



Newsmakers // Opportunities // New Developments in Tourism

## **Athens Represented at Tourism, Arts, and Hospitality Day at the Capitol**



*L-R, Chuck Jones, Sen. Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville), Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, Oconee County Tourism Director Alex Perschka, and Sen. Majority Leader Bill Cowser (R-Athens)*

Tourism professionals from Athens joined Georgia tourism industry leaders and elected officials for the annual Tourism, Hospitality, & Arts Day at the Capitol on January 23 to recognize the \$60.8 billion impact of tourism on Georgia's economy. Industry representatives presented Gov. Nathan Deal with a check representing the \$3.1 billion in state and local tax revenue generated by tourism-related expenditures.

Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Director Chuck Jones and Athens CVB Director of Marketing & Communications Hannah Smith were joined by Michael Lachowski from the Georgia Museum of Art, Elizabeth Hovell from the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel, and Oconee County Tourism Director Alex Perschka to represent the Athens area at the event.

Visitors to Athens-Clarke County spent \$292.3 million in 2016, according to the "2016 Travel Economic Impact on Georgia State, Counties and Regions" study prepared for the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) by the United States Travel Association (USTA). Tourism in Athens-Clarke County supported 2,745 jobs with a \$61.01 million payroll, as well as \$12.22 million in state tax and \$7.95 million in local tax collections. Total state and local taxes of \$20.17 million were collected from visitor spending.



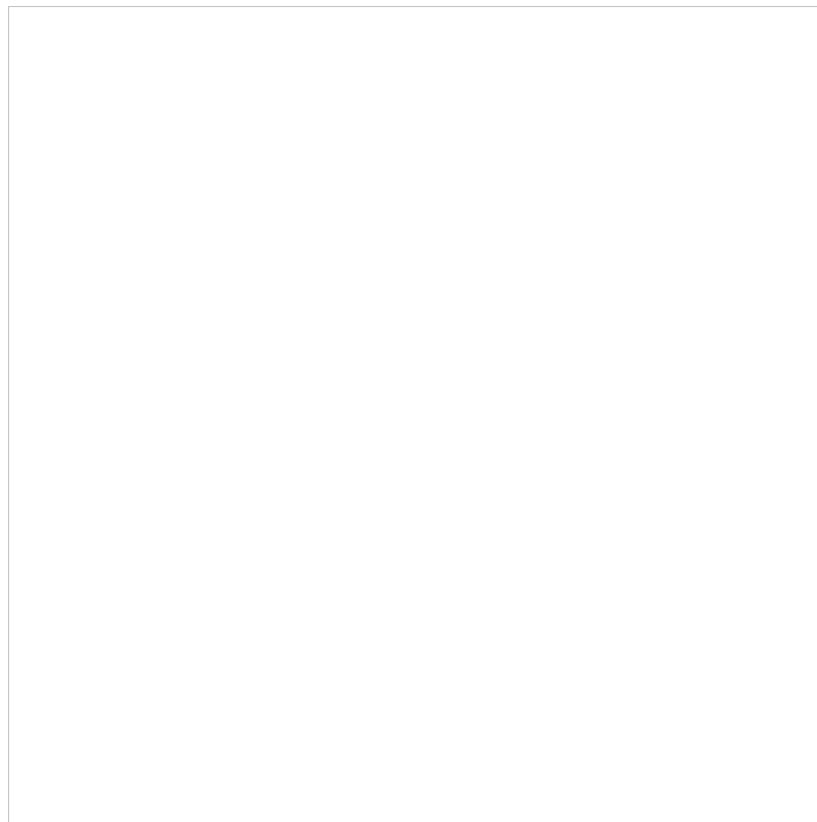
*L-R Oconee County Tourism Director Alex Perschka and Chuck Jones talk tourism with newly elected Representative Deborah Gonzalez (D-Athens) and Jonathan Wallace (D-Watkinsville)*

While in Atlanta, Jones met with the full local legislative delegation, including newly elected Representatives Deborah Gonzalez and Jonathan Wallace, as well as Representative Spencer Frye and Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp, an Athens native. Jones stated, "We are very fortunate to have legislators who understand the value of tourism, not only on a state level but on a local level as well. I am grateful to have been able to meet with each of them again this year."

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## Georgia Economic Outlook Is Positive for Tourism

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Communications Hannah Smith, and PR Coordinator Aimee Cheek attended the Georgia Economic Impact Luncheon at The Classic Center on January 24.

The 2018 Economic Outlook report is prepared by the Selig Center for Economic Growth and presented by UGA's Terry College of Business. Dean Benjamin Ayers presented the statewide forecast, and Director Jeffrey Humphreys presented the findings for the 2018 outlook for Athens-Clarke County.

Highlights of the report include that the hospitality sector will continue to outperform the overall economy, historic and cultural travel is one of the fastest growing segments in the travel market, and there is an anticipated ninth-straight year of sales growth for the restaurant industry, which fares well for Athens.

The full report is available [online](#), or for additional information, please reach out to [Aimee Cheek](#).

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## CVB Sales Updates: Housing Bureau & RCMA

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### New Housing Bureau Launched

The Athens CVB has partnered with MeetingMax to provide group housing needs to meeting planners with a streamlined process to ensure ease of use for both planners and hoteliers. CVB Sales and Services Manager Jeremiah Cook has led the launch of this enhanced service and is the main contact for meeting planners, attendees, and hoteliers. As an early adopter of this housing service, Athens continue to be competitive. If you would like further information, please [email Jeremiah](#).

### Athens Exhibits at Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA) Emerge

The Classic Center Executive Director Paul Cramer, Outside Sales Manager Marvin Nunnally, and CVB Director Chuck Jones attended RCMA Emerge in Omaha, Nebraska. RCMA is the only multifaith, not-for-profit, international association comprised exclusively of religious meeting planners. Cramer, Jones, and Nunnally met with several meeting planners and look forward to bringing new religious groups to Athens. Nunnally also had the distinct honor to lead the prayer for the general session.



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## Hospitality Newsmakers

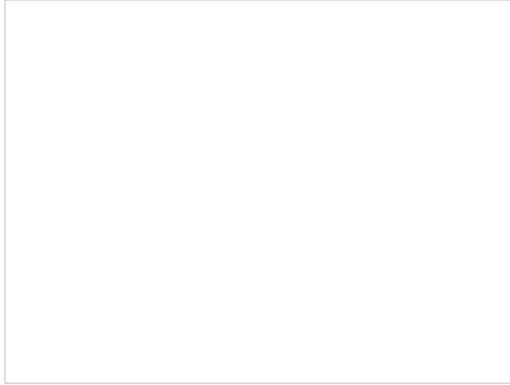
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### Georgia Museum of Art & Hillary Brown

The Georgia Museum of Art at the University of Georgia received [three awards](#) last week at the Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries (GAMG) annual conference for its exemplary work. GAMG presented the museum with awards for the exhibition "Modern Living: Giò Ponti and the 20th-Century Aesthetics of Design" and its studio workshop educational program. Hillary



Brown, the museum's director of communications, received Museum Professional of the Year.



*Hillary Brown (centered) receives the Museum Professional of the Year Award.*



### **Richard Neal - Five and Ten**

Five and Ten's Richard Neal has been named one of [2018's Star Chef's Rising Stars!](#)

Diners experience Richard's standard for excellence and unwavering commitment to local ingredients every day at the restaurant, and Athens is fortunate that Neal calls our town home.



### **Christopher Belk - Saucehouse BBQ**

Christopher Belk was recognized by The University of Georgia Alumni Association at the ninth-annual Bulldog [100 Celebration](#) in Atlanta. Saucehouse BBQ co-founder Belk is a double dawg and owns the fastest-growing business for 2018. The restaurant and catering company is based in Athens, and is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

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## **Opportunities:**

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**WE'RE  
HIRING!**

### **\*\*Join in the fun of the Athens CVB\*\***

Do you love Athens and want to share it with others? The Athens CVB is now accepting résumés for a part-time afternoon receptionist position. Please see the full [job description](#) and email [Venessa Banks](#) if interested.



### **\*\*FY19 Georgia Tourism Grant Match Program\*\***

The Georgia Department of Economic Development's tourism division will provide up to \$400,000 in 1:1 match funds for Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 tourism ad campaigns. Any tourism entity with a current listing on [www.ExploreGeorgia.org](http://www.ExploreGeorgia.org) is eligible. Applications will be open starting March 1 and will be reviewed on a first come, first-served basis. Please find additional information, including all the regulations, at [www.MarketGeorgia.org](http://www.MarketGeorgia.org) [More Details](#).



**\*\*SAVE THE DATE: CVB Advisory Board Meeting\*\***

The next CVB Advisory Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 15, at 9:00 a.m.

Historic Heartland Tourism Project Manager Rebekah Snider will be discussing initiatives and partnership opportunities. Formal invitation to come soon.



**\*\*Looking to get more visitors through your doors?\*\***

The CVB's website delivers interested customers straight to you through a variety of ad packages that increase your exposure on [VisitAthensGA.com](http://VisitAthensGA.com). Contact the CVB's agency, Destination Travel Network. For more information, [email Brittany Montoya](mailto:Brittany.Montoya) or call (520) 284-1090.

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## Recent Media Coverage

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- "Ken Sweeney Traces The Journey That Made R.E.M. One of the Biggest Bands on the Planet," [The Irish Sun](#), Jan. 2018
- "7 Must Explore Places While Biking the Antebellum Trail," [Explore Georgia](#), Jan. 2018
- "Many Reasons to Head to Athens in 2018," [Southern Bon Vivant](#), Jan. 2018
- "Geraldine in Georgia and South Carolina," [3 op Reis](#), Jan. 2018
- "Sweet Treats," [AAA Living](#), Jan. 2018

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