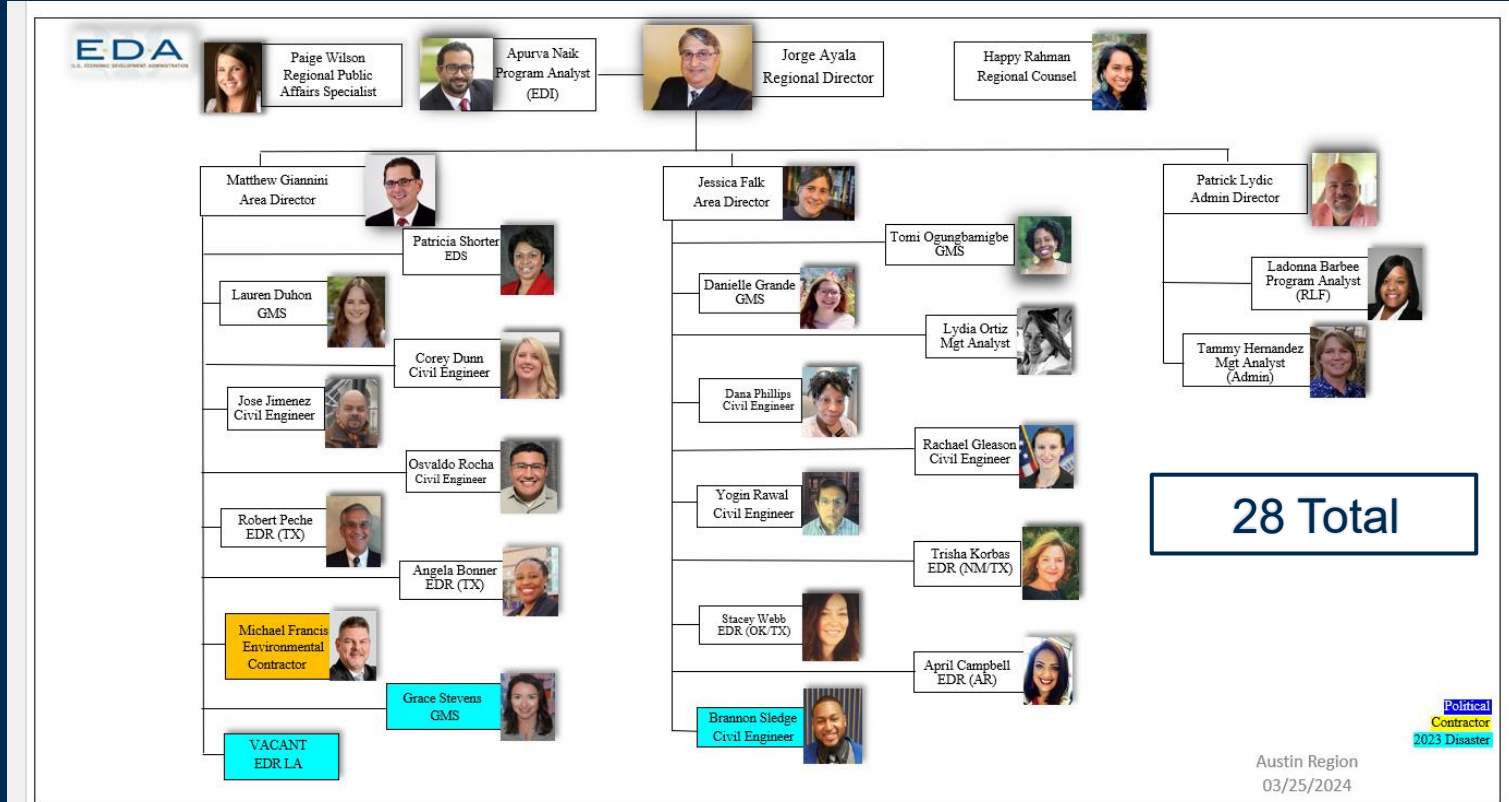


What I'm most proud we accomplished at AURO

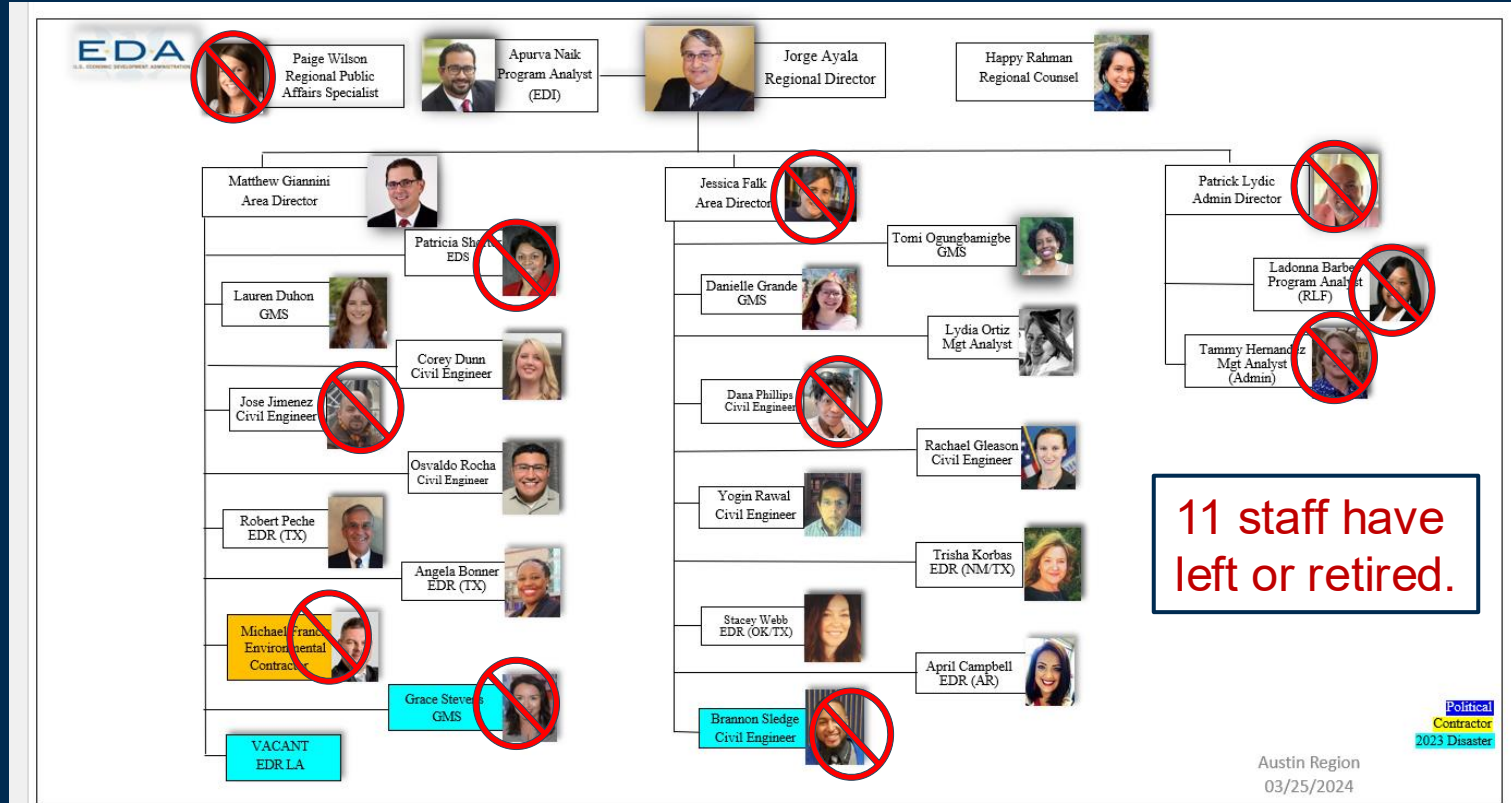
Having the privilege of leading the best staff in all of EDA



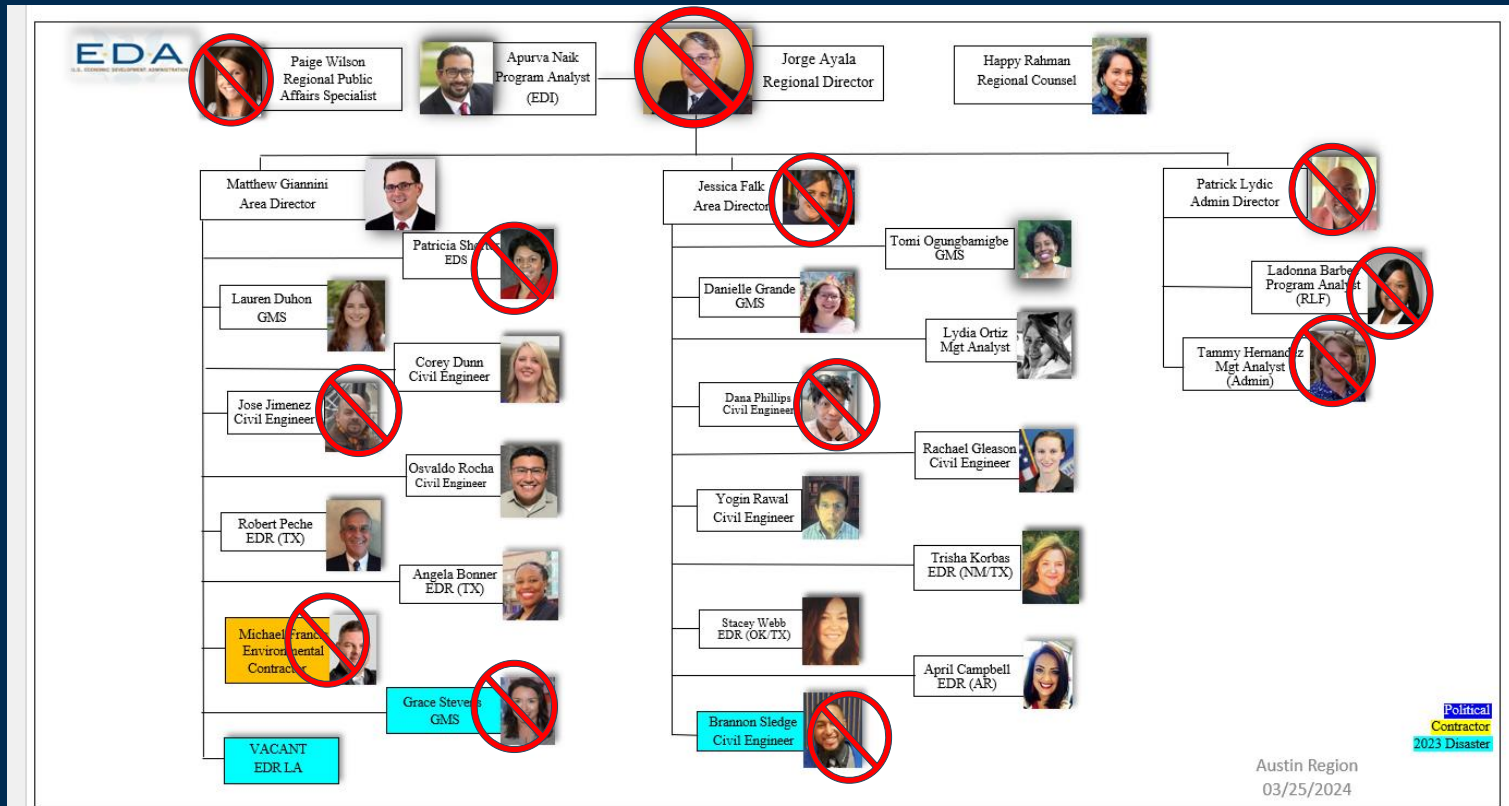
AURO Team in 2024



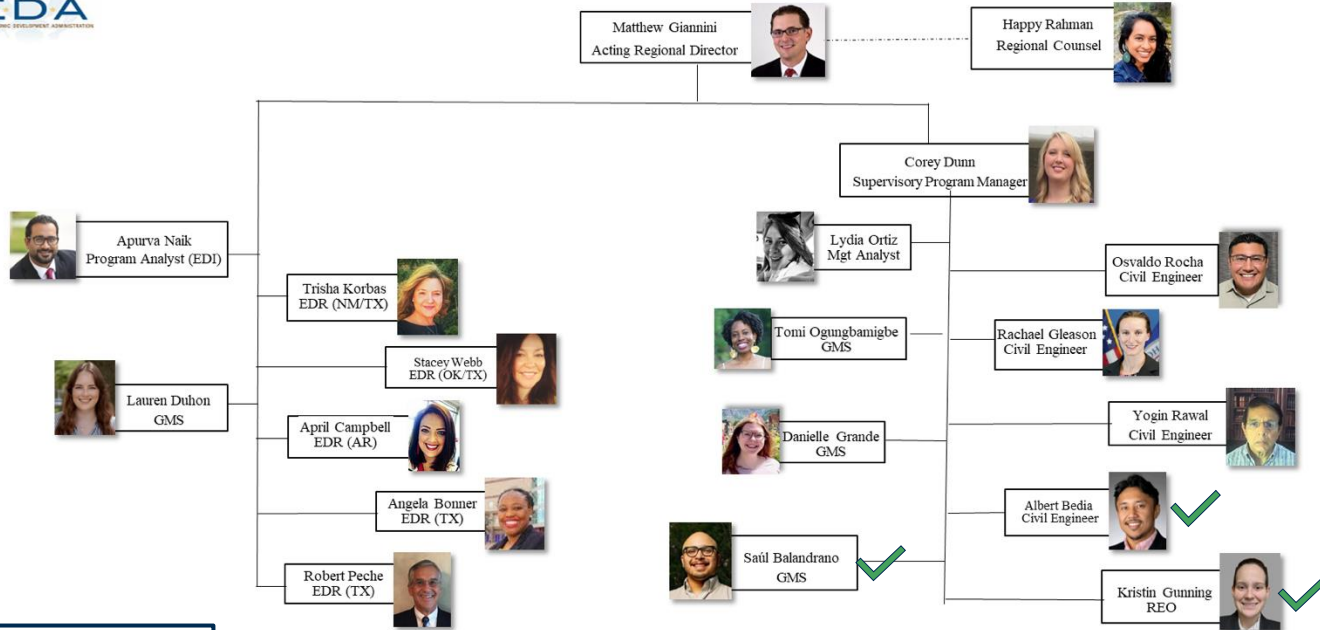
AURO Team Departures



AURO RD Last Day April 30th



AURO Team in May 2026



19 Total

What's Ahead for the EDA Austin Regional Office

- Matt will lead the office over the next 6–12 months
- Backed by one of the strongest teams in EDA
- EDA remains well-funded and committed to its mission
- Ongoing strong support from Congress
- And most importantly—your continued partnership will drive AURO's success

Thank You...

I leave with gratitude. For the years. For the friendships. For the chance to serve. And most of all, for your partnership and support that carried me here. EDA will always be part of my story. And I hope I've left a little of myself in its story too. Thank you—for the work we did, for the memories we made, and for walking this 30-year road with me.

Grandpa Club Update



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