



Cast your vote for the State Botanical Garden of Georgia everyday in *USA Today's 10Best "Best Botanical Garden" Contest* until March 27, [here](#).



New Homewood Suites breaks ground in Athens



McNeill Hotel Company held official groundbreaking ceremonies on February 22, 2017, for the new Homewood Suites by Hilton hotel in Athens. Scheduled to open in spring of 2018, the Homewood Suites - Athens is located just behind The Classic Center. The pet-friendly hotel will have 130 one- and two- bedroom guest room suites with fully-equipped kitchens and a separate living room area.

Guests will enjoy extra comforts like free Wi-Fi, online check-in and room selection, guest laundry room, and free grocery-shopping service. A complimentary hot breakfast is served each morning and on Monday through Thursday guests will enjoy a complimentary evening social gathering. [MORE INFO](#)

CVB's Marketing team wins big at GACVB annual meeting



The Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau was selected as a winner in the **Georgia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus' (GACVB) Best Ideas Competition** at the 2017 Winter Meeting in Carrollton.

The Athens CVB won the Collateral Materials category with its Meeting Sales Collateral Suite. A comprehensive and streamlined approach to all stages of the sales cycle, the suite includes a "Meet Athens" eNewsletter, new branded profile sheets, and an editable PDF template for proposals and contracts. [MORE INFO](#)

Pictured (L to R): Director of Marketing & Communications Hannah Smith and PR Coordinator Khyra Walker pose with GACVB Executive Director Julie Musselman after win.

Athens hosts student groups this season



Pictured (L to R): Georgia TSA Executive Director Steve Price, CVB Director of Sales Missy Brandt Wilson, and Tailgate Station Owner Jeff Cravens at the GA TSA State Leadership Conference in Athens March 9-11.

Student groups from around Georgia take over Athens during the early months of the year, and this year is no different. More than 13,000 middle and high school students bring \$5,983,294.54 in direct spending during seven conferences held between January and April. We're happy to have Georgia's best and brightest head to Athens with their robots, instruments, and presentations, and for them to call Athens home, even for a few days out of the year.

Envision Athens Stakeholder wrap-up

CVB Director **Chuck Jones**, along with Classic Center Executive Director **Paul Cramer**, participated in the Envision Athens Stakeholder Sessions at The Classic Center February 28 -



March 1.

Some 140 stakeholders attended these thought-provoking sessions, where each stakeholder group (stakeholders being experts in a particular area, Jones in economic development and Cramer in cultural resources) were asked to assess written public comments from recent community forums, and, from there, develop common themes, identify what was missing, address challenges, and provide outcomes.

CVB Advisory Board meeting scheduled for March 28

Please join us for a special presentation from **Chris Cannon**, Assistant Director of Tourism Product Development for the Georgia Department of Economic Development!

Chris is a dynamic speaker who challenges Georgia communities to "Jettison the Generic" and set themselves apart from their competition to maximize visitation.

We invite you to attend Chris' presentation, then engage with the Athens CVB as we seek opportunities to share Athens' distinctive culture with our target market. We'll be asking for your input during and following this meeting as we construct our FY18 budget and program of work.

Come be a part of this exciting presentation and discussion!

CVB ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, March 28

State Botanical Garden of Georgia

Gardenside room, Visitor Center-Conservatory Building

8:45 a.m. arrival-networking

9-10 a.m. program

RSVP by March 24 to CVB Receptionist Sonya Dills, sdills@VisitAthensGA.com or by calling 706-357-4430.

Don't Miss Out

The CVB's largest advertising campaign of the year is now running, meaning more traffic to VisitAthensGA.com. We want more of those visitors to head from our website to YOURS.

Help us help you by:

- * Updating your listing with current offerings and hours
- * Verifying that your website and social media links are current and correct
- * Adding fresh photography
- * Adding a promotion or special offer

You can do all this through our Partner Extranet: <https://www.visitathensga.com/partners/>.

Another incentive to update your listings: we will soon be displaying listings based on **Content Quality**, which means that taking the above steps will be sure to move you higher in the rankings. (Featured listings based on ad packages will not be impacted, though; of course, if you're paying for eyeballs, you'll also want your listing to be in great shape!)

Industry Events

CVB Advisory Board Meeting
March 28

Travel Media Marketplace
April 20-22

Recent Media Coverage

- "24 Coolest Small Towns in the USA," [Matador Network](#), March 2017
- "The Most Overlooked Cities in the USA,"

[Website](#) / [Partner Extranet](#) / [State Resources](#) / [Media Coverage](#) / [Athens Events](#)

