

Athens Now //

March 2018

Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau

Athens
LIFE UNLEASHED



Newsmakers // Opportunities // New Developments in Tourism

Tourism Conference Kicks Off Piedmont College's New Hospitality and Tourism Program

Piedmont College has partnered with The Classic Center Authority and The Classic Center Cultural Foundation to form a Hospitality & Tourism Management program that will be available at Piedmont's Athens campus this fall.

The Hospitality & Tourism Management (HTM) curriculum will cater to the fast-growing hospitality industry, which has been ranked as the second-largest sector employer in Georgia and the third-largest private industry in the Athens area. It will operate within Piedmont's Harry W. Walker School of Business.

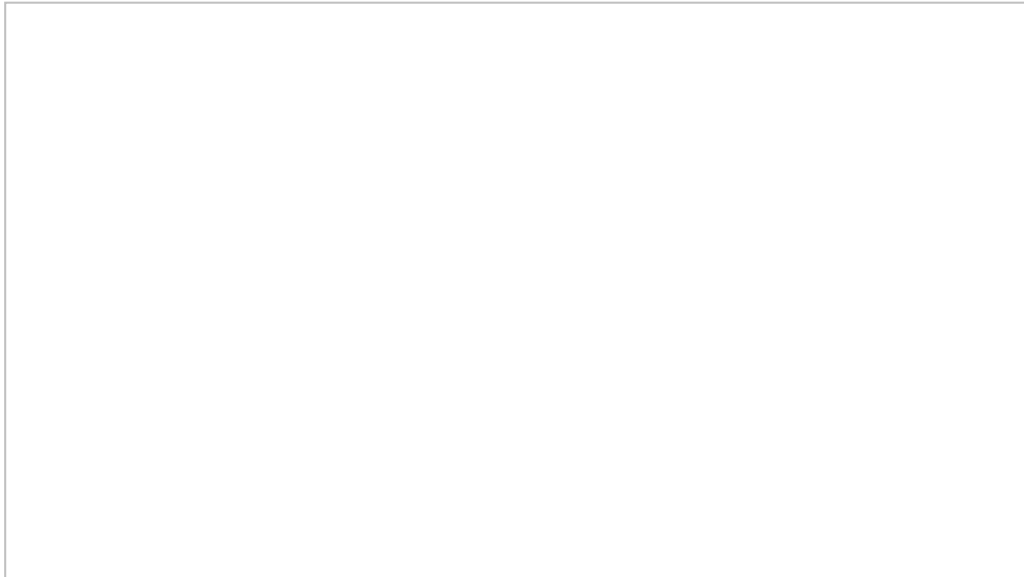
An endowment that was established earlier this year by The Classic Center Authority and The Classic Center Cultural Foundation to support hospitality education will help fund the program. Dr. Mark Newton, a business professor with more than 20 years of private-industry management experience, will lead the program. He retired from Gwinnett Technical College in 2016 where he was the director of the Hotel/Restaurant/Tourism Management Program. He is a graduate of Cornell University and has earned master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Georgia.

Courses in hotel, club and vineyard management, and other areas will be offered through the new program. Graduates will earn a BS in Business with a concentration in HTM. A unique feature of the program is a component that will allow students to work in The Classic Center and learn from staff there. They will also learn from other industry leaders in Athens who will participate in classes, sponsor internships, and shape course material.



Piedmont College, The Classic Center Authority, and The Classic Center Cultural Foundation will also host the **Athens Hospitality & Tourism Conference** on March 27 from 1-4 p.m. at The Classic Center. This informative, lively conference is **FREE** and is a must-attend networking opportunity. Come meet industry leaders, celebrate the vibrant Hospitality and Tourism Industry in the Athens area, and learn more about the HTM program. Please register [HERE](#).

Athens-Clarke County Rails to Trails Program Receives Engineering Excellence Honor Award



The American Council Engineering Companies of Georgia (ACEC Georgia) recognized the Athens-Clarke County Rails to Trails Program with its design team, Prime Engineering, as an Engineering Excellence Honor Award Winner.

The Rails to Trails Program's purpose is to convert abandoned railroad corridors into pedestrian and bicyclist paths for transportation and recreation purposes. Athens-Clarke County's project team (Leisure Services Department, SPLOST Management Office, and Prime Engineering) designed and constructed a one-mile long multi-use trail incorporating 19th-century infrastructure where feasible. One of the distinguishing features include a 500-foot bridge over the North Oconee River.



Check out our blog post about the [Firefly Trail](#) and enjoy this Athens treasure for yourself.

Robotics Tournament Draws Students from 13 Southern States

More than 1,500 middle and high school students and their families from 13 southern states gathered at The Classic Center on March 7-10 for the FIRST Tech Challenge South Super-Regional Championship.

The event challenged teams of 10 or more students to build a robot that could complete a set list of tasks, with the winners advancing to the FIRST Tech Challenge World Championships in April.

Their event organizers gave a glowing "thank you" to the Athens CVB and Classic Center teams, saying, "For two years in a row, you have made FTC South Super Regionals (and our committee) look like stars! Thanks for all the hours you have spent helping us negotiate the multifaceted world of hosting major events that have hundreds of people attending who need hotels, food, the right spaces and setups for the event, oh, and trying to keep everyone happy! Thank you, thank you, thank you!"



Athens CVB Advisory Chair Kathy Hoard Receives ATHENA Award

Congratulations to CVB Advisory Board Chair Kathy Hoard, who was honored with the ATHENA Award at the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce annual meeting on March 8.

The award recognizes a woman who excels in her profession, devotes time to the community, and helps other women reach their potential.



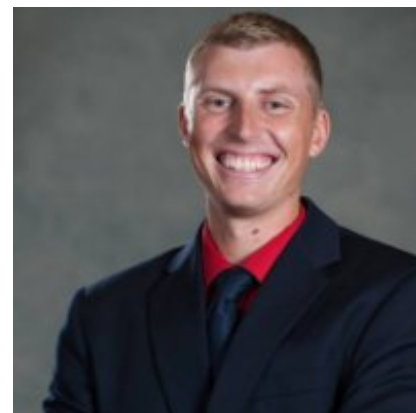
L-R: CVB Sales Manager Jay Boling, ATHENA Winner Kathy Hoard, CVB Director of Sales Missy Brandt-Wilson, Athens Mayor Nancy Denson, CVB Director Chuck Jones

Now retired from the University of Georgia, Hoard served 6 years with the Athens City Council and 12 years as an Athens-Clarke County commissioner after unification. In addition to serving as advisory board chair of the Athens CVB, Hoard currently serves as a member of the Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center Authority and the hospital's Foundation Board. She also volunteers with the Athens-Clarke County Police Department Foundation.

Hospitality Newsmakers

Danny Bryant - The Classic Center

The Classic Center is pleased to announce that Danny Bryant has accepted the newly created position of Director of Arena and Ancillary Services. Bryant oversees Akins Arena, home of the UGA Ice Dogs, the 440 Pavilion, Parking Services, Food and Beverage contracts, and Audiovisual contracts for The Classic Center. Bryant began his tenure at The Classic Center in 2010 and has served in a variety of roles.



Don't Miss Out:



GDEcD Tourism Product Development Resource Team Presentation **June 7, 2018, 6:00 p.m.** **The Classic Center**

The Georgia Department of Economic Development Tourism Product Development Resource Team will return to Athens to present findings and recommendations from the November 2017 visit. The CVB encourages our tourism partners to attend the presentation at The Classic Center to hear the team's report that will provide guidance for future tourism product development in Athens.

Register

March 27, 2018, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
The Classic Center

This free and informative conference is a must-attend networking opportunity for hospitality and tourism employers, employees, and interested students and individuals. Please register [HERE](#).



****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 is eligible. Applications opened March 1 and will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis through March 30 or while funds remain available. Please find additional information, including all the regulations, [HERE](#).



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

The CVB's website delivers interested customers straight to you through a variety of content and ad packages that can increase your exposure on VisitAthensGA.com. Don't forget to keep your listing information, images, and offers current at VisitAthensGA.com/partners. Contact the CVB's agency, Destination Travel Network, for advertising information, [email Brittany Montoya](mailto:Brittany.Montoya) or call (520) 284-1090.

Athens in the News

- "Athens, Georgia: A Romantic College Town That Sports a Thriving Arts, Culinary & Music Scene," DatingAdvice.com, Feb. 2018
- "The Antebellum Trail," The Excursion with David Zelski, March 10, 2018
- "Musical Soul," [Georgia Connector](http://GeorgiaConnector.com), spring 2018
- "It Happened One Weekend," [Georgia Connector](http://GeorgiaConnector.com), spring 2018
- "Geraldine in Georgia and South Carolina video," [3 op Reis](http://3opReis.com), Jan. 2018
- "Where the Locals Eat," [Taste of the South](http://TasteoftheSouth.com), Jan./Feb. 2018
- "Best College for Sports Fans," #6; [USAToday/10Best](http://USAToday.com); March 2018

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