

THE ANNUAL  
REPORT



2023









# WELCOME FROM THE BOARD

In the dynamic landscape of today's business world, visionary leadership is paramount. As a member of Georgia World Congress Center Authority's (GWCCA) board of governors, I have had the privilege to witness firsthand an unwavering commitment to innovation, strategic foresight, and a relentless pursuit of excellence demonstrated by leadership and team members as they have charted new paths, embraced emerging technologies, and deftly navigated complex industry challenges with confidence.

Throughout the year, GWCCA leadership's strategic decisions and visionary approach has not only kept its campus competitive but has also allowed it to seize opportunities that are propelling the campus to new heights. Nothing is more evident of this than the anticipated opening of Signia by Hilton Atlanta. The hotel compliments the Authority's vision of a compact and connected campus featuring an unrivaled package of facilities we call championship campus. This urban destination approach aligns GWCCA with the evolving needs of its customers while making Atlanta among the most compelling locations for live events the country has to offer.

Much of the success the Authority has experienced is directly due to its industry-best team. Culture is the heart and soul of any organization. Over the last decade I have personally witnessed efforts to elevate a culture of inclusivity, innovation, and collaboration. Here, team members are not just employees, they are ambassadors of the organization's values and carriers of its brand service promise to create compelling guest experiences. Their voices are heard through surveys and meetings and, as a result, leadership development programs are in place to empower team members to make decisions and take actions that are positively impacting business outcomes.

As Georgia continues to lead the nation as the best place for business, GWCCA endures as a critical element to maintaining and building upon the value of tourism. As an economic engine fueling downtown development, supporting jobs, and driving new dollars across the state, the Authority's strong leadership, vibrant culture, and unwavering commitment to excellence have positioned GWCCA for continued success in the years ahead. Georgia World Congress Center Authority is not just an organization, it is a community of dedicated individuals who are driven by a shared vision and united by a common purpose - To be recognized as the No. 1 convention, sports, and entertainment destination in the world.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn Hicks'.

Glenn Hicks, Chairman  
GWCCA Board of Governors



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# GWCCA BRAND SERVICE PROMISE

TO  
CONSISTENTLY  
CREATE  
COMPELLING  
**GUEST**  
EXPERIENCES



# LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

In simple terms, performance is defined as the process of carrying out or accomplishing a task or function. For GWCCA, performance means a bit more; it is what fuels our mission and vision. The goals set forth and achieved during the fiscal year (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023) are directly correlated to the Authority's commitment to not only generate economic benefits to and enhance the quality of life for all Georgians but to be the gold standard in the industry – to be the No. 1 convention, sports, and entertainment destination in the world. Our journey towards excellence is marked by continuous improvement and unwavering dedication to honing our expertise.

We are pleased to present to you our Annual Report for 2023. As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with a profound sense of pride and gratitude for what our team members, partners, and stakeholders have achieved together. In an industry marked by rapid change and evolving market dynamics, we are happy to report that big shows are back. International Woodworking Fair (IWF) returned to GWCCA's championship campus for its first show since the pandemic and welcomed 25,000 attendees. FABTECH exceeded attendance expectations as they welcomed more than 35,000 while Momocon broke the 50,000-attendee barrier. These shows, along with 11 other large shows, accounted for nearly \$7 million in revenue for the Authority, which is a testament to our ability to drive efficiency and enhance value.

On the customer front, we continue to live our brand service promise to consistently create compelling guest experiences. Satisfaction scores from meeting planners and exhibitors increased over the previous fiscal year as a common theme emerged in feedback: GWCCA is easy to do business with. Time and time again, our customers let us know that our team members are courteous and responsive and that our service partners are the best in the business. We couldn't agree more.

During fiscal year 2023, campus development projects totaling more than \$4 million and ranging from building and equipment upgrades to technology and security

enhancements were completed while another \$602 million were in various stages of planning or execution. As the fiscal year closes, we are just months away from opening our new convention center hotel Signia by Hilton Atlanta. A vision more than 10 years in the making, we already are seeing the benefits of this new facility as we have secured group bookings well into the next decade. Signia by Hilton Atlanta will enhance GWCCA's championship campus as **THE** premier destination to host events.

Over the past year, we have continued to invest in our people and our communities. Team member engagement scores continue to rise as the Authority broadened its leadership development opportunities, enriched its diversity and inclusion initiatives, and added a renewed focus on wellbeing. We are proud to share that 97 percent of team members told us they are "strongly" committed to helping GWCCA achieve its vision and goals. By taking care of our team members, we have fostered a culture of collaboration that empowers people to do their best work and bring our mission and vision to life every day.

The Authority evolved its sustainability and corporate social responsibility platform during the back half of the fiscal year with the introduction of an enhanced environment, social, and governance (ESG) strategy focused on a broad spectrum of sustainability issues that are increasingly important to our customers. A new strategy, "Intentional Gatherings," includes programming to develop the local workforce, educate local businesses, and contribute resources to the surrounding community. We hope you will take the time to learn more about our new efforts which are outlined within this report.

GWCCA's success is a shared achievement, and we look forward to continuing this journey together in the coming year. As we move forward, we will stay true to our values, explore new horizons, and work tirelessly to create value for all Georgians. We remain dedicated to our mission and vision, and we are excited about the opportunities and challenges that the future holds.



**Frank Poe**  
Executive Director



**Joe Bocherer**  
Chief Commercial Officer



**Kevin Duvall**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Jen LeMaster**  
Chief Administrative Officer

# YEAR IN

FY23 (JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023) EVENTS, MILESTONES, AND HIGHLIGHTS

## **JULY**

Inaugural Look Up Atlanta held in Centennial Olympic Park on July 3 draws thousands downtown to witness Southeast's largest fireworks show.

## **OCTOBER**

The Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority extends GWCCA's management agreement of the Savannah Convention Center through 2026.

GWCC is recertified as LEED Gold by the U.S. Green Building Council.

## **AUGUST**

International Woodworking Fair (IWF) occupies more than 663,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space, houses over 900 exhibitors, and draws more than 25,000 registered attendees.

College Football Playoff selects Atlanta to host 2025 CFP National Championship at Mercedes-Benz Stadium; Atlanta will become the first city to host the CFP title game for a second time.

## **NOVEMBER**

FABTECH welcomes nearly 35,000 attendees from 70 countries and all 50 states and features close to 1,200 exhibitors, including 150 making their show debut.

## **DECEMBER**

College football takes over Championship Campus as Mercedes-Benz Stadium hosts the Celebration Bowl, the SEC Championship, and the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl which also served as a College Football Playoff Semifinal game; Georgia defeated Ohio State 42-41 and would go on to win its second consecutive CFP championship.

## **SEPTEMBER**

Hilton reveals food and beverage master plan for Signia by Hilton Atlanta; including Capolinea, the ultimate homage to Italian American cuisine.



# REVIEW

## JANUARY

IPPE celebrates its 75th anniversary with a show attended by more than 28,000 visitors from over 130 countries; the show has been held at GWCC annually since it opened in 1976.

## APRIL

Taylor Swift performs at Mercedes-Benz Stadium April 28 – 30 for 210,000 fans (or Swifties as they are known); she is the first act to sell out three consecutive nights at the venue since it opened in 2017.

## FEBRUARY

CHEERSPORT welcomes nearly 1,200 teams from across the country; its fundraiser event, Friday Night Live, raises \$194,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Academy Award-winning director Francis Ford Coppola shoots scenes for his self-funded movie *Megalopolis* in Centennial Olympic Park.

## MAY

Momocon, an Atlanta-based culture convention celebrating the latest in anime, American animation, comics, video/tabletop games, and cosplay, hosts the largest gaming floor in the Southeast, with more than 300,000 square feet of classic arcades, esports stages, PC/LAN gaming, console tournaments, and free play.

## MARCH

HAI Heli-Expo returns to GWCC with 600-plus exhibits and 14,000 industry professionals; industry heavyweights use event to reveal 2022 performance news as well as plans for 2023.

## JUNE

The largest gathering of America's future skilled workforce converges on GWCC for the SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference; more than 15,000 attendees and 6,500+ high school competitors in 100 competitions generated more than \$20 million in economic impact to Atlanta.

# LOOK UP ATLANTA

Experience  
Look Up Atlanta



GWCCA began fiscal year 2023 with "oohhs and aahhs" as it hosted the first Look Up Atlanta, a celebration of all that makes Atlanta a great city – from its sports teams and attractions to the culturally diverse and celebrated food and arts scene – culminating with the nation's largest metropolitan fireworks show.

Along with a wide variety of delicious food and beverage options, attendees had the opportunity to engage with some of Atlanta's favorite sports franchises, including the Atlanta Hawks, Atlanta Dream, Atlanta United, and Atlanta Falcons, who each activated an entry gate allowing them to engage fans of all ages. Several of the teams visited the Look Up Atlanta main stage to share team news and predictions for the upcoming season. Atlanta Dream stars Naz Hillmon and Rhyne Howard, the WNBA's 2022 Rookie of the Year, surprised attendees by making an appearance on stage right after notching a victory against the Seattle Storm earlier that afternoon.

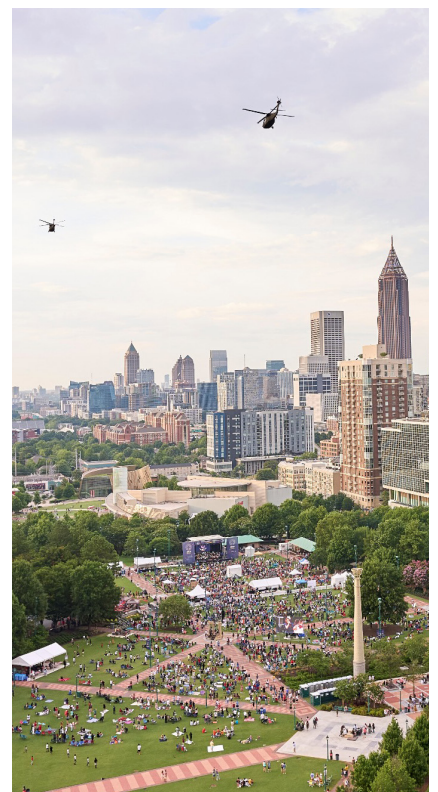
Look Up Atlanta attendees looking to plus up their experience in Centennial Olympic Park had the opportunity to purchase tickets to VIP Village, a special experience offering premium amenities and viewing locations, as well as curated activities for children. Based off positive attendee feedback, GWCCA plans to expand and enhance this offering in the future.

Atlanta's thriving music scene provided no shortage of talent for headlining acts for Look Up Atlanta's inaugural year. Wanting to celebrate the many talents of the city's youth, GWCCA collaborated with the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra (ASYO) and Atlanta native Angelica Hale, runner-up on season 12 of "America's Got Talent," for the evening's entertainment. The Authority kicked off its main stage activities with the ASYO performing a lineup of special patriotic music, including the national anthem with Hale and a special treat – a helicopter flyover courtesy of the Georgia Army National Guard. Hale then reclaimed the stage performing a variety of pop classics that set the tone for the evening's grand finale fireworks spectacular.

The collective undertaking by GWCCA team members, leadership, and the numerous event partners has set the foundation for Look Up Atlanta to become Atlanta's newest holiday tradition. Coverage of the event spanned social platforms, television, radio, newspapers, blogs, magazines, and photo/video sharing sites reaching an estimated 71.4 million total viewers.

“Easily the best fireworks display I've ever seen!  
**@fcampagna**







# CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT



Learn more about  
Signia by Hilton Atlanta

*A look at the hotel's progress over two years (September 2021 – 2023); Signia by Hilton Atlanta will feature 40 floors, 976 rooms and suites, and more than 100,000 square feet of meeting and events space.*



*GWCCA leadership and members of its board of governors participated in a hotel tour after the topping out ceremony.*





During fiscal year 2023, the Authority continued to pursue its vision to be recognized as the No.1 convention, sports, and entertainment destination in the world. Capital investments totaling more than \$600 million were in the planning, procurement, design, or construction phase with none bigger or more important than Signia by Hilton Atlanta (scheduled to open January 2024).

In March, GWCCA hosted a topping out ceremony, a long-held tradition in the construction industry that celebrates the final structural beam being raised into place, completing, in this instance, the hotel's frame. The press event featured leaders of key organizations involved with the development of Signia by Hilton Atlanta, including Drew Company, Skanska, GWCCA, and Hilton and was attended by members of Atlanta's hospitality community, customers, and GWCCA team members, executive team, and board of governors. Remarks not only recognized and praised the commitment of the hotel's construction team and their work but reinforced the significance of the hotel in GWCCA's ability to host high-profile events in the future and be a top economic engine for Georgia's economy. The event closed with Executive

Vice President and President of the Americas Danny Hughes sharing why Hilton's newest brand, Signia by Hilton, is right for Atlanta and the Authority's championship campus, and how the hotel will set Georgia World Congress Center apart from its competition in terms of hotel experience.

A big part of the guest experience at Signia by Hilton Atlanta will be its food and beverage (F&B) program, which will be representative of the brand's unparalleled commitment to quality and creativity. During the GWCCA board retreat in September, Hilton debuted each of the F&B concepts at Signia by Hilton Atlanta with focus on service positioning and ambiance. No matter a guest's preference, the dynamic spectrum of food and drink experiences within the hotel's footprint will create an elevated destination beyond anything currently in the Atlanta hospitality market. The F&B options available in Signia by Hilton Atlanta has already begun to generate excitement.

The end of the fiscal year marked the hotel's executive team being finalized with the hiring of key positions in hotel management, finance, HR, catering and events, operations, and culinary.

**Capolinea**  
MARTINIS. ANTIPASTI. SPAGHETTI.

**NEST**  
ON FOUR

FRIENDSHIP  
**MARKET**

**Homespun**  
ATLANTA FLAIR. SOUTHERN FARE.

**High**  
SKYLINE SOCIAL  
**ball**

# HOTEL PROJECT FUN FACTS

## INTERESTING STATISTICS GENERATED DURING FISCAL YEAR 2023

**1.25M**

Square footage of the hotel; the average college football field is 57,600 square feet...this is equivalent to more than 20 of Georgia Tech's Bobby Dodd Stadiums

**40 Ft**

Height of Signia by Hilton Atlanta's Triumph Ballroom; this is the same height as the Palace of Versailles' Hall of Mirrors, however the ballroom's square footage of 40,000 is 4.95 times larger than the Hall of Mirror's 8,072 square feet

**2,015**

Tons of steel used in hotel project as of the beginning of the fiscal year; this equates to the weight of 202 school buses or 16,120 full-size refrigerators

**1.7M+**

At the close of the fiscal year, approximate man hours logged on the hotel project; a direct flight from Atlanta to Barcelona on Delta takes 8.5 hours...this equates to 200,000 direct flights

**30,349**

number of cubic yards of concrete poured at Signia by Hilton Atlanta hotel site as of September 2022, this equates to 122,913,450 pounds or 2.5 million (Georgia) bulldogs

**453 Ft**

Height of hotel, which is equivalent to 3.7 Atlanta Olympic Torch Towers stacked on top of each other

# INVESTMENT IN CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPUS

Several key campus development projects have been completed in recent years that are easy to see, celebrate, and appreciate for the benefits provided to the Authority – Exhibit Hall BC and the new Andrew Young International Mall and Terminal. Behind the scenes, though, are countless capital improvement projects undertaken by the Authority annually designed to ensure that visitors to championship campus receive a compelling guest experience.

Over the last 20 years, the Authority has self-funded more than \$164 million in its facilities. These ongoing investments play a pivotal role in ensuring that GWCCA remains at the forefront of the live events industry and fulfills its mission to significantly contribute to the economic growth of the region by fostering tourism, generating business opportunities, and creating jobs.

The commitment to maintaining world-class facilities underscores GWCCA's dedication to sustainability, technological innovation, and adaptability, ensuring its vision to be the No. 1 convention, sports, and entertainment destination in the world is within reach, reflecting GWCCA's forward-thinking approach and its integral role in shaping Atlanta as a premier destination for meetings and entertainment.

During the fiscal year, the Authority invested more than \$6 million in GWCC and Centennial Olympic Park (COP) projects focused on technology, equipment, safety, and connectivity. A summary of GWCCA's historical investments and this fiscal year's project highlights follow.

## GWCCA HISTORICAL PROJECT FUNDING

FISCAL YEAR	GWCCA FUNDED	FISCAL YEAR	GWCCA FUNDED
2002	31,600,000	2013	1,287,718
2003	0	2014	2,600,000
2004	906,547	2015	31,432,687
2005	1,033,744	2016	2,324,950
2006	794,500	2017	6,034,548
2007	3,342,316	2018	3,225,015
2008	1,469,146	2019	12,766,321
2009	3,498,983	2020	6,742,792
2010	746,879	2021	41,595,010
2011	1,400,784	2022	4,523,054
2012	483,143	2023	6,270,282
		<b>Total</b>	<b>164,078,419</b>



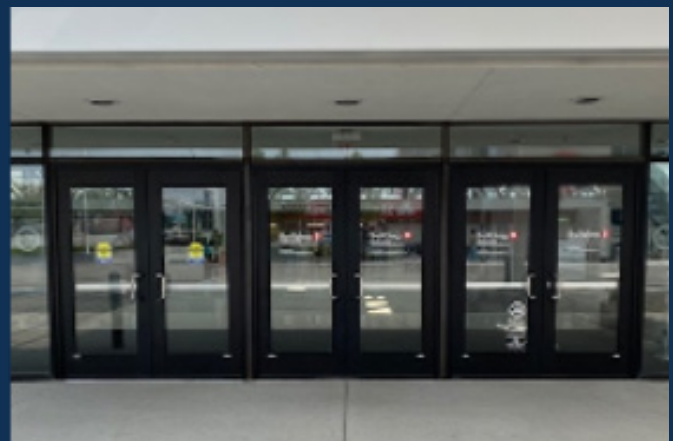
## FACILITY AND TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

International Blvd. crosswalk upgrades  
COP perimeter fence and enhancements  
Carpet replacement  
Escalator repairs and improvements  
New exterior furniture  
Equipment (ballroom chairs, folding chairs, tables, banquet/cocktail rounds, podiums)  
FeedbackNow Survey Tool  
Exhibit hall floor repairs  
New Facility Operations forklifts  
Meeting room enhancements (carpet, airwalls, etc.)  
New Red Deck VIP parking spaces  
Restroom upgrades  
Room temperature sensors and monitoring

## SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS

Elevator call box upgrades  
Public safety vehicles and equipment  
Police ATV

*5,000 ballroom chairs, 1,450 tables, and 63 podiums were purchased as part of GWCCA's upgrade process to increase inventory to meet customer requirements.*



*Installation of new doors at the A/B main entrance help maintain interior temperatures and increase efficiencies; new outdoor patio furniture creates an inviting, comfortable location for those seeking respite from inside events.*

## PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION: EDLEN

When you visit Edlen's website the first phrase you see is "The Power People." Since 1975, Edlen has been the power behind the events industry as the nation's leading temporary utility contractor to the trade show, convention, and special event industry. When GWCCA reset its operating model nearly three years ago, it made the strategic decision to outsource its power solutions to Edlen and never looked back.

From the start of their exclusive relationship with GWCCA in 2021, Edlen has lived the Authority's brand service promise to create compelling guest experiences as evidenced in this year's customer satisfaction scores. The Edlen team's proactive customer service approach, open and consistent communication, and commitment to ongoing education and training has resulted in them being one of the Authority's highest performing departments.

Edlen has supported the Authority's vision to be the No. 1 convention, sports, and entertainment destination in the world through more than \$4 million in capital improvement purchases, \$100,000 in electrical shop upgrades, and completion of numerous projects, including installation of additional power locations in Centennial Olympic Park, upgrades to outdoor power sources with added safety measures, and enhancements to overhead power sources.

In all, Edlen's team of 15 fulltime event services team members, 21 fulltime electricians, and 5 plumbers have produced fiscal year 2023 commissions for GWCC totaling more than \$7 million; this is a 46 percent increase over the previous fiscal year's total of just over \$5 million.

### STRIVING FOR 5: EXHIBITOR SATISFACTION SCORES



**FY23 4.40**

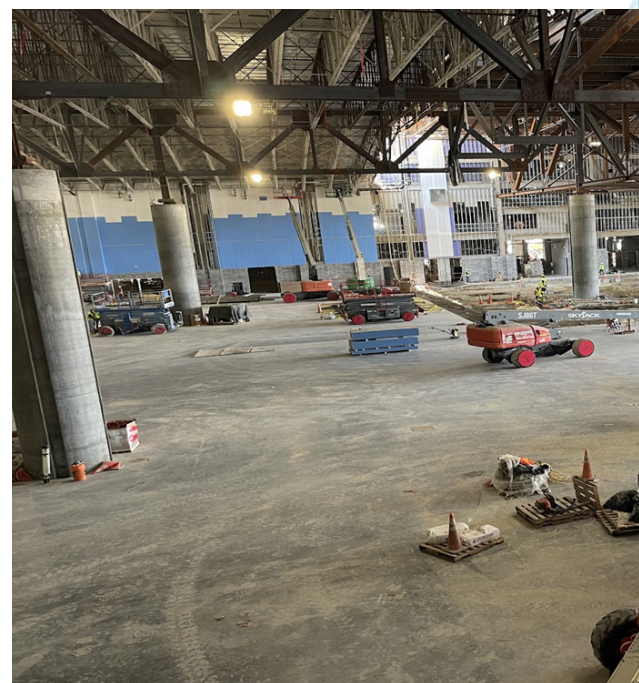


# SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER

Double the convention center. Double the charm. This mantra was celebrated in March as representatives from the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority Board, Visit Savannah, and elected officials gathered for a "topping out" ceremony celebrating the last beam being placed and marking progress for the current Savannah Convention Center (SCC) expansion project.

On track to open in Spring 2024, the \$276 million expansion project will double the size of exhibit hall space available for events to 200,000 square feet, add a new 40,000-square-foot ballroom, 15 new meeting rooms, feature a 58-foot-wide hangar door, and include a new 900-space parking deck. This expansion will position SCC to host new and larger events that will generate more visitors, increase revenue as well as economic impact to the region and state of Georgia. Currently, 38 events are booked into the new expansion space which will generate approximately \$98 million in economic impact for Savannah.

To date, the SCC expansion project has generated approximately \$122 million in contracts that have been awarded to first-tier Georgia contractors; \$70 million of those dollars have remained in Savannah. Additionally, 500 local construction site jobs have been created as a result of this project which translates to more than 1 million man-hours worked.





## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FISCAL YEAR:

**162**

Events Hosted

**182,025**

Hotel room  
nights generated

**197,197**

Event attendees  
welcomed

**\$200.9M**

In economic impact  
to Georgia

**\$187.7M**

In economic impact  
to Georgia



# CATALYST FOR CHANGE

For more than a decade, GWCCA has lived its mission to enhance the quality of life for Georgians by integrating sustainability and social responsibility into all aspects of its business to support people, the planet, and its bottom line. In recent years, the business landscape has undergone a significant transformation with a notable shift in focus from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations. No longer just a "nice-to-have," this shift reflects a broader recognition of the interconnectedness between business operations, society, and the environment.

In fiscal year 2023, the Authority shifted to ESG and introduced its "Intentional Gatherings" strategy to deliver unconventional solutions for people, planet, and performance. Focused on purposeful gatherings and hospitality, these three key pillars provide GWCCA the opportunity to build on partnerships and commitments while prioritizing people:

**PEOPLE** - Building champions on the team and in our community.

**PLANET** - Operating efficiently and providing leadership to produce net zero events.

**PERFORMANCE** - Articulating policies and clear goals and measuring performance.



People, whether team members, customers, or community partners, are at the heart of GWCCA's ongoing success. Under its new ESG model, the Authority focused efforts during the year on workforce development, engaging local businesses, and contributing resources to the community through several initiatives. In celebration of Women's History Month (March), GWCCA hosted its inaugural "Making HERstory" Tea designed to provide lessons and insights into hospitality careers from some of Atlanta's most prolific female hospitality executives. The program produced new partnerships and was recognized with a proclamation from Governor Brian Kemp and Atlanta City Hall declaring March 29, 2023, as Making HERstory Day.

GWCCA launched a partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council and Sustainable Georgia Futures to train minority students and professionals to become LEED certified associates, exposing diverse talent to careers at venues and providing the opportunity to earn an industry certification. Additionally, the Authority partnered with Georgia State University and Georgia Tech to create career days and job shadowing opportunities to build a future pipeline of leaders.





GWCCA's goal of operating efficiently and providing leadership and guidance to produce net zero events was the focus of the planet pillar. Key initiatives performed throughout the year included:

- Expansion of its food rescue program from one partner, Second Helpings, to include One Heart Ministries. By adding a second partner, GWCCA was able to donate more than 900 pounds of food.
- Production of more than 200 pounds of honey, filling 170 jars. Bee Downtown, GWCCA's partner, informed the Authority that its bees flew approximately 11.2 million miles, or 452 times around earth, to produce the honey.
- Donation of Elaeagnus from Centennial Olympic Park to help feed animals at Zoo Atlanta.
- Formation of a partnership with re:loom to donate materials and time to upcycle textiles which supports the employment and empowerment of homeless and low-income individuals.



*Tracye Hutchins (ANF), Shavannia Williams (GWCCA), Jen LeMaster (GWCCA), Kim Allison (GWCCA), Ebony Barley Carswell (City of Atlanta), Kristen Delahunt (ACVB), Jai Ferrell (Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta international Airport), Lauren Fisher (AMB Sports + Entertainment) and Toyya Lassere (Mercedes-Benz Stadium) discussed developing women leaders and innovating business through exceptional customer service during Making HERstory Tea.*

# CATALYST FOR CHANGE



Performance is the cornerstone of any successful organization. One way in which performance is celebrated and recognized at the Authority is through thought leadership and leadership appointments within the live events industry. During the fiscal year, team members industry recognition contributed to the Authority's goal of creating a competitive advantage through performance and participation.

## **Jen LeMaster**

Chief Administrative Officer

Appointment: IAVM Board of Directors  
Chairman, Senior Executive Symposium Board of Governors  
(Georgetown University)

## **Brittany Martin**

Senior Event Manager

Panelist: ASAE NextGen

## **Ken Stockdell**

Director,  
Program and  
Project Management

Organized and moderated the Convention Center  
Design Charrette session at IAVM VenueConnect

Organized and moderated a Signia by Hilton  
presentation at Georgia Association of State Facility  
Administrators fall conference

Member: Convention Center Sector Committee, IAVM

## **Marc Vincent**

Manager,  
Emergency Preparedness

Panelist: Special Events Preparedness at Emergency  
Management Association of Georgia Training Summit

Panelist: Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events  
at RIMS RiskWorld

Member: Convention Center Safety & Security  
Subcommittee, IAVM

## **Shavannia Williams**

Director,  
Strategic Partnerships

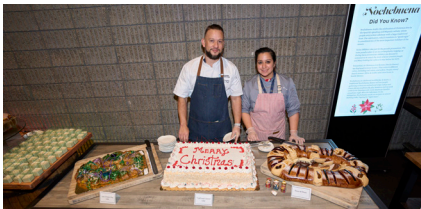
Appointment: Director of Public Relations, National Black  
MBA Association Board (Atlanta chapter)

## **Alisha King**

Administration Manager

Parliamentarian, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.,  
Henry County Alumnae Chapter





*GWCCA team members participated in a wide variety of activities and volunteer opportunities throughout the fiscal year.*

As the Authority continued to strengthen its culture, a new internal resource group was formed during fiscal year 2023 that focused on the holistic health and wellness of its team members. GWCCARES was introduced to create, inspire, and maintain a culture that supports each team member's overall wellness through intentional programming, education, and tools and resources in the areas of physical, emotional, financial, and social wellness. Together with the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Council programming, GWCCA continues to unlock the potential of its workforce, fostering a culture of resilience, innovation, and success. Following highlights activities hosted by the two groups throughout the year.

## SEPT 22

Hispanic Heritage Month

## NOV 22

National First Responders Day and Veterans Day Celebration

## MAR 23

Women's HERstory Month

## DEC 22

Celebration of Holidays and Traditions

## FEB 23

Black History Month

## MAY 23

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

## APR 23

Earth Day

## JUN 23

Pride Month

1 Million Steps Challenge

CPR Training w/American Heart Association

Day Party for Mental Health

Flower Meditation Workshop

● GWCCARES  
● JEDI Events

# BUILDING A #1 CULTURE

GWCCA's commitment to building a team culture that helps everyone in the organization feel valued and empowered to do their best work continues to gain momentum as evidenced by results of its 2023 employee engagement survey.

Designed to give team members a voice in shaping the culture and work experience, the last two survey scores of 4.1 (out of 5) revealed that team members believe in the vision of the Authority and how it is going about achieving its goals. This year, the survey score increased to 4.3 (out of 5) confirming that the actions taken throughout the year by the Authority continue to be well-received by team members.

Activation of events sponsored by the JEDI Council and GWCCARES, the Authority's new wellness committee focused on team members' physical, emotional, financial, and social wellbeing, paired with opportunities for leadership training, recognition of those living GWCCA's brand service promise, and regular communication of initiatives around campus have resulted in engaged, accountable team members striving to make a positive impact on business now and for years to come. Below are a few drivers of team member satisfaction.



I feel proud to tell people where I work.

**92%** of team members agree or strongly agree.

**84%** of team members see themselves working at GWCCA in two years.



I feel confident about the future performance of GWCCA.

**89%** of team members agree or strongly agree.

**98%** of team members are committed to helping GWCCA achieve its vision and goals.

**89%** of team members are motivated to go above and beyond in their role.



My manager helps me understand how important my work is to GWCCA.

**85%** of team members agree or strongly agree.

**86%** of team members believe their job makes good use of their skills and abilities.



# SERVICE AWARDS AND RETIREES

Each year the Authority recognizes its longest-serving team members through its Service Award program. These team members embody GWCCA's brand service promise and vision to be the No. 1 convention, sports, and entertainment destination in the world. Thank you to each of the following team members for their role in the Authority's achievements over the years. Congratulations!

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## SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

### 1 Year

Justin Hawkins  
Andrew Hayles  
Martin Lett  
Brittany Martin  
Marques Neal  
Brent Oden  
Laura Pape  
Amanda Vaiden White

### 5 Years

Sharde Glore  
Jordan Hopkins  
Elisha Jones  
Dashawn Keller  
Keith Kelly  
Candice Key  
Alisha King  
Chris Van Meter  
Tamekia Rogers  
Sarah Wilburg

### 10 Years

Jeffery Hardeman  
Charles Henry  
Kevin Jabbar  
Heather Kulla  
Ryan Lockhart

### 15 Years

Antonio Jackson  
Nathaniel Johnson  
Carmen Kelsey  
Kay Lawrence  
Crystal Lowe  
Sandy Smith

### 20 Years

Timmi Benton  
Scott Crutchfield  
Terrell Jones  
Agnes Reed  
Christopher Sims

### 30 Years

Michael Leverett

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## RETIREES

Cullen Clark  
Kenneth Jordan  
Earnest Mills  
Rutheugnia Patton  
Ajit Podder  
Ernestine Scott  
Alan White  
Leslie Smith

Facility Supervisor, Maintenance  
Public Safety  
Custodian  
Custodian  
Custodian  
Custodian  
Police Lieutenant  
Account Receivable Manager

# VISION 2030

In 2014, the Authority introduced a bold, long-range strategic plan known as 2020 Vision. The focus was on ensuring its facilities – Georgia World Congress Center, Centennial Olympic Park, and Mercedes-Benz Stadium – were positioned for the future. Over the course of the next six years, GWCCA's championship campus began to take shape. Anchoring the vision were three marquee projects: the addition of a new 100,000-square-foot exhibit hall that would create one million square feet of exhibition space (today known as BC Exhibit Hall); capital improvements to Centennial Olympic Park to strengthen its heritage and revitalize residential and commercial development in downtown; and development of a headquarter hotel that, today, is Signia by Hilton Atlanta.

With the right package of facilities and infrastructure in motion, the Authority turned its attention to Vision 2025, a gameplan prioritizing technology and talent and featuring strategic elements to better brand GWCCA as a destination and employer of choice while systematizing quality operating standards. Although the financial repercussions of the pandemic forced the Authority to sunset several activities, many others were implemented and achieved, including GWCCA earning the distinction of being a top workplace in Atlanta.

Fast forward to today. With a connected, walkable campus featuring a package of facilities unrivaled anywhere in the United States in place and several strategic processes in motion to maximize operational excellence and economic performance, the Authority is setting its sights on Vision 2030.

With contributions from the Authority's extended leadership team, Vision 2030 is beginning to take shape based on one simple question: What do we want to see in place by 2030 because of our united efforts? The strategic areas outlined on the next page will form the basis of Vision 2030. More will be shared and celebrated as these strategic directions transform from intention into attainable action.

**“It's not what the vision is,  
it's what the vision does.**

**ROBERT FRITZ**



Strategic Direction 1  
**Build Innovative &  
Empowered Workforce**

Strategic Direction 2  
**Amplify Enhanced  
Safety & Accessibility**

Strategic Direction 3  
**Acknowledged as  
Thought Leader**

Strategic Direction 4  
**Modernized  
Infrastructure**

Strategic Direction 5  
**Achieved Financial  
Independence**

## GWCCA CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPUS: ECONOMIC IMPACT

Two major economic headlines came out of GWCCA's fiscal year 2023: large-scale events are making a triumphant return and the era of getting more from fewer events has arrived. The Authority hosted approximately 30 fewer events during this fiscal year, but welcomed nearly eight percent more visitors to its championship campus and increased its economic impact by nearly \$400 million. The revival of these gatherings ushered in an economic resurgence that saw the Authority beat its previous year's economic impact on several fronts. A key driver of this revival is the surge in travel and tourism spending. This trend not only signifies a return to normalcy but also underlines the resilience, adaptability, and importance of GWCCA to the state of Georgia's economy. Highlights from the fiscal year's economic impact follow.



**3,233,408**

*Visitors to GWCCA's championship campus increased by eight percent over the previous fiscal year, including a 2 percent increase in out-of-state attendees. More than 60 percent of GWCCA's and 40 percent of Centennial Olympic Park's visitors were from out of state.*

### DID YOU KNOW



**\$0.90**

Each dollar of initial spending by out-of-state visitors to GWCCA's championship campus generated an additional 90 cents in economic output for the state's economy.



**2.22M**

Events on GWCCA's campus generated more than 2 million out-of-state visitor stays, a 28 percent increase from the previous fiscal year's total of 1.74 million.



**55%**

Georgia World Congress Center accounted for 55 percent (or \$970.4M) of the Authority's total economic impact; Mercedes-Benz Stadium accounted for 45 percent.





## \$1,767,226,234

GWCCA's championship campus continued its trend of surpassing \$1 billion of economic impact to Georgia's economy. The uptick in travel and tourism resulted in direct spending by out-of-state visitors to jump by 28 percent from the previous fiscal year.



## \$580.6M / 16,607

The economic impact generated by Georgia World Congress Center, Mercedes-Benz Stadium, and Centennial Olympic Park continued to have a positive impact on Georgia's labor market as both jobs supported and labor income generated were up from FY22 numbers.



## \$100,406,695 / \$81,237,599

Combined, GWCCA's unrivaled package of facilities contributed over \$100 million in tax and fees revenues to the state of Georgia and more than \$81 million to local governments. The latter total includes \$26.1 million in hotel/motel taxes.

### CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPUS EVENTS

### ATTENDANCE

Conferences	121,600
Consumer Shows	57,717
General Meetings/Other	49,767
Graduations	11,000
Participation Sports	220,554
Spectator Events	2,453,515
Trade Shows	270,505
Outdoor/Charity/Entertainment	25,750
Concert/Festival	23,000
Grand Total	3,233,408

### GWCCA CAMPUS TAX REVENUES

State Sales Tax	\$50,948,623
State Personal Income Tax	\$19,333,169
State Hotel/Motel Fee	\$7,923,904
Other Taxes/State	\$22,200,999
Local Hotel/Motel Fee	\$26,067,863
Local Sales Tax	\$55,169,736
Grand Total	\$181,644,294

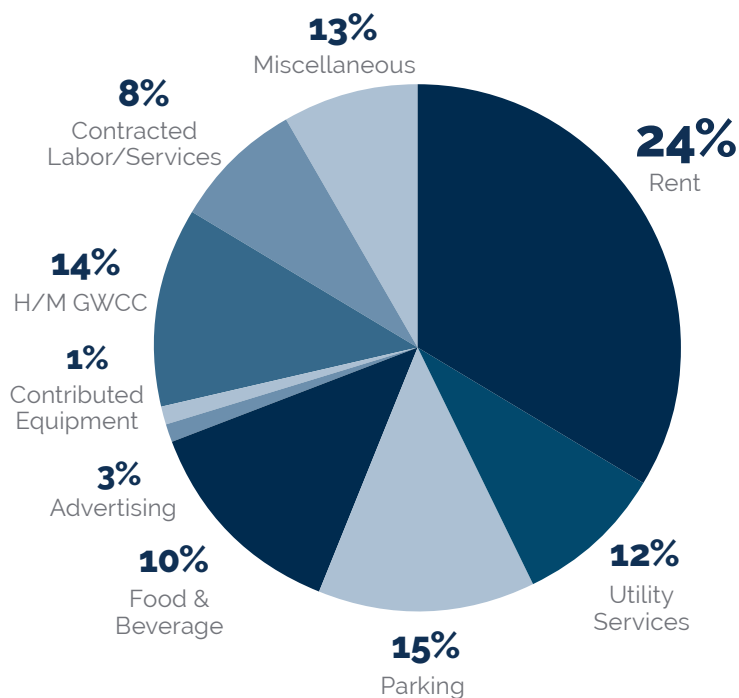
## GEORGIA'S ECONOMIC ENGINE

### ATLANTA CAMPUS

Date	Operating Revenue	Operating Expense	Operating Profit/(Loss)
2009	71,060,589	77,079,259	(6,018,670)
2010	68,707,527	69,818,566	(1,111,039)
2011	78,280,863	73,931,987	4,348,876
2012	76,410,365	73,661,411	2,748,954
2013	89,504,084	83,551,929	5,952,155
2014	89,459,952	86,857,029	2,602,923
2015	96,645,804	89,540,897	7,104,907
2016	104,526,078	95,640,972	8,885,106
2017	108,371,541	102,092,148	6,279,393
2018	59,024,482	52,880,256	6,144,226
2019	69,582,696	60,730,953	8,851,743
2020	47,086,781	51,143,201	(4,056,420)
2021	Did not issue economic impact report due to COVID-19		
2022	53,118,264	41,259,730	11,858,534
2023	<b>57,626,826</b>	<b>50,929,042</b>	<b>6,697,784</b>

Note: Net Operating Profit ties to audited financial statements, excluding OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits), pensions, and depreciation. Figures prior to 2018 include Georgia Dome.

## GWCCA REVENUE & EXPENSES



### OPERATING REVENUE

Rent	13,945,002
Utility Services	7,379,799
Parking	8,932,561
Food & Beverage	5,484,029
Advertising	1,501,890
Contributed Equipment	226,914
H/M GWCC	8,300,007
Contracted Labor/Services	4,579,936
Miscellaneous	7,276,689
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	<b>57,626,826</b>

### NON-OPERATING REVENUE

H/M Tax - ACVB	31,657,750
Investment Gain	8,550,143
Land Lease	2,281,100
Miscellaneous	18,960,210
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>61,449,204</b>



The return of big business and increased travel and tourism spending resulted in GWCCA's championship campus contributing more than \$88 million in Direct Profit to the state of Georgia. Since 2009, the Authority has boosted Georgia's bottom line by more than \$850 million.

## STATE OF GEORGIA

State Tax Revenue	Debt Service	State Profit	*Direct Profit to Georgia
97,415,555	35,022,336	62,393,219	56,374,549
87,901,235	36,921,791	50,979,444	49,868,405
76,219,994	36,691,726	39,528,268	43,877,144
57,187,264	30,686,513	26,500,751	29,249,705
59,096,921	30,864,376	28,232,545	34,184,700
72,762,330	32,180,471	40,581,859	43,184,782
71,872,730	32,898,503	38,974,227	46,079,134
87,097,971	30,969,143	56,128,828	65,013,934
104,273,146	31,566,447	72,706,699	78,986,092
98,772,115	34,397,803	64,374,312	70,518,538
109,437,916	35,567,114	73,870,802	82,722,545
80,309,796	35,278,562	45,031,234	40,974,814
82,859,833	18,011,319	64,848,514	76,707,048
<b>100,406,695</b>	<b>18,594,600</b>	<b>81,812,095</b>	<b>88,509,879</b>

\*Direct Profit to Georgia is calculated by adding GWCCA's operating profit/loss and state profit.

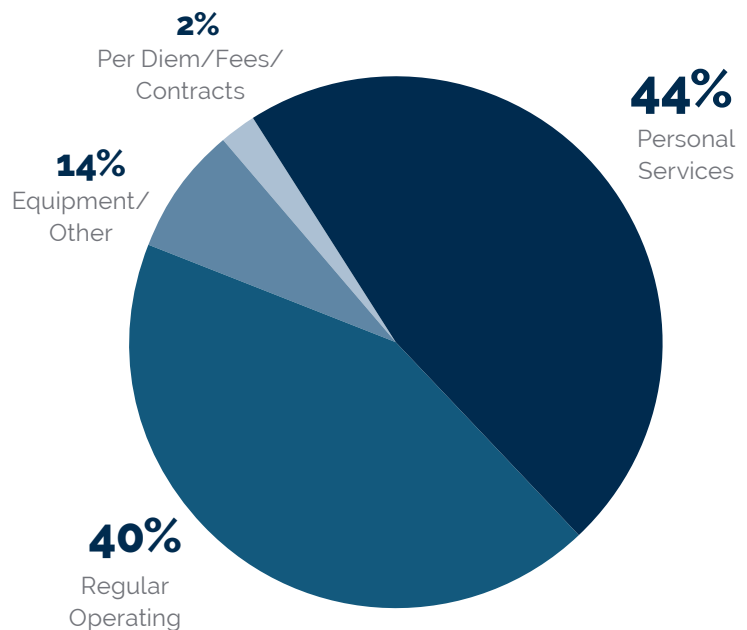
The Authority recognized more than \$57 million in operating revenue from primary sources such as space rental, utility services, parking, and food and beverage. Operating expenses came in just over \$50 million with the bulk contributed to by personal services and regular operating.

### OPERATING EXPENSES

Personal Services	22,671,274
Regular Operating	20,277,388
Equipment/Other	6,897,491
Per Diem/Fees/Contracts	1,086,243
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>50,932,397</b>
<b>Net Operating Profit</b>	<b>6,694,429</b>

### NON-OPERATING EXPENSES

ACVB H/M Tax	31,657,750
Hotel	23,576,889
Misc.	1,358,951
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>56,593,590</b>



# GWCCA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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**Doug Tollett, Secretary**  
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Sen. Brandon Beach  
Sen. Steve Gooch  
Sen. Sonya Halpern  
Sen. John Kennedy  
Sen. Larry Walker  
Rep. Chris Erwin  
Rep. Jan Jones  
Rep. Chuck Martin  
Rep. Butch Parrish  
Rep. Ron Stephens

# MISSION, VISION, VALUES

## MISSION

The State of Georgia established Georgia World Congress Center Authority to develop and operate Georgia World Congress Center, Centennial Olympic Park, and related facilities. These facilities exist for the primary purpose of promoting and facilitating events and activities that generate economic benefits to the citizens of the state of Georgia and the city of Atlanta as well as enhance the quality of life for every Georgian.

## VISION

To be recognized as the No. 1 convention, sports, and entertainment destination in the world.

## VALUES



### **WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE**

We embrace proactive and responsible behaviors that create ownership of outcomes for the individual and the business.



### **WE ARE AUTHENTIC**

We operate with transparency; encourage vulnerability and expression of self and others to foster an inclusive environment for our Customers.



### **WE ARE ONE**

We move with a unified purpose and voice to ensure our Customers experience radical hospitality.

## CREDITS

Georgia World Congress Center Authority's 2023 annual report was written by Holly Richmond, Director of Communication, and photographed and published by the Authority's Marketing Communications department. Editorial oversight courtesy of Jennifer LeMaster, Chief Administrative Officer. Additional photography and design renderings courtesy of Chris Helton, Austin Simmons, Gensler, and Savannah Convention Center.

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Digital copies of this report and prior GWCCA annual reports are available for download at [www.gwcca.org](http://www.gwcca.org).











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