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CORRECT STATS: VISITORS TO GEORGIA IN 2018 111.67 million.

Athens Now //
September 2019
Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau



Newsmakers // Opportunities // New Developments in Tourism

NEWS AND UPDATES

Governor Tourism Conference Held in LaGrange

CVB Director Chuck Jones and Director of Marketing and Communications Hannah Smith attended the Georgia Governor's Tourism Conference in LaGrange, Georgia, September 8 - 11. The Georgia Governor's Tourism Conference is the premier educational and networking event in the state for travel professionals and destination marketers. At this conference, it was announced that Georgia hosted a record 111.67

million visitors in 2018 who generated \$31 billion in direct spending. It was also announced that the Georgia Department of Economic Development has officially changed its name to Explore Georgia. Jones took the opportunity to speak with key members of the state legislature, including Rep. Ron Stephens and Sen. Frank Ginn, chairs of their respective chambers' Economic Development & Tourism committees.

(Header Image Left to right: Rep. Ron Stephens, Director Chuck Jones, Sen. Frank Ginn at Sweetland Amphitheatre)

Athens CVB hosts 10 journalists with Travel Media Showcase

The Athens CVB hosted 10 top-level bloggers, journalists and media professionals on August 19 - 20 as a part of the Travel Media Showcase Conference pre-fam tour. They experienced the best of Athens, including catching a ride on the HopOn Athens Shuttle, as well as visiting the Georgia Museum of Art, Lyndon House Arts Center and Ware-Lyndon House, R. Wood Studio, State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Condor Chocolates and Avid Bookshop. They also had excellent dining experiences at Last Resort Grill, home.made, The National and Five and Ten. Beer tastings occurred at Creature Comforts and Terrapin Beer Company. Plus, they were given the opportunity to tour UGA's North Campus as well as a chance to experience the Athens Heritage Tour and Music History tour with Paul Butchart, which are both offered by the Welcome Center's Classic City Tours.



A HUGE thank you to all the partners who made this visit possible and Homewood Suites for providing our visitors with a nice place to rest up and have breakfast.

These media professionals reach more than 12 million readers and followers in media outlets including: *GEORGIA Magazine*, *Sirk TV*, *Backroad Planet*, *Connecticut Magazine*, *Travel the South Blog*, *Wherever I May Roam* and *Southern Hospitality Blog*.

"Honestly, it was one of the tastiest places I've visited in my four years of blogging," Melody Pittman, *Wherever I May Roam* and *Travel the South Blog*.

Chandler Promotes Athens at Travel Media Showcase

Communications Specialist Alvieann Chandler traveled to the Travel Media Showcase Conference in Dekalb County, Georgia, August 20 - 22. Chandler spoke with more than 20 media professionals in one-on-one meetings, ranging from journalists to radio producers, providing them with information about Athens and encouraging them to visit and produce content about the city. During the meetings, she provided them with a press kit, pamphlets about Athens, showed a 90-second video about Athens and offered snacks from home.made.

SALES UPDATES

CVB Sales team Makes Connections at Connect



(Left to Right: Jay Boling, Jeremiah Cook and Nick Arnold at Churchill Downs)

Director of Sales Nick Arnold, Sales Manager Jay Boling and Sales Manager Jeremiah Cook attended the Connect Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, August 26 - 29. Connect brings together the most active planners, suppliers and experts across six meetings and events industry markets. Attendees gain crucial experience to advance their careers and business through professional development and meeting excellence, all while having fun. The three met with more than 30 meeting planners in one-on-one meetings in their specific markets

from various states. Cook attended Connect Specialty; Arnold, Connect Association; and Boling, Connect Sports.

HOSPITALITY NEWSMAKERS

New Greenway Connector Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

The Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services Department hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, September 5 for the new bridge along the North Oconee River Greenway, between the Lamar Dodd School of Art and the College Station Park-&-Ride lot. The new connector is 0.2 miles in length, connecting the University of Georgia East Campus area. The dedication included a performance by the Redcoat Marching Band entitled "Murmurs and Prestige," an original piece composed for the occasion by University of Georgia Music and Composition Theory senior Cameron Gwynn. Mayor Kelly Girtz along with UGA Vice President of Student Affairs Victor K. Wilson, UGA staff members, members of the Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission (ORGC) and Athens Clarke-County (ACC) Commissioners cut the ribbon to the new bridge, opening it to the public. After the ceremony, members of the community were seen riding their bikes along the new bridge.



(Left to Right: **back row** UGA Director of Campus Planning Lara Mathes, ORGC Commissioner Susie Haggard, ORGC member Jacob Maas, ORGC Chair Nat Kuykendall, ACC Commissioner Jerry Nesmith, ORGC Commissioner Karen Porter, UGA Director of Community Relations Alison Bracewell **front row**: ACC Commissioner Allison Wright, Mayor Kelly Girtz, UGA Vice President of Student Affairs Victor K. Wilson.)

Hyatt Place Rooftop Bar Now Opened

The new Hyatt Place Rooftop Bar opened to the public on Thursday, September 5. The new rooftop can hold 120 people and provides a 360-degree view of Athens from the Piedmont hills to Sanford Stadium. The bar is currently opened weekdays

beginning at 4 p.m. and on the weekends beginning at 11 a.m. Cocktails are offered as well as a choice of various dishes from the Hyatt Place Rooftop Bar menu.

Terrapin Beer Co. to Produce Solar-Brewed Beer

Terrapin Beer Co. is going to make history as the first brewery in the state of Georgia to purchase renewable power directly at its facility. Through a partnership with Cherry Street Energy, a new solar array will be installed on the Terrapin rooftop, as well as solar-panel sunshades in the brewery's parking lot. "Love for the outdoors is at the core of who we are at Terrapin, as a brewery and as individual employees," said Dustin Watts, Terrapin president. "We look to do what's best for our communities and for the environment because it matters to each of us. It's that simple."

To learn more, [click here](#).



Minor League Hockey is coming to the Akins Ford Arena at The Classic Center

The Columbus River Dragons and The Classic Center are excited to bring minor league hockey to Athens. The Federal Prospects Hockey League will play two neutral site games at the Akins Ford Arena at The Classic Center in Athens, GA. Director of Arena and Ancillary Services Danny Bryant says, "We are excited to welcome the Columbus River Dragons and the Federal Prospect Hockey League to Athens and the Akins Ford Arena. We believe this will be an exciting opportunity for our current UGA Ice Dawgs fans to experience a professional hockey game in addition to bringing new fans to Athens." To learn more, [click here](#).

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!



Sales Manager Joel VanDusen and Tyreda Starks.

Director Chuck Jones and Sales and Services Manager Joel VanDusen attended The Classic Center's volunteer appreciation party on Tuesday, August 6. Jones recognized all the volunteers that assisted the CVB with delivering the 2018- 2019 Visitors Guide to various businesses.

Volunteers are some of Athens' top hospitality ambassadors -- we truly couldn't provide an exceptional visitor experience without them!

Congratulations to Tyreda Starks, the recipient of the Dedicated Athens Ambassador award!

For more information and to become a new volunteer [sign up here](#).

DON'T MISS OUT: OPPORTUNITIES

2019 - 2020 Visitors Guide is now available

The new 2019 - 2020 Athens Visitors Guide is now available! This piece is a great resource to help with trip planning and includes information on things to do, where to eat and attractions to visit.

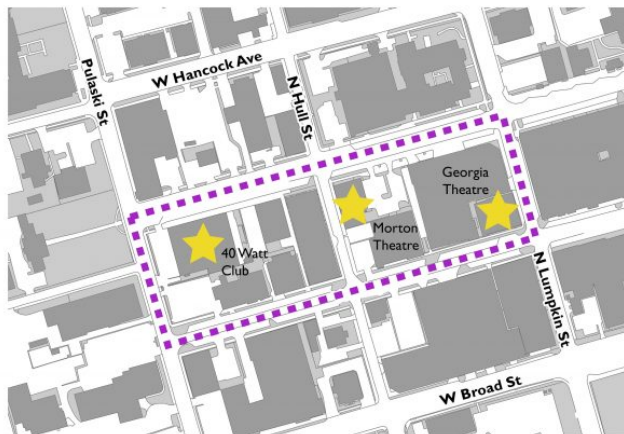
A HUGE thank you to our advertisers for making this publication possible!

Please contact Information Coordinator Meredith McLucas (706.357.4430) to arrange for a supply to display at your business if you have not already received our guides. Meredith can also assist with including a link to the Visitors Guide on your website.

[Click here](#) to view the digital version of the guide.



Athens Cultural Affairs Commission Call for Public Art



The Athens Cultural Affairs Commission invites professional artists and designers to submit a proposal for public art on the Athens Music Walk of Fame in Athens, Georgia. This project requires a designed template that will be used for making bronze plaques about each inductee to the Athens Music Walk of Fame. The plaques will be placed in the sidewalks of Downtown Athens. The deadline to

submit artwork is **Saturday, September 21**. Find the full guidelines and application [here](#).

Hire an Athens Musician

Did you know? VisitAthensGA.com promotes all things Athens music, including encouraging meeting professionals to hire local Athens musicians to give their events true local flavor. We're relaunching the website soon and need more Athens musician listings. Visit our [current page](#) and contact Meredith McLucas to add your listing.

Extranet Training

The CVB offers Extranet Training on the second Thursday of each month beginning at 2 p.m. The next Partner Extranet Training will be **Thursday, October 10**. Come learn how to:

- Submit events to the VisitAthensGA.com calendar.
- Update your web listing on VisitAthensGA.com.

- Include any specials or coupon offerings on VisitAthensGA.com.

RSVP to Hannah Smith at hsmith@visitathensga.com.

INDUSTRY CALENDAR AND EVENTS

September 17 - **Fundraiser for Bread for Life Golf Tournament**
 Chipotle, 165 Alps Road, Athens, Georgia
 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Chipotle.com

September 23 - **Bread for Life Golf Tournament**
 The Georgia Club, Stratham, Georgia
 8:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Breadforlife.org

October 24 - **CVB Annual Meeting**
 The Classic Center, Athens, Georgia
 8 a.m. - 11 a.m.

ATHENS IN THE NEWS

"10 best college football tailgate locations for 2019," 247sports.com, August 2019

"Greatest Mascot in College Football History," SportsIllustrated.com, August 2019

"Best College Football Destinations," Ravereviews.org, September 2019

"Top US Cities for Musicians," Cubsmart.com, September 2019

"Top 10 Best Places to Retire in Georgia in 2019," InvestmentU.com, September 2019

"Terrapin Beer Co. to Produce Solar-Brewed Beer," BikeWorldNews.com, September 2019

"9 Epic Things to See and Do in Athens, Georgia," WhereverIMayRoam.blog, Sept. 2019

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