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Athens Now //
February 2019
Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau

Athens
LIFE UNLEASHED



Newsmakers // Opportunities // New Developments in Tourism

Local Product Development Grant Winners Announced

The Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau, along with The Classic Center and The Classic Center Cultural Foundation, is pleased to announce the latest recipients of the Athens Local Product Development Grant. A total of \$15,000 will be awarded to Athens Twilight, Kindercore Vinyl and Wild Rumpus. The current award cycle emphasized projects that worked towards recommendations in the June 2018 Music Tourism Report submitted to Athens-Clarke County by the Georgia Department of Economic Development product development resource team.



Click here to read the full [press release](#).

Homewood Suites Grand Opening

Members of the CVB staff attended the Homewood Suites grand opening on Wednesday, January 23. The opening included a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a brief tour of the suites. President and CEO of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce David Bradley and local ACC Commissioner Jerry Nesmith were among some of the speakers welcoming Homewood Suites to the area. Classic Center Executive Director Paul Cramer and Athens CVB Director Chuck Jones also spoke highly of Homewood Suites and welcomed the new hotel to Athens. McNeill Hotel Company, the owners and operators of the hotel, also announced they were investing in Bread for Life and presented The Classic Center Director of Education, Shannon McCullough, with a check for the organization.

(Header image)

Athens hosts first Historic Heartland Travel Association Meeting of 2019



On Wednesday, February 6, Athens CVB and Terrapin Brewery hosted the first 2019 meeting of the Historic Heartland Travel Association, which is comprised of hospitality industry professionals from 19 counties in our region of Georgia. More than three

dozen tourism professionals, including six CVB staff members, attended the meeting. The program was a panel discussion about culinary travel, and a superstar panel of local Athens professionals discussed current trends. Panelists included Mimi Maumus from home.made, Angie Tillman from Pickles Phun Foods, Jack Albanese from Terrapin Brewery and Stephanie Vandyck with Athens Wine Weekend.

CVB Director joins Athens Area Chamber of Commerce Board

Athens CVB Director Chuck Jones is currently serving on the Board of Directors of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce in an ex officio role. The board held its first meeting of the year on Monday, January 28, to discuss the proposed budget for 2019. The meeting also revealed the theme for the year "Lighting the Way," and the new three-year strategic plan was presented and approved. At the meeting, Jones gave a brief report of recent CVB activities.

Athens represented at Tourism, Hospitality and Arts Day



Tourism and arts professionals from Athens joined Governor Brian P. Kemp and other professionals from across Georgia for the annual Tourism, Hospitality & Arts Day at the Capitol on Tuesday, February 5, to recognize tourism's record-

breaking \$63.1 billion impact on Georgia's economy.

Athens CVB Director Chuck Jones and Athens CVB Director of Marketing and Communications Hannah Smith were by Elizabeth Hovell from the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, Michael Lachowski from the Georgia Museum of Art and Alex Perschka of the Oconee County Tourism Department. The Athens-area team also met with legislators, including its own, to discuss the state's tourism priorities.

[Click here](#) to view the press release.

UGA holds luncheon to announce 2019 Economic Outlook numbers

Athens CVB Director Chuck Jones and Sales Manager Jeremiah Cook attended the UGA Economic Outlook Luncheon on Wednesday, February 6. Ben Ayers, dean of the UGA Terry College of Business, gave an outlook on Georgia's economy, stating it will grow by about 3 percent, compared to 2.5 percent for the nation. For Athens, Dr. Jeff Humphreys, also from the Terry College, stated that 1,500 new jobs will be gained this year, which is a 1.5 increase from 2018. He continued by saying that the hospitality industry is an economic driver and would continue to do well in 2019. The 2019 Economic Outlook report is prepared by the Selig Center for Economic Growth and presented by the Terry College of Business.

To view the Economic Outlook for 2019 [click here](#).

DON'T MISS OUT: ATHENS BURGER WEEK

The people behind ATL Burger Week are bringing one of ATL's most popular and successful restaurant promotions to Athens this March! Athens Burger Week kicks off on March 25th and will bring a TON of traffic into Athens' local restaurants. The hook is simple: Dozens of restaurants feature a \$5 specialty burger for the week. Then the public is asked to try as many as humanly possible so that they can vote for their favorite.

Athens' restaurants should check out the www.AthensBurgerWeek.com website and sign up to participate.

DEADLINE TO SIGN-UP IS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25



SALES UPDATES

Athens CVB now offers Registration Services

The Athens CVB is excited to announce conference registration as a new service for meeting planners! Registration packages are highly customizable and include a dedicated URL with a custom registration form, customized reports before and after the conference, management of all funds received and outstanding and many more options. The new registration service joins the CVB's housing bureau, which launched a year ago.

For more information, please contact CVB Sales & Services Manager Joel VanDusen, (706)357-4579, jvandusen@VisitAthensGA.com.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Extranet Training



The CVB is offering Partner Extranet Training on the second Thursday of each month from 1 - 2 p.m. at the CVB. Please join us to learn about ways you can promote your organization through VisitAthensGA.com, access website reporting and upcoming conferences, as well as manage CVB leads. This opportunity is for new and veteran

Extranet users. Come with questions; leave with new tips and tricks! The next Partner Extranet Training will be **Thursday, March 14.**

Volunteers needed for Georgia Technology Student Association Conference

On March 14 - 15, Georgia Technology Student Association (TSA) will host its State Leadership Conference at The Classic Center. More than 2,500 students will gather to showcase their talent. The events range from CAD to Video Game Design to Promotional Graphics to Flight Endurance. The conference is currently

in need of 200 volunteers to serve as competitive event judges for both days. Each competitive event session requires about four hours, and volunteers can serve in more than one session.

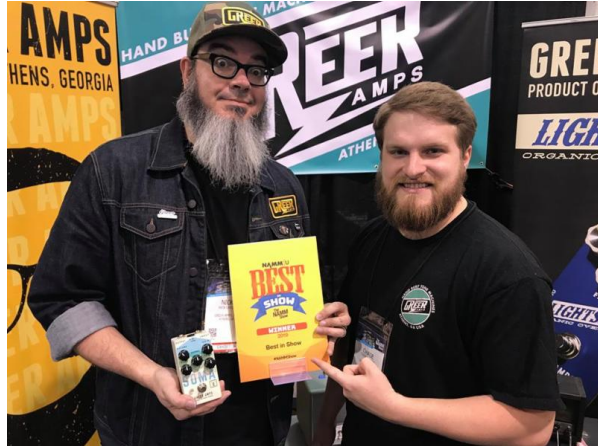
Volunteer Registration form [click here](#).

For questions, contact Sylvia Phillips at judges4education@yahoo.com.

ATHENS NEWSMAKERS

Athens native wins big at National Association of Music Merchants

Nick Greer, owner of Greer Amplification, and Chase Garrett won Best in Show for their SOMA63 Vintage Preamp at the National Association of Music Merchants convention in Anaheim, CA in January. This is one of the largest conventions in the United States showcasing the newest innovations in music, recording technology, sound, stage and light products.



MORE EVENTS

- Feb. 20-22 - GACVB Winter Meeting, Dunwoody, <https://www.gacvb.com/winter-meeting>
- Mar. 3-4 - Winter Chautauqua Tourism Conference, Carrollton, <http://www.winterchautauqua.com/>
- Mar. 25 -31 - Athens Burger Week <https://www.visitathensga.com/event/athens-burger-week/23670/>
- April 1-7 - Athens Craft Beer Week <http://classiccitybrew.com/abw.html>

ATHENS IN THE NEWS

"The South's Best New Bars" - [Garden and Guns magazine February 2019](#)
"Best of 2018 top 50 golf courses in the United States" - [Golf Advisor 2019](#)
"Athens ranked 8th for job, economic growth" - [Athens Banner-Herald](#)

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