



# FOCAL POINT

## ANNUAL REPORT 2018



### INSIDE

THE YEAR IN FOCUS:  
A-TO-Z HIGHLIGHTS

FUTURE FOCUS: WHAT'S  
COMING TO CAMPUS?


FOCAL POINT:  
ECONOMIC IMPACT



FOCAL POINT *N.* - 

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THE POINT AT WHICH ALL  
ELEMENTS CONVERGE;  
CENTER OF ACTIVITY



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

GREETINGS FROM THE GOVERNOR	4
LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP	5
THE YEAR IN FOCUS: A-TO-Z HIGHLIGHTS	6
FUTURE FOCUS: A LOOK AT UPCOMING EVENTS ON THE GWCCA CAMPUS	8
FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	10
FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE: THE PURSUIT OF NO. 1	12
FOCUS ON CONNECTIVITY: CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPUS	14
FOCUS ON BENCHMARKS: 2020 VISION	17
FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIPS: SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER	18
FOCUS ON FAREWELL: GEORGIA DOME GOES OUT WITH A BANG	20
FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT: THE AUTHORITY'S DIGITAL FOOTPRINT	21
FOCAL POINT: ECONOMIC IMPACT	22
BOARD OF GOVERNORS	26

**ON THE COVER:** Georgia World Congress Center's spiral staircase and atrium leading to the Thomas Murphy Ballroom, as seen from Level 3 of Building B. Photo by Ashley Gilmer, Georgia World Congress Center Authority.

## GREETINGS FROM THE GOVERNOR

When I was elected to the Georgia Senate in 1980, members of the General Assembly often found themselves defending funding for the Georgia World Congress Center Authority (GWCCA) in the annual state budget. The Congress Center, which had then only been open for four years, was often questioned for its value to communities outside of metro Atlanta.

We have seen over the course of the last four decades that the GWCCA indeed benefits communities all across our state and far beyond the Atlanta area.

The GWCCA is one of Georgia's strongest assets for economic growth and tourism, and last year the Authority played a significant role bringing 1.24 million out-of-state visitors to downtown Atlanta helping generate \$1.77 billion in economic impact.



Through fiscal year 2018, the state has invested **\$783 million** into the GWCCA and the Authority has returned **\$1.6 billion** in sales tax and **\$795 million** in net revenue.

For fiscal year 2018, I recommended \$55 million in bond funding for planning, construction and equipment for the Congress Center's first major expansion since 2002. This expansion project will allow Georgia to continue to host some of the world's largest industry trade shows and conventions, while also accommodating growth for the Congress Center's long-term customers.

I appreciate the efforts of GWCCA Executive Director Frank Poe and his staff, as they do exceptional work to make the GWCCA campus a dynamic force within the hospitality industry. I also appreciate the GWCCA Board of Governors for taking advantage of opportunities to expand and strengthen the offerings of the entire GWCCA campus.



*Gov. Nathan Deal talks with local media at the GWCCA's expansion project groundbreaking.*

We are proud that Georgia is home to the premier convention, sports and entertainment destination. As the No. 1 state for business, we look forward to hosting more conventions, trade shows, and events at the Georgia World Congress Center Authority campus.

Sincerely,

*Nathan Deal*

Governor Nathan Deal



## LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP



*From left to right: Executive Director Frank Poe, Chief Commercial Officer Joe Bocherer, Chief Operating Officer Kevin Duvall, Chief Administrative Officer Jennifer LeMaster.*

IN REVIEWING  
FISCAL YEAR 2018, A  
**FOCAL POINT**  
BECAME CLEAR AS  
THE AUTHORITY'S  
LEGACY CONVERGED  
WITH ITS FUTURE.

From the storied Georgia Dome giving way to world-class Mercedes-Benz Stadium to setting in motion plans for a convention center hotel to serving as championship campus for the 2018 College Football Playoff National Championship, the GWCCA demonstrated its commitment to strengthening Atlanta's status as a top convention destination while showcasing its ability to host the biggest and brightest events the world has to offer.

We are pleased to share our 2018 annual report. It is both a review and a celebration of our many achievements and also a look ahead at the initiatives that will continue to solidify the Authority's role as an economic engine for the State of Georgia for decades to come.

In it, you'll read how our 2020 Vision strategic plan is delivering on our goal of ensuring our facilities are relevant for the future and that Centennial Olympic Park continues to enhance the quality of life in the Atlanta area through increased community access and enhanced visitor experiences. We also share an update on our efforts to minimize our environmental impact on the community as well as our community outreach efforts focused on education and economic empowerment. Likewise, you will learn more about our vision for a connected campus as we introduce you to the Andrew Young International Boulevard master plan.

This also was a year of renewed focus on the customer as the Authority implemented a program to monitor and improve every key moment along the customer journey. The initiative is a direct response to our commitment to creating compelling guest experiences while striving to uncover areas of opportunity and drive critical organizational outcomes.

It's an exciting time at the Georgia World Congress Center Authority. The foundation for a bigger, better campus is in place, new customers and new events are on the horizon, and a committed, strategic team is planning the next evolution of the No. 1 convention, sports and entertainment destination in the world.

From all of us,

# THE YEAR IN FOCUS: A-TO-Z HIGHLIGHTS



With the **American Society for Hematology (ASH)** 59th Annual Meeting and Exposition set to open Dec. 9, 2017 at the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), an unusually early (for Georgia) winter storm dumped several inches of snow on metro Atlanta and left some 200,000 customers without power in north Georgia. But the GWCC's electricity stayed on and the building remained open throughout the winter storm as 26,000-plus ASH conventioners stayed warm and dry for the four-day event geared toward hematologists conquering blood-borne diseases.

In partnership with the Savannah College of Art and Design's (SCAD) Atlanta branch, the Authority's team dining hall, the Getaway Café, was reimagined as **Bridge Point**, which opened in April, coinciding with Earth Month, an extension of Earth Day (April 22). The opening date intentionally underscored the new dining experience's focus on well-being, with healthier lunch options, and a focus on sustainability as many of the food service products transitioned from disposable to reusable utensils, plates, bowls and cups, and food composting was introduced.



We've got spirit, yes we do, we've got spirit – and so did 48,450 cheerleaders, cheer-families and spectators who packed Building B for **Cheersport Nationals**, the annual cheerleading championship held Feb. 16-18 that took over downtown, creating an estimated economic impact of \$43.8 million.

Over the course of three weeks in March, approximately 35,000 devotees of the Aga Khan, Prince Shah Karim Al Hussein, came to the GWCC for **Diamond Jubilee USA Mulaqat**, a celebration of his 60th year as spiritual leader of the Nizari Ismailis. The multi-day celebration included large banquets and concerts, as well as performing arts and Atlanta was designated as one of only two U.S. stops on the Diamond Jubilee schedule.

The rapidly growing **eSports** (competitive video gamers and their legions of fans) sector took center stage for DreamHack Atlanta held July 21-23 at the GWCC. Billed as the world's largest digital festival, the three-day event featured professional gamers competing for lucrative prize purses, live music, cosplay, an expo with panels and workshops and several BYOC (bring your own computer) events – all streamed live on the Internet.

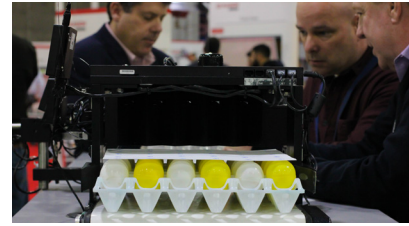


The wildly popular Atlanta United **Football Club**, the Major League Soccer team owned by Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur Blank, made its home debut at the \$1.6 billion state-of-the-art Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Sept. 10, 2017 drawing a sell-out crowd of 45,314. After opening its inaugural season at Georgia Tech's **Bobby Dodd Stadium** while MBS was still under construction, the United adapted well to its new home and went on to post a 5-1-2 record at MBS, advance to the playoffs, and shatter league attendance records.



Not necessarily the G.O.A.T. (greatest of all time) but pretty great, nonetheless. More than 40 **goats** and two guard dogs returned to the GWCCA campus in April for their bi-annual maintenance of a steep, hilly parcel of brush, ivy and grass. Employing the goats from locally-owned Get Your Goat **Rentals** is part of the Authority's corporate social responsibility plan to reduce its environmental footprint by minimizing the use of gas-powered landscaping equipment – while also providing natural fertilizer.

Adjacent to the GWCC's Building A, the 94,256-square-foot shrine to collegiate gridiron legends officially rebranded as the Chick-fil-A College Football **Hall of Fame** in May. Atlanta-based Chick-fil-A was one of the original **backers** in relocating the attraction from South Bend, Ind., and the interactive museum's second floor already included the Chick-fil-A Fan Experience, and a football-themed Chick-fil-A restaurant is adjacent to the building.



Covering more than 521,000 square feet of exhibit space at the GWCC, a total of 1,218 exhibitors showcased the latest poultry, feed and meat technology for 30,678 attendees from around the globe at the annual

**International Production and Processing Expo** held Jan. 30-Feb. 1.



The Authority's **Fourth of July Celebration** at Centennial Olympic Park featured a new twist as the Authority teamed up with Lenox Square to combine both venues' popular fireworks shows into to one giant pyrotechnic extravaganza, drawing a crowd of approximately 26,000 revelers honoring Independence Day and enjoying the music of pop/R&B legend Bobby Brown.

The Mercedes-Benz Stadium era officially kicked off on Aug. 26, 2017 when the Atlanta Falcons hosted the Arizona Cardinals in preseason action at their new home on the GWCCA campus, followed quickly by a pair of Chick-fil-A **Kickoff Games** (Tennessee beat Georgia Tech 42-41, and Alabama dispatched Florida State 24-7) over the Labor Day weekend – the first college football games at the iconic retractable roof venue.

Already the world's largest LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) convention center, the Georgia World Congress Center upped its sustainability game by achieving LEED Gold status in November 2017, the second highest level of certification issued by the U.S. Green Building Council.



The first **MomoCon** in 2005 attracted 700-plus attendees. Fast forward to 2018, and the Atlanta-based convention packed the GWCC over the Memorial Day weekend (May 24-27) with 36,200 fans, exhibitors and guests dedicated to American and Japanese animation, gaming, comic books and costuming.



More than 125,000 guests visited the championship campus in conjunction with Jan. 8's College Football Playoff **National Championship Game** overtime victory by Alabama over Georgia at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Featuring the event's first walkable urban footprint, Playoff Fan Central at the GWCC and the Extra Yard for Teachers 5K hosted at the GWCCA's International Plaza broke previous attendance records, while artists including Charlie Puth, Darius Rucker, The Chainsmokers and Jason DeRulo rocked Centennial Olympic Park at AT&T Playoff Playlist Live.



Pop culture icon **Oprah Winfrey** made a surprise appearance June 2 to deliver a short speech and receive an honorary degree during SCAD Atlanta's commencement ceremony at the GWCC's Georgia Ballroom. Winfrey told the 2,600 SCAD graduates: "We're all seeking to be the truest, purest, highest expression of ourselves as human beings."



**Phase I** of Centennial Olympic Park renovations were completed in April, featuring the new West Lawn Promenade on site of the former Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce Building, creating almost an acre of additional greenspace. In May, Phase II construction kicked off with the reimagining of the park gateway at the corner of Baker Street and Centennial Olympic Park Drive and a new plaza on the northwest corner of the park honoring Paralympic athletes.



T-Rex and pals returned March 9-11 to the GWCC when **Jurassic Quest** turned the convention center into a prehistoric playground featuring more than 80 life-size and animatronic dinosaurs, rows of vendors, and kid-friendly interactive attractions.



It was **rocket science** – and many more disciplines – for 9,629 educators, administrators, scientists, business and industry representatives and 350-plus exhibitors, that converged upon the GWCC for the National Science Teachers Association National Conference (March 15-18), which included a live downlink to the International Space Station where attendees posed real-time questions to NASA astronaut Scott Tingle.



Marking its fifth edition at Centennial Olympic Park and featuring headlining performances by the String Cheese Incident, Umphrey's McGee, Tedeschi Trucks Band and Sturgill Simpson, the **SweetWater 420 Fest** celebrating craft beer, live music and the environment attracted 23,000 festival-goers for the three-day event held April 20-22.

Utilizing 400,000 square feet of exhibit space across multiple exhibit halls in the GWCC's Buildings B and C, Coverings '18, the largest **tile and stone show** in North America, featured more than 14.5 million pounds of freight on the show floor and nine miles' worth of tile. The show, which ran May 8-11, included more than 1,100 exhibitors and attracted approximately 25,000 attendees.

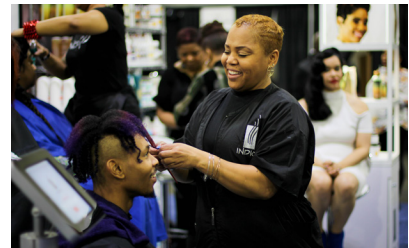
Standing 28 feet tall and weighing in at five tons, Georgia artist Gregory Johnson's Modern Peach stainless steel sculpture was officially **unveiled** Sept. 1, 2017 on the GWCC's East Plaza, donated by Peach Bowl Inc. Designed with photo ops – and selfies – in mind, the Modern Peach is equipped with an instep built into the base where people can stand and/or pose, with the iconic symbol of the Peach State and the GWCC's Building A as the backdrop.



Announced during the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) VenueConnect conference in Nashville, the Georgia World Congress Center received IAVM's 2017 **Venue Excellence Award**. The award annually recognizes five venues which demonstrate outstanding management and operations, team building and professional development, safety and security, and service to the community.



The fifth anniversary of **Walker-Stalker Con**, a convention for fans of AMC's "The Walking Dead" and other postapocalyptic horror entertainment held Oct. 27-29, 2017 at the GWCC, was also its largest gathering so far, attracting an estimated crowd of 65,000.



Bringing a combined 63,244 attendees to the GWCC, the mid-winter and summer editions of the Bronner Bros. International Beauty Show offered plenty of room for self-expression, including spirited barbering and styling contests, from the Creative Student Rising Star competition to the Fantasy Competition featuring a superhero/comic book theme.

**Youth** was served April 21-24 when 19,000-plus high school and college scholars, business professionals and alumni gathered at the GWCC for DECA's International Career Development Conference, an event that prepares students for entrepreneurship and careers in hospitality, management and marketing finance.



Former GWCC General Manager **Mark Zimmerman** officially retired from the Authority in November 2017. A fixture in the hospitality and convention industries and known simply as "Z," he served as GM of the GWCC from 2004 until late 2016, at which time he transitioned to a new role as senior business consultant for the Authority. He retired from the latter role to concentrate on his new consulting business fulltime.



# FUTURE FOCUS: A LOOK AT UPCOMING EVENTS ON THE GWCCA CAMPUS



The average person may not have plans beyond next week. But on the GWCCA campus, many future events are coming into focus all the way through 2026, reflecting a general industry reality where organizers and planners are seeking and securing longer-term bookings.

And the GWCCA campus calendar for 2019 is filling up at an accelerated pace with more than 122 events already confirmed, at the time of this report's publication. It's shaping up to be a banner year for Atlanta's hospitality industry – and the new year bursts out of the gates with Super Bowl LIII and its 10 days of officially sanctioned events, all but two of which are slated to take place on - or immediately adjacent to - the GWCCA's 220-acre campus.

Looking forward, GWCCA bookings are ahead of pace compared to previous years, with 61 events confirmed for 2020 (fiscal year), 35 for fiscal year 2021, and 31 for fiscal year 2022.

Here's a look at select events with projected attendance of 10,000-plus coming to the No. 1 convention, sports and entertainment destination in the world in 2019 and beyond.



## 2019

Progressive Insurance Atlanta Boat Show • AHR Expo • Super Bowl LIII • International Production and Processing Expo (IPPE) • Hot Chocolate 5K/15K • Monster Jam • Monster Energy Supercross • HAI HELI-EXPO 2019 • Publix Atlanta Marathon • Atlanta International Auto Show • Hinman Dental Meeting • George Strait Concert • American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting • Big South Qualifier • SweetWater 420 Fest • Cast Expo 2019 • MomoCon • Primerica Life Insurance Co. • Atlanta Comic Con • Nike Tournament of Champions • Fire-Rescue International 2019 • Bronner Bros. International Beauty Show • Ace Hardware Fall Convention & Expo • National Association of Convenience Stores • North American Commercial Vehicle Show • American College of Rheumatology Health Professionals Annual Meeting • SEC Football Championship



## 2020

IPPE • MODEX 2020 • Hinman Dental Meeting • NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four • SweetWater 420 Fest • MomoCon • North American Mission Board • ASIS International 2020 • SEC Football Championship

## 2021

IPPE • MomoCon • SkillsUSA • Primerica Life Insurance Co. • American Chemical Society • North American Commercial Vehicle Show • SEC Football Championship • ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition

## 2022

IPPE • MODEX 2022 • DECA 2022 • SkillsUSA • SEC Football Championship

## 2023

IPPE • HAI HELI-EXPO 2023 • The Risk and Insurance Management Show • SkillsUSA • SEC Football Championship

## 2024

MODEX 2024 • SkillsUSA • SEC Football Championship

## 2025

SkillsUSA • SEC Football Championship

## 2026

Keller Williams Realty Family Reunion • American Chemical Society • SkillsUSA • SEC Football Championship



## FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

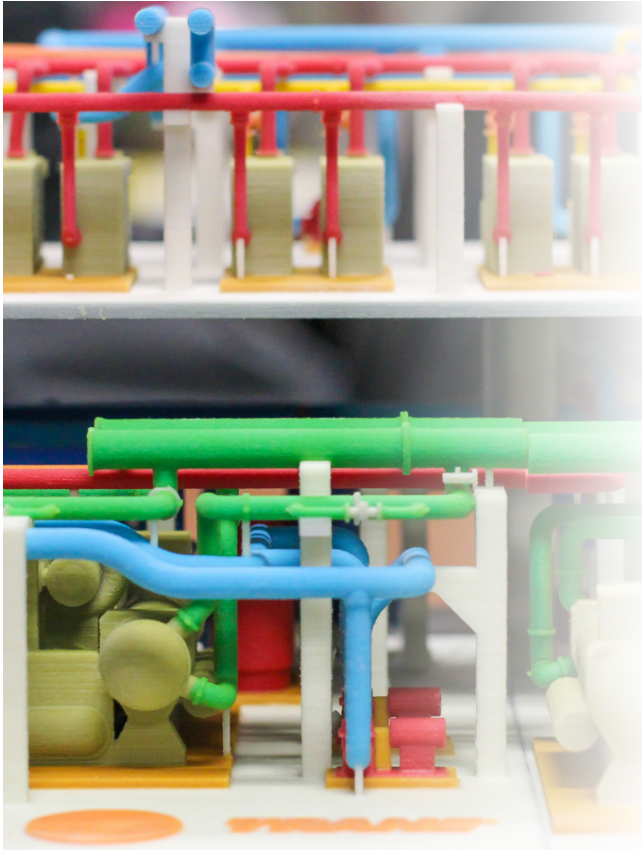
Continuing to deliver on its mission to be recognized locally and industry-wide for the positive environmental and social impact the Authority has on the lives of Georgians, fiscal year 2018's corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy focused on a number of initiatives that demonstrated GWCCA's commitment to better buildings and a better community.



*Corporate Social Responsibility Manager Tim Trefzer surrounded by a collection of the Authority's environmental awards and the natural beauty of the GWCCA campus.*

## CERTIFICATIONS, AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Fiscal year 2018 saw several of GWCCA's sustainability initiatives receive industry recognition, none bigger than upgrading the GWCC's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification from Silver to Gold in November. The Savannah Convention Center, managed by the GWCCA, also obtained LEED Gold certification in July 2017. Also, Mercedes-Benz Stadium on the GWCCA campus became the first professional sports venue in North America to achieve LEED Platinum status. The accolades didn't stop there. In July 2017, the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge presented GWCC and Centennial Olympic Park the "Top Performer for Water Conservation" award for significant reduction in water consumption. In September 2017, GWCC was awarded the "Spirit of Green Award for Outstanding Institutional Program" by the Georgia Recycling Coalition for its waste diversion and resource management. Additionally, the Authority received "Energy Project of the Year" honors at the Association of Energy Engineers 2017 regional awards presentations for its energy savings performance contract with Trane. And in February, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized GWCC as a regional award winner for its sustainable food management as part of the annual Food Recovery Challenge.



## ENERGY SAVINGS PERFORMANCE CONTRACT

In October 2017, the measurement and verification period of the GWCCA's energy savings performance contract with Trane went into effect.

The \$28 million invested to upgrade lighting, chillers and outdated equipment on the GWCCA campus is expected to reduce utility costs by at least 39 percent annually as well as repay the cost of installing energy-efficient equipment.

Here's a look at the first-year results:

- Expected to reduce utilities costs by 39 percent, the first year of the pact exceeded that mark, providing a **43 percent** reduction.
- This 43 percent reduction resulted in a **\$2,244,732 savings** on energy costs.
- **23,014,810 kWh** of electricity saved, equal to the annual consumption of 1,762 homes in Georgia.
- **190,973 therms** of natural gas saved, equal to the average consumption of 268 homes in Georgia for an entire year.
- **20,356,000 gallons** of water saved, approximately double the amount of water that the Georgia Aquarium holds.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Fiscal year 2018 built upon GWCCA's CSR platform as partnerships with the Atlanta Community Food Bank and Atlanta Mission were enriched with new activities. In addition to its long-standing commitment of food donations, the GWCCA initiated targeted donation drives, sorted and packed food boxes for local distribution, and served hot lunches at two of the Atlanta Mission's shelters.

Likewise, the Authority continued its partnership with Everybody Wins! Atlanta by participating in the organization's "Power Lunch" reading program. Once a week, GWCCA team members visited Centennial Place Elementary School during lunch and read to children.



**338**  
volunteer hours  
gifted to community  
partners



## FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE: THE PURSUIT OF NO. 1

While there are many factors that influence the Authority's vision to be the best in the industry, none is more important than delivering on the GWCCA's brand service promise to create compelling guest experiences. During fiscal year 2018, GWCCA drilled down on a new initiative focused on real-time feedback and the ability to benchmark against the competition.

Likewise, several other programs were reviewed or enhanced (one was even spiffed up) to ensure that every department and every team member understood how they contributed to the Authority's success.

*Armed with tablet computers, Guest Services Specialists, such as Amber Smith (pictured), help visitors complete Authority-customized electronic customer feedback surveys.*



## SURVEY SAYS...

The customer remained the focus of every Authority endeavor in fiscal year 2018, and during this period the organization took it to the next level, improving its customer experience tracking processes with the aid of customized proprietary software and data. To be the best, the Authority needed to ensure that customer feedback data provided a complete picture, in order to identify the best opportunities to enhance each of our primary customer groups: visitor, exhibitor, and meeting planner. Partnering with digital customer experience platform Qualtrics, the Authority created tools to monitor customer feedback and identify actionable insights.

Electronic surveys given to event attendees, event planners and exhibitors produce a real-time measuring stick, allowing the Authority to easily pinpoint the biggest impact areas and make immediate, meaningful changes.

The results: the overall customer satisfaction rating improved nearly 13 percent from fiscal year 2017 to 2018, while the percentage of customers giving the Authority the highest score rose by 26 percent.



**VIDEO:** Go to [gwcca.org/focal](http://gwcca.org/focal) to meet Lead Guest Services Specialist John Scott (pictured above) who embodies the Authority's brand service promise.

## IDEA INCUBATOR

The Authority's organizational restructuring in 2016 created opportunities for team members to bring new ideas to the table – ranging from ways to generate new revenue streams to proposed process improvements – and many came to life during the fiscal year.

As the adage goes, you never get a second chance to make a first impression, so in December 2017, the Authority unveiled a fresh new look for its Guest Services team. The organization's frontlines were now easier to spot in radiant red sweaters replacing gold shirts of the past.

In addition, multiple departments collaborated on a customer service training video focusing on first impressions, while team members Authority-wide engaged in the new Lobby Legends program, casting team members, regardless of their usual roles, on the frontlines, welcoming guests to the GWCCA campus, answering questions, pointing them in the right direction, and making them feel right at home.

Some might simply call it Southern hospitality.

Meanwhile, another commitment to being the best resulted in developing new quality operating standard manuals – guidelines set to ensure the delivery of consistently high-quality services and products – to uphold the organization's reputation for superior customer service. Refining the manual was a future-forward organizational goal, and these standards define the quality and expectation in which the Authority operates its campus facilities. It is a promise, and directive to strive for and achieve exceptional results.

From the ideation think-tank, the Authority plotted new paths to deliver and enhance more services, such as coat and baggage checks performed in-house by team members (incubated in fiscal year 2018, implemented in fiscal year 2019), and the Authority's public safety department offered event security and traffic management to customers.

## FOCUS ON CONNECTIVITY: CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPUS

In a city that is constantly reinventing itself since the days of Reconstruction, the ever-evolving GWCCA campus is a focal point of Atlanta's – and Georgia's - economic prosperity.

The tremendous flurry of development, and redevelopment, of the GWCCA campus, focused on improving connectivity between its facilities and the surrounding hospitality district that will elevate the guest experience, reached a fever pitch in fiscal year 2018.

The world's most technologically advanced and eco-friendly stadium opened its doors on the GWCCA campus in fiscal year 2018, Centennial Olympic Park renovations continued, the Georgia World Congress Center's first major expansion since 2002 kicked off, progress continued for an onsite convention hotel, while a new plan to improve traffic management, pedestrian safety and the aesthetics of Andrew Young International Boulevard (AYIB) through the heart of the downtown Atlanta campus emerged.





Cranes, bulldozers, construction crews and equipment, dust clouds, hard hats, dayglow yellow vests, contractors, engineers and work trucks were all part of the daily fabric as projects progressed across the campus 24-7, breathing new life into established landmarks and revealing fresh, exciting features and the latest architectural twists at a dizzying pace.

All this while 3.7 million visitors attended 482 events on the campus last year, including top trade shows, meetings and conventions, marquee sporting events and a diverse entertainment lineup.

## CAMPUS GATEWAY

In March, the Georgia General Assembly provided an essential shot-in-the-arm, approving \$15 million earmarked for the Authority's latest reimagining of the campus' main gateway – Andrew Young International Boulevard.

Creating a seamless guest experience from Centennial Olympic Park to Mercedes-Benz Stadium (MBS) and the surrounding hotel, entertainment and hospitality district, with tree-lined lanes separating foot-traffic and vehicles, the AYIB project is the metaphorical stitch designed to neatly sew it all together.

Vehicular traffic would be restricted to the side of the road closest to CNN Center/State Farm Arena (formerly Philips Arena), while pedestrian traffic would flow on the opposite side, closest to the convention center.

Plans also call for a dedicated area for buses to load and unload next to International Plaza instead of pulling up to the convention center's curb, often clogging traffic on the roadway during busy event days.

Intended as a passport to the world-class offerings on the GWCCA campus, the AYIB project aligns with future plans to create a dynamic gathering place for visitors and residents alike. It will give the GWCCA another edge in enticing more conventioners and sports fans to spend more time on campus.

## CONVENTION CENTER EXPANSION

Meanwhile, design work for the much-anticipated \$55 million GWCC expansion project was finalized during fiscal year 2018 and construction began in June. This addition, connecting exhibit halls in Buildings B and C, will allow the convention center to create more than 1 million square feet of adjoining exhibit space.

The GWCC will be able to vie for the industry's largest shows that have opted for other markets because of space constraints, while also allowing long-term customers to grow.

The potential economic impact of this additional exhibition space is estimated at more than \$600 million.

The expansion is already proving influential, with new customers signing multi-year contracts to book the GWCC based on the project, which is expected to be complete by the end of 2019.

"The addition of this new contiguous exhibition facility will be a catalyst for the next level of growth. We are one of only five convention centers in the country offering 1 million square feet of contiguous exhibit space, and when combined with our impressive suite of venues, Atlanta is well positioned for the future," said William Pate, President and CEO, Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau.





## HEADQUARTERS HOTEL

A key component of campus connectivity, the planned luxury hotel built on part of the former Georgia Dome site, connected to the GWCC's Building C, is another game-changer. According to a demand analysis, the hotel has the potential to attract an additional 116,000 convention and trade show attendees in a typical year, and increase GWCCA revenues by more than \$2.9 million annually. The Authority will own the hotel, which will be entirely funded by bonds issued by the GWCCA, and the search for a flagship brand was narrowed to four finalists in fiscal year 2018. Bonding for the project is capped at \$400 million. Rising more than 30 stories, the hotel will feature between 840 and 1,001 guest rooms, and include 75,000 square feet of meeting and event space, with a main entry facing Northside Drive. GWCCA's hotel, along with The Home Depot Backyard and MBS are expected to spark commercial and residential development and create job opportunities along the west side of the campus.

## PARK VISIONING

Part of the Authority's 2020 Vision strategic plan, updates to the park are designed to strengthen its Olympic heritage, increase community access, expand programming opportunities and enhance the visitor experience. The initial stage of construction, Phase I, came to a close in April. It features the new West Lawn Promenade, adding close to an acre of greenspace on site of the former Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce Building. Phase II, including the reimagined entry way at the Baker Street corner with a new, eye-catching water feature, renovation of the Southern Company Amphitheater and addition of the Paralympic Plaza honoring athletes that competed in the 1996 Paralympics, kicked off in May.

"From Mercedes-Benz Stadium and the scheduled campus hotel, to the re-envisioning of Centennial Olympic Park, and the contiguous exhibition facility project, the reimagining of (Andrew Young) International Boulevard is another competitive differentiator that will allow us to attract more conventioners and sports enthusiasts to spend additional time on campus. It will contribute to the overall aesthetics of the campus and position GWCCA, the city and state for continued economic success." – Sen. Butch Miller, Chairman, Georgia World Congress Center Authority Legislative Overview Committee





## FOCUS ON BENCHMARKS: 2020 VISION

The Authority's Department of Project and Program Management oversaw more than \$32 million worth of campus upgrades in fiscal year 2018, ensuring that the bold evolution of the campus outlined in the 2020 Vision strategic plan and other projects jumped from blueprints to reality, on time and on budget.

### 2020 VISION UPDATES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018 INCLUDE:

**Mercedes-Benz Stadium:** Although the original opening date was delayed for several months by complications associated with the one-of-a-kind retractable roof, the stadium made its official debut on Aug. 26, 2017 with the Atlanta Falcons-Arizona Cardinals pre-season game.

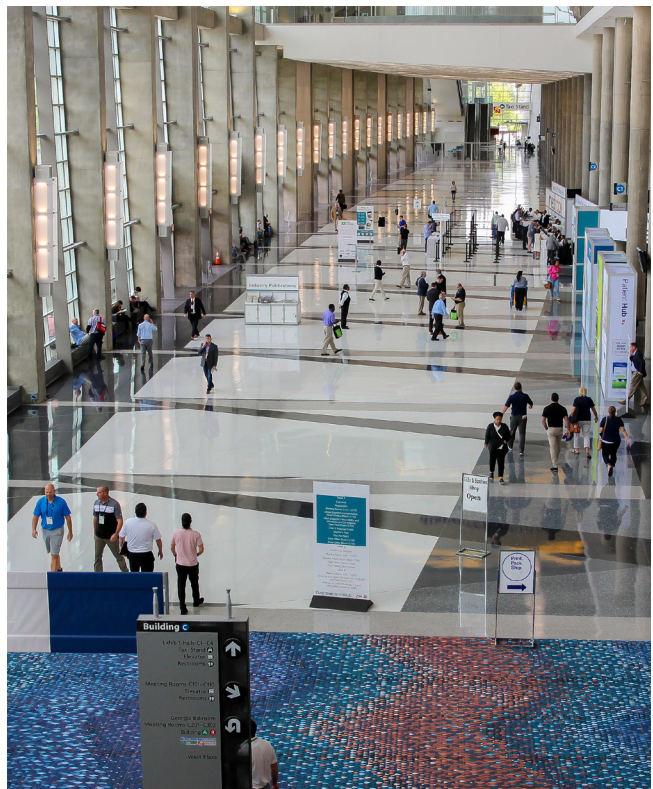


**The Home Depot Backyard:** The Georgia Dome site was cleared rapidly of metal and other large debris and by early March, more than 200,000 tons of concrete from the stadium was crushed and used as infill for The Home Depot Backyard, an 11-acre greenspace and tailgating spot adjacent to MBS.



**Orange Deck:** Clearing of the Dome site also included carving out space for a new 600-space parking facility known as the Orange Deck. Adjacent to the Red Deck, it is going in next to Home Depot Backyard and hotel site, providing easy access to the stadium and the convention center, complementing the array of secure, professionally operated parking facilities on campus. Design work was completed in fiscal year 2018.

**Flooring Updates:** Terrazzo installation was completed in June, closing out the first half of the GWCC's flooring replacement project. Final approvals of the second component – replacing old carpet with customized new Georgia-made carpet featuring designs representing the Peach State's topography – were made in mid-May.



### OTHER CAMPUS UPGRADES INCLUDE:

- \$1.7 million in roof repairs and maintenance.
- A \$1.6 million upgrade of public safety radio systems.
- Repair and replacement of several elevators throughout the GWCC's Building B and Building C.
- Design and renovation of GWCCA employee cafeteria, rebranded as Bridge Point Café.

# FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIPS: SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER

**Managed by the Georgia World Congress Center Authority, this key Peach State convention destination sees record-breaking year.**

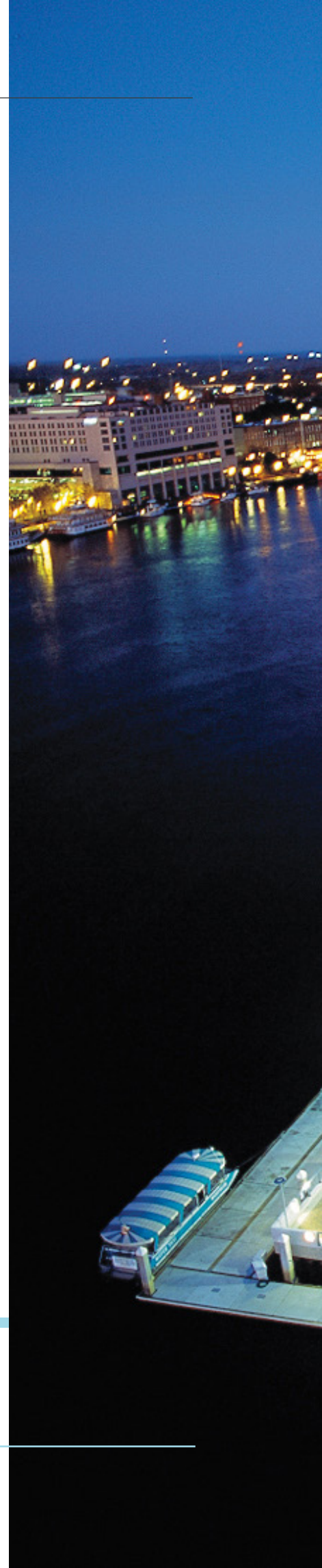
Despite being the oldest city in Georgia, Savannah is experiencing a newfound hipness thanks in part to a surge in everything from trendy hotels and elevated shopping to celebrity-driven restaurants and a burgeoning arts scene. This tourism boom has greatly benefited the Savannah Convention Center (SCC), which saw its best year yet in fiscal 2018.

The convention center's 160 events generated a record 105,000 hotel room nights and brought in more than 217,000 guests, a record high for the 18-year old facility. In June, the SCC hosted its (and the city's) largest convention to date as the National BETA Club brought in more than 25,000 visitors over eight days. Additionally, fiscal year 2018 generated several financial highlights, including:



In July, the SCC was recognized for its ongoing sustainability efforts by the U.S. Green Building Council and awarded Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification, the first convention center in Georgia to obtain this certification level.

Meanwhile, the future of the Savannah Convention Center is focused on expansion. During fiscal year 2018, the Georgia legislature approved an additional \$6.3 million for continued design and engineering of a master plan that includes the addition of 100,000 square feet of exhibit hall space, a 40,000 square-foot ballroom, 15 new conference rooms, and a parking deck. The expansion plan also proposes a new convention center hotel on Hutchinson Island, adjacent to the convention center. With its sights set on the future, the SCC is laying the groundwork to be a bigger and better asset not only for Savannah, but the state of Georgia.







**VIDEO:** Go to [gwcca.org/focal](https://gwcca.org/focal) and meet GWCCA Sales Manager Lidija Ahmetovic, who focuses on booking business at the Savannah Convention Center.





## FOCUS ON FAREWELL: GEORGIA DOME GOES OUT WITH A BANG



With sunlight illuminating the backdrop on a bitterly cold November early morning, GWCCA Executive Director Frank Poe ascended to the podium under a large translucent party tent, flanked by four red folding seats plucked from the Georgia Dome aisles.

"For many in this room, it becomes somewhat of a difficult moment, because it's been a significant part of their professional lives here on the campus," said Poe. "It's also a reflection in many ways of progress; things that come about and succeed it."

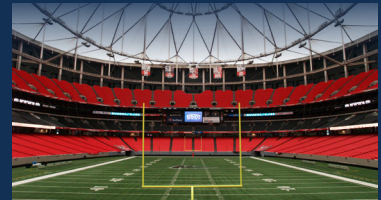
At 7:30 a.m. Nov. 20, 2017, the final farewell commenced as the Georgia Dome flattened into a pile of rubble in a mere 12 seconds. Most of it...that is. Despite the 4,800 pounds of explosive charges, the Dome's exterior East Wall and Gate B remained standing after the dust settled. The event attracted major media attention, with a total audience of 318,540,813 reached via broadcast, print and online. A secondary implosion, using 300 pounds of explosives, finished the job a month later. And so the new era of the GWCCA began in earnest.

Succeeded by state-of-the-art retractable roof Mercedes-Benz Stadium literally next door to the Dome (83 feet separated the two stadiums), demolition of the beloved facility allowed the GWCCA to move on to the next phases of its 2020 Vision master plan reshaping the 220-acre downtown Atlanta campus. True to one of the GWCCA's four core values - be stewards - approximately 90 percent of the Dome's materials were recycled and reused.

Of that, an estimated 200,000 tons of Georgia Dome concrete was crushed and spread about the stadium's footprint, creating the infill base for three projects on-site: The Home Depot Backyard, the Orange Deck parking facility, and the GWCCA's planned high-rise convention hotel.

"Mercedes-Benz Stadium has replaced the Georgia Dome, and it's a spectacular venue," said Poe. "What demolition of the Dome allows us to do as a campus, moving forward - the potential for a hotel, expansion of exhibit space on our campus, is set the next platform for the State of Georgia and the city of Atlanta as the No. 1 convention, sports and entertainment destination in the world."

### THE DOME BY THE NUMBERS



**200,000**

Tons of concrete crushed during demolition



**5,100**

Pounds of explosives used in implosions



**1,400 +**

Events hosted at the Dome from 1992 - 2017



**706**

Football games played from high school to pro



**#DOMEFAREWELL**

## FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT: THE AUTHORITY'S DIGITAL FOOTPRINT



Creating a compelling, more innovative digital experience was front and center for GWCCA in fiscal year 2018. The organization approached its social channels like a consumer brand, placing a bigger emphasis on customer engagement because of the impact on reputation, awareness, and loyalty.

Massive changes to the digital strategy were implemented, including shuttering social channels that didn't align with goals, launching a new blog focused on storytelling, and rebranding the Authority's intranet to provide a broader array of information to team members.

A robust social strategy was put into motion on the Authority's big four channels – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter – to reach meeting planners, key stakeholders, and campus visitors. Content calendars with themes ranging from facilities and events, destination appeal to campus development and architecture to thought leadership were prioritized. Imagery had to meet set criteria. Amplification of blog posts and sharing content across platforms became standard operating procedure. Likewise, timely responses to individual messages (positive or negative) allowed GWCCA to directly connect with customers.

In March, the Authority's new blog, *unConventional*, debuted on gwcca.org. Designed to shed light on human interest stories, amplify thought leadership, celebrate sustainability, deliver Authority news, provide updates on campus development, and promote the downtown experience, this medium has allowed GWCCA to proactively tell a variety of stories which directly influence the organization's reputation as an economic powerhouse for the state of Georgia. This owned content approach also has been instrumental in ensuring the Authority is driving the stories being told and that social channels stay relevant to key stakeholders.

In June, GWCCA team members were introduced to *George*, a brand new resource portal designed to be the go-to spot for organizational info - from department directories and campus development to lunch menus and team member profiles and everything in between. Paying homage to the namesake of the George L. Smith II Georgia World Congress Center, *George* has ushered in a new era of team member engagement.

### SOCIAL MEDIA AT A GLANCE



#### FACEBOOK

**10,456**

New Page Likes



#### TWITTER

**1,756**

New Followers



#### INSTAGRAM

**874**

New Followers



#### LINKEDIN

**1,456**

New Likes



**#THEAUTHORITY**

## FOCAL POINT: ECONOMIC IMPACT

More than 3.7 million visitors attended events on the Georgia World Congress Center Authority campus in fiscal year 2018, generating a total economic impact of \$1.77 billion, according to an analysis by Georgia State University. Economic impact is estimated from the direct spending of out-of-state visitors, exhibitors and sponsoring organizations of events held on the GWCCA campus. These figures include what is known as “new dollars” – money that would not be spent in Georgia without the events taking place on the GWCCA campus.

GEORGIA WORLD CONGRESS CENTER	# OF EVENTS	ATTENDANCE
Trade Shows	35	293,366
Conferences	12	165,891
Participation Sports	24	267,939
Graduations	13	157,650
Consumer Shows	14	217,790
General Meetings / Other	38	67,598
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>1,170,234</b>

GWCC ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	
New Dollars	\$563,172,082
Total Economic Impact	\$1,079,754,819
Labor Income	\$362,668,828
Jobs	10,889
<b>Tax Revenues</b>	
State Sales Tax	\$28,210,318
State Personal Income Tax	\$12,475,808
State Hotel/Motel Fee	\$5,157,095
Other Taxes/State	\$15,356,519
Local Hotel/Motel Tax	\$13,374,778
Local Sales Tax	\$29,431,664
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$104,006,182</b>

# 157,650

Number of attendees to local graduation ceremonies at the Georgia World Congress Center in fiscal year 2018.

MERCEDES-BENZ STADIUM	# OF EVENTS	ATTENDANCE
Major Championship Ticketed	3	147,643
Amateur Sports	2	21,311
College Sports	3	168,138
Professional Sports	6	264,292
Entertainment Concerts	3	182,372
Atlanta Falcons	11	741,878
Atlanta United	19	877,491

Tours	3	23,783
Graduations & Local events	1	6,697
General Meetings	3	37,895
CFP National Championship Game	1	77,420
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>2,548,920</b>

#### MBS ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

New Dollars	\$355,314,621
Total Economic Impact	\$684,013,785
Labor Income	\$226,109,774
Jobs	7,337
<b>Tax Revenues</b>	
State Sales Tax	\$20,129,655
State Personal Income Tax	\$7,778,176
State Hotel/Motel Fee	\$3,124,490
Other Taxes/State	\$5,878,340
Local Hotel/Motel Tax	\$8,134,880
Local Sales Tax	\$21,315,460
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$66,361,001</b>

**\$684,013,785**

Amount of economic impact generated by MBS in its first year.

CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC PARK	# OF EVENTS	ATTENDANCE
Ticketed (Other) : Concerts	1	23,000
Outdoor	2	26,650
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>49,650</b>

#### COP ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

New Dollars	\$3,567,489
Total Economic Impact	\$6,727,350
Labor Income	\$2,154,375
Jobs	67
<b>Tax Revenues</b>	
State Sales Tax	\$196,646
State Personal Income Tax	\$74,111
State Hotel/Motel Fee	\$56,230
Other Taxes/State	\$334,728
Local Hotel/Motel Tax	\$146,306
Local Sales Tax	\$208,633
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,016,654</b>

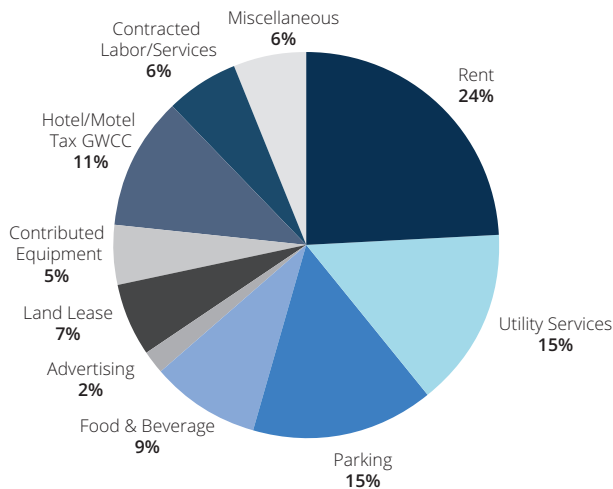
**\$171,383,837**

Amount of local and state tax revenue generated by GWCCA campus in fiscal year 2018.

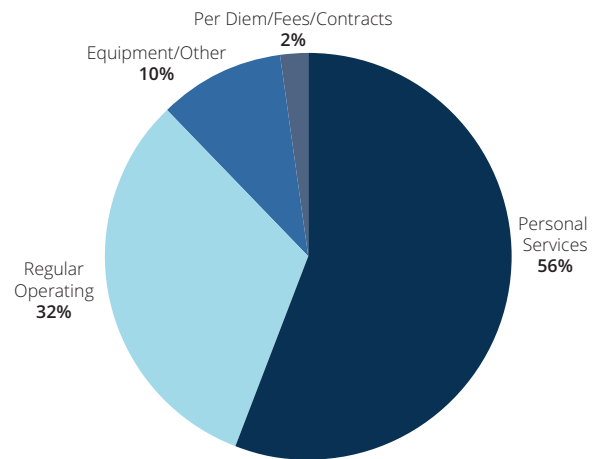
# FINANCIAL FOCUS: REVENUE & EXPENSES

The GWCCA's primary sources of operating revenue in fiscal year 2018 remained rent, utility services, parking and food services, which combined accounted for 63 percent of all operating revenue.

## REVENUE AT A GLANCE



## EXPENSES AT A GLANCE



### OPERATING REVENUE

Rent	14,043,217	24%
Utility Services	8,598,385	15%
Parking	9,034,635	15%
Food & Beverage	5,686,970	9%
Advertising	1,758,713	2%
Land Lease	3,775,000	7%
Contributed Equipment	2,830,389	5%
Hotel/Motel Tax GWCC	6,459,428	11%
Contracted Labor/Services	3,509,992	6%
Miscellaneous	3,327,753	6%
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$59,024,482</b>	<b>100%</b>



### OPERATING EXPENSES

Personal Services	29,972,064	56%
Regular Operating	16,658,810	32%
Equipment/Other	5,446,181	10%
Per Diem/Fees/Contracts	803,201	2%
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$52,880,256</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Net Operating Profit</b>	<b>\$6,144,226</b>	

*\*Note: Last year the Authority began consolidated financial reporting of the Georgia World Congress Center and Centennial Olympic Park, in preparation for closure of the Georgia Dome. As a result, the data represented here differs slightly from previous years. In addition, it does not include financial reporting related to Mercedes-Benz Stadium, because the Authority does not operate the facility.*





## NON-OPERATING REVENUE

Hotel/Motel Tax (ACVB)	24,588,534
Miscellaneous	3,518,490
Subtotal	28,107,024
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$87,131,506</b>

## FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

GWCCA is committed to making long term investments and minimizing expenses.



## NON-OPERATING EXPENSES

ACVB Hotel/Motel Tax	24,588,534
Construction Projects	1,223,007
Subtotal	\$25,811,541
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$78,691,797</b>
Net Income/loss before depreciation and OPEB accrual	\$8,439,709

# FOCUSING ON GEORGIA'S BOTTOM LINE

After paying debt service and all operating expenses for fiscal year 2018, the State of Georgia realized a net profit of more than \$70 million from Georgia World Congress Center Authority events and activities.

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

## DIRECT PROFIT TO GEORGIA

DATE	OPERATING REVENUE	- OPERATING EXPENSE	= OPERATING PROFIT/LOSS	STATE TAX REVENUE	- DEBT SERVICE	= STATE PROFIT	DIRECT PROFIT TO GEORGIA
2008	80,115,757	84,613,865	4,498,108	122,866,019	37,621,219	85,244,800	80,746,692
2009	71,060,589	77,079,259	6,018,670	97,415,555	35,022,336	62,393,219	56,374,549
2010	68,707,527	69,818,566	1,111,039	87,901,235	36,921,791	50,979,444	49,868,405
2011	78,280,863	73,931,987	4,348,876	76,219,994	36,691,726	39,528,268	43,877,144
2012	76,410,365	73,661,411	2,748,954	57,187,264	30,686,513	26,500,751	29,249,705
2013	89,504,084	83,551,929	5,952,155	59,096,921	30,864,376	28,232,545	34,184,700
2014	89,459,952	86,857,029	2,602,923	72,762,330	32,180,471	40,581,859	43,184,782
2015	96,645,804	89,540,897	7,104,907	71,872,730	32,898,503	38,974,227	46,079,134
2016	104,526,078	95,640,972	8,885,106	87,097,971	30,969,143	56,128,828	65,013,934
2017	108,371,541	102,092,148	6,279,393	104,273,146	31,566,447	72,706,699	78,986,092
<b>2018</b>	<b>59,024,482</b>	<b>52,880,256</b>	<b>6,144,226</b>	<b>98,772,115</b>	<b>34,397,803</b>	<b>64,374,312</b>	<b>70,518,538</b>

\*The Net Operating Profit ties to audited financial statements, excluding OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits), pension and depreciation. Figures prior to 2018 include Georgia Dome.

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## VISION

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

## MISSION

The State of Georgia established the Georgia World Congress Center Authority to develop and operate the 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.

## VALUES

**BE ONE:** We achieve together. We focus on the big picture and think in terms of what's good for the campus as a whole.

**BE HONEST:** We hold ourselves and each other accountable to high ethical standards. As state employees entrusted with public money and assets, we earn our reputation daily as both trustworthy and transparent.

**BE STEWARDS:** We are focused on safety and committed to serving our customers, community, environment, and each other. We demonstrate an unwavering commitment to quality and efficiency.

**BE DYNAMIC:** We seize the ever-changing, intense and exhilarating environment in which we live and work. We recognize that our leadership position in the industry and across the State of Georgia is a privilege and requires us to continuously innovate and evaluate everything we do.

## CREDITS

The 2018 Georgia World Congress Center Authority Annual Report is published by the GWCCA Department of Marketing and Communications, Frank Poe, Executive Director. Written, compiled, designed, and edited by Jennifer LeMaster, Holly Richmond, Kent Kimes, Ashley Gilmer, Jaleesa Fears, Tim Trefzer, Parker Hendricks, Alicia McNease, and Ikram Omar. Principal photography by Ashley Gilmer, with additional photography by Robb Cohen Photography, Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau and GWCCA staff.

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