



# Tourism Annual Report & 2019 Marketing Plan



[VISITAUGUSTA.COM](http://VISITAUGUSTA.COM)

# Our Mission

Growing the economy and community vitality for all Augustans by creating memorable travel experiences for visitors throughout Augusta's River Region.

## Our Strategic Priorities

- **Tell Augusta's story to influence the decision to travel here**
- **Help Augusta grow market share in Conventions, Events, and Film Productions**
- **Help increase visitor activity and spending in Augusta**
- **Elevate the organizational reputation of accountability and productivity**

# Transition & Momentum in 2018

## Bennish Brown, *President/CEO*

Dear Partner,

Augusta is an amazing city with global name recognition, and a reputation for world-class hospitality. Augusta is synonymous with history, culture, innovation and excellence, and is the heartbeat of Augusta's River Region.

On behalf of our Board and our entire team, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing commitment and support of our tourism industry. We are also extremely grateful for all you do for the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau.

This past year marked a very important yet challenging year for our organization, but our team stayed focused and committed to accomplishing many of the priorities, projects and goals we put in place. Although it was a year of transition, 2018 was also a period of great momentum and accomplishment.

Among the major successes was our move to our new office building and visitor experience center at 1010 Broad Street. We are proud to share this three-story, renovated historic building with the Augusta Sports Council. Our location in the heart of downtown Augusta allows us to play an integral role in the continued revitalization of our city core. The beauty and charm of the space also provides a memorable first impression as we represent the authenticity of this historic, yet future-focused destination. The first phase was moving into the offices. Planning for the second phase, the build out of the new and innovative visitor experience center, which will be known as Augusta & Co., began before the end of the year.

Hollywood also came to town during the summer for the filming of the Clint Eastwood feature movie, *The Mule*, activating our Film Augusta services. Film Augusta is a division of the Augusta CVB and serves as the city's liaison to the film industry.

Finally, through our creative marketing efforts and our targeted sales outreach to meeting planners, we worked to position and promote the region as a preferred destination for leisure and meeting travel. All of the primary performance metrics were up in 2018, including average hotel occupancy and average room revenue. That's a story we love sharing.

*Bennish D. Brown*



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Augusta's River Region

## Visitor Impact



VISITOR SPENDING BREAKDOWN

# \$553.44

M I L L I O N

## Economic Impact

### Employment

# 4,902

Jobs

### Tax Relief Per Household

# \$549

As a Result of Taxes  
Generated by Tourism

### State Taxes

# \$24.89

Million

### Local Taxes





# \$14.83

Million


Source: Georgia Department of Economic Development

# Visitor Profile

## Who is the Augusta Traveler?

<b>51%</b> Visiting friends and relatives	<b>\$118 Million</b> Spent in restaurants, 25% of total spending	<b>2.8</b> Average nights stayed	<b>76%</b> Use social media for travel
 Well-educated, professional	 Enjoys shopping, fine dining, landmarks or historical sites, golf, and museums	 Lives within driving distance	 Travels without children

## Target Audiences



**Primary**  
 Millennials:  
 This demographic seeks new and authentic experiences.



**Location Radius**  
 Within  
**250**  
 mile radius.



**Secondary**  
 Baby Boomers:  
 They have the available time and income to enjoy a weekend getaway.

## Top Interests of Millennials



# Marketing

**Position and promote the region as a preferred destination for leisure and meeting travel.**

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## 2019 Marketing Objectives

- Generate favorable media exposure from booked conventions
- Manage advertising campaign across all market segments
- Develop and execute a robust public relations program
- Engage locals to tell Augusta's story
- Employ innovative and interactive digital strategies engaging target audiences
- Strengthen and expand collaborations and partnerships with local industry and economic development partners
- Use the Masters Tournament® as an opportunity to identify top prospects for conventions, travel writers and influencers
- Expand film industry services and marketing efforts



# 2019 Total Advertising Media INVESTMENT

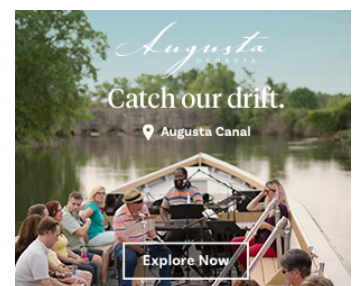
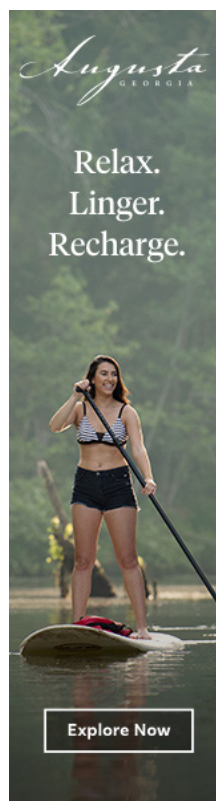
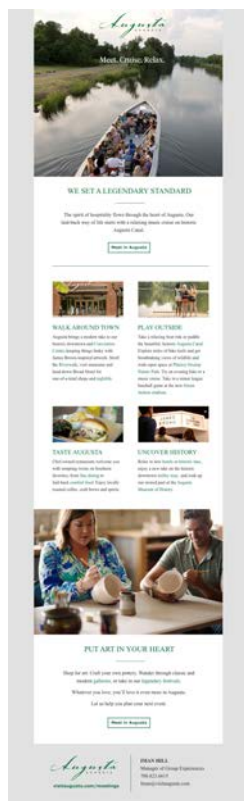
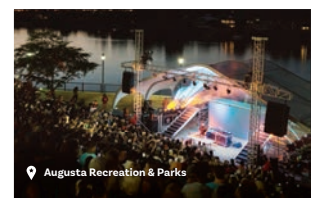
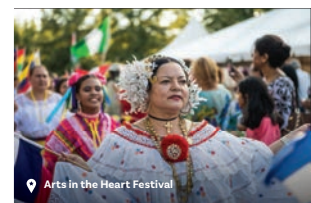
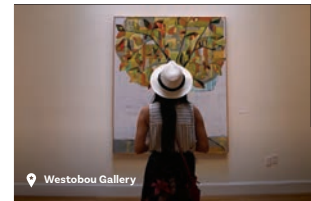
●  
Print  
\$111,185  
(22%)

\$497,994

●  
Digital  
\$386,809  
(78%)



# Advertising Samples

Print



Digital

# 2019 Media Plan

 	Historical / Heritage			Outdoor			Arts & Events			Culinary		
				Masters (4/11 - 4/14)								
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Augusta CVB 2019 Leisure Media Plan												
Southbound Magazine - Spring/Summer 2019				Full Page Spread								
Southbound Magazine - Fall/Winter 2019										Full Page Spread		
Atlanta Magazine - May					Half Page Ad							
Classic South Brochure				2-page Spread								
Facebook	Desktop + Mobile / Newsfeed + Right Hand Side / Single Image, Carousel + Video											
Instagram	Desktop + Mobile / Newsfeed / Single Image, Carousel + Video											
Programmatic DSP Partner	Desktop + Mobile / Static, Rich Media + Video											
Mobilefuse	Mobile / Static Banners			Mobile / Static Banners			Mobile / Static Banners			Mobile / Static Banners		
TripAdvisor	Desktop + Mobile / Static + Rich Media Banners // Visit Augusta Page Sponsorship											
Garden & Gun						Desktop + Mobile / Static + Rich Media Banners						
AdServing Fee	AdServing											
Augusta CVB 2019 Meetings Media Plan												
Orange142	Desktop + Mobile / Banners, Custom Email Blasts and Geo-Fencing											
Facebook	Desktop + Mobile / Retargeting Only											
LinkedIn	Desktop + Mobile / Prospecting + Retargeting											
Augusta CVB 2019 COOP Media Plan												
Georgia Travel Guide - 2020												Full Page Spread
Georgia Eats	Full Page Ad											
Southbound Magazine - Spring/Summer 2019				Full Page Spread								
Southbound Magazine - Fall/Winter 2019										Full Page Spread		
Spring/Summer Contest : Outdoor Getaway		Desktop + Mobile / Static + Rich Media										
Very Vera + Augusta Experience Getaway									Desktop + Mobile / Static + Rich Media			
Facebook + Instagram	Desktop + Mobile / Newsfeed + Right Hand Side / Single Image, Carousel + Video											
Programmatic DSP Partner	Desktop + Mobile / Static, Rich Media + Video											
AdServing Fee	AdServing											

# Festival & Event Videos

In 2018, the Augusta CVB partnered with TranterGrey to produce a series of action-driven videos highlighting the variety of festivals and events in Augusta. In 2019, these videos will be distributed through our digital and earned-media marketing.



## VIDEOS PRODUCED

- Sacred Heart Garden Festival
- Pig Out in the Park - Augusta Common
- Arts in the Heart of Augusta Festival
- Imperial Theatre
- Miller Theater
- Augusta Players
- Westobou Festival
- CanalFEST



Festivals & Events Videos may be viewed on Vimeo here: <https://vimeo.com/album/5684512>

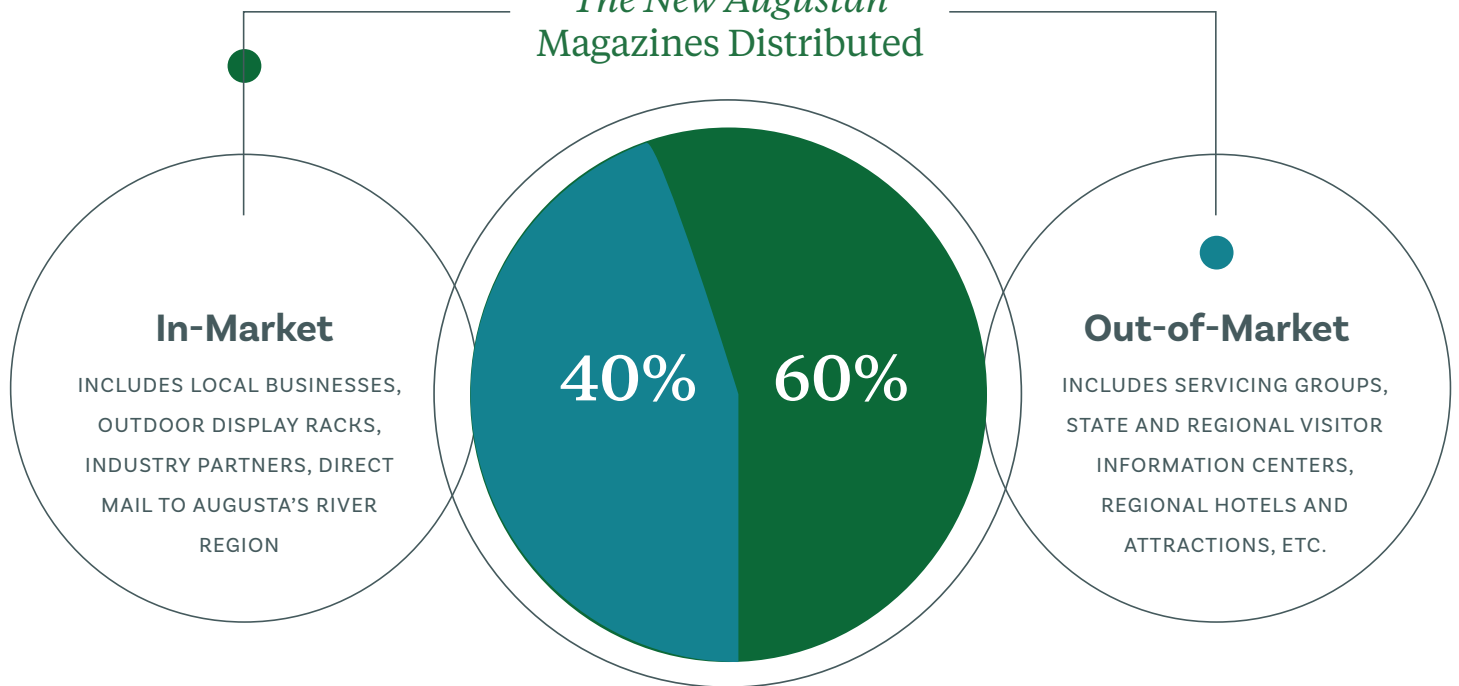
# The New Augustan



2018

# 60,502

*The New Augustan*  
Magazines Distributed



**“By far the best publication to come out of Augusta...  
Keep up the fantastic work!”**

— Adel A.

The seventh issue of *The New Augustan* will be released in March 2019.

# VisitAugusta.com

Total Sessions

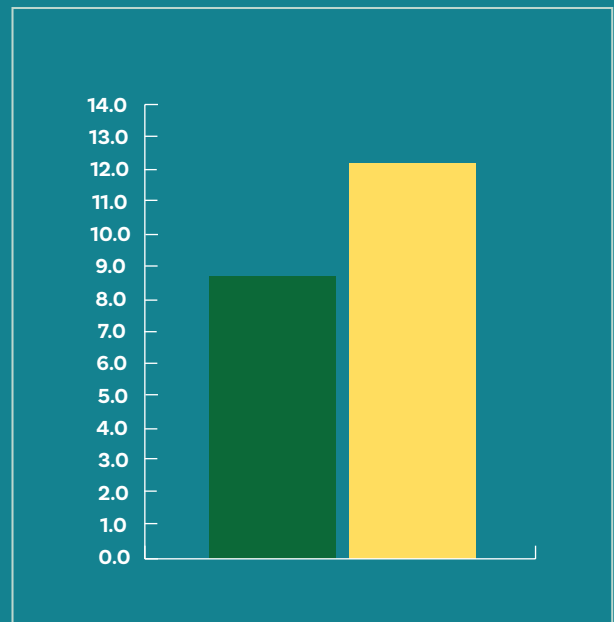
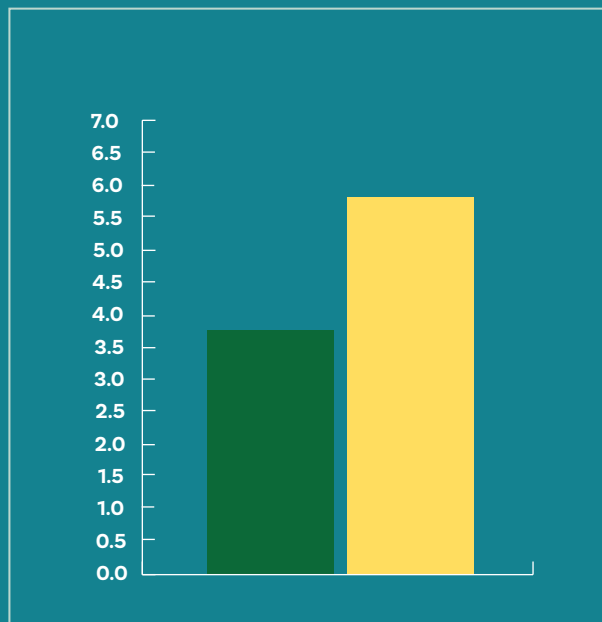
581,558

Time on Site: 1:56

Page Views

1,227,963

Pages Per Visit: 2.11



Legend: 0.5 stands for 50,000

Source: Google Analytics and Simpleview Inc.

2017

2018

## VisitAugusta.com Top States of Origin



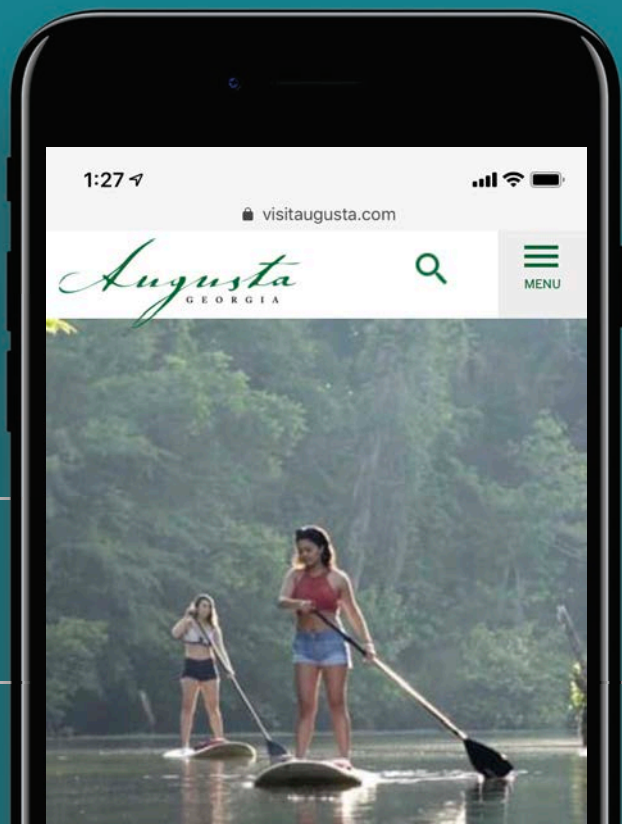
# VisitAugusta.com

## Top 5 Pages Visited



# 63%

of website visits were from a  
mobile device.  
**365,610 total mobile sessions**



# Social Media

🐦 [visitaugustaga](#) / [f visitaugusta](#) / [visitaugusta.com/blog](#) / [@ visitaugusta](#) / [v visitaugusta](#)

## HIGHLIGHT

25+ Blogs  
written/created on  
[VisitAugusta.com/blog](#)

## NUMBER OF #LoveAugusta

ON INSTAGRAM & TWITTER

13,500+ (2018) 4,100+ (2017) Increase of 229%



Twitter Followers

**3,721**

(2018)

INCREASE OF

**9%**



Facebook Fans

**10,121**

(2018)

INCREASE OF

**8%**



Instagram Followers

**4,533**

(2018)

INCREASE OF

**27%**

Twitter Impressions

**138,175** (2018)

Facebook Organic Reach

**826** (2018)

Increase of 18%



New YouTube Videos Added

**20+** (2018)

# Social Media Influencer Report

## INFLUENCER IMPACT

- Total Influencers: 5 (exceeded goal of 1 per quarter)
- Total Impressions: 283,540
- Total Ad Value: \$51,200

35

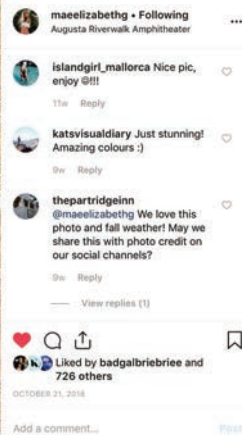
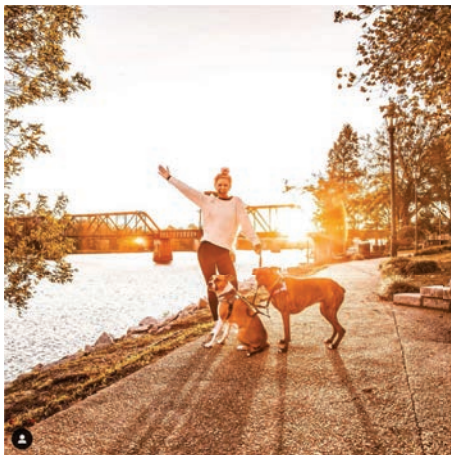
average number of visits to  
visitaugusta.com as result of  
Instagram stories



There's a little-known gem just outside of Atlanta on I-20 going East. Mostly synonymous with the Masters® Golf Tournament, Augusta is revitalizing it's downtown area and ramping up its food scene. One of my favorite excuses for stopping in Augusta had always been to dine at [The New Moon Cafe](#) in downtown, but ever since one of my best friends moved there it was just the excuse I needed to make a weekend getaway out of Augusta to visit her. To my enjoyment, I discovered much more charm than I had anticipated and had the privilege to see a more hip and historical side of Augusta.



WELCOME TO  
DARLING DOWN  
SOUTH



**angela\_damario** Never been, but your photos are making me think I should make a weekend trip there soon!

50w Reply



**lashnapsbyem** Such a busy time in Augusta!! It looks beautiful :)

12w Reply



**longislandfoodsavage** This is pure southern comfort

9w 1 like Reply



**hotlantahtotsauce** Brb driving to Augusta

9w 1 like Reply



**julia.beckerr** next time take meeee

12w Reply

Hide replies



**maeelizabethg** @julia.beckerr deal!!

12w Reply

# FILM AUGUSTA

## 2019 Film Objectives

**Position and promote the region as a preferred destination for film production.**

- Recruit new productions
- Provide exceptional service to productions in Augusta
- Collaborate with Augusta film partners
- Research additional space for use as a sound stage
- Engage local education institutions and the GA Film Academy in discussions
- Maximize membership in Association of Film Commissioners International

### 2018 PRODUCTIONS

The Mule  
Observance (proof of concept)  
Untitled JLWOP Documentary  
Georgia in the Great War

8

number of Film Augusta  
registration forms we received  
in 2018



Beginning in April, Film Augusta worked with the production crew for the major motion picture, *The Mule*, starring Clint Eastwood to select locations and connect the crew with local contacts. The film, shot in June and July, used eight Augusta locations and generated an **estimated \$1.1 Million in economic development.**

When *The Mule* debuted in December, we partnered with First Community Bank (one of the locations of the filming) to hold a screening at Riverwatch Cinema.

(Photo bottom, left) The production thanked Film Augusta in the credits.



# Public Relations

## Total Number of Impressions

# 338,932,817

Print **3,197,085**   Digital **326,282,144**   Social **7,636,188**   Television **1,817,400**



Travel Writers  
Hosted

## 10



Advertising  
Equivalency

## \$3,510,782

(+711% YOY)



Stories  
Generated

## 123



[Video](#) [Destinations](#) [Bookings](#) [Shop](#) [Sign In](#)

FEATURED ARTICLE

## 7 reasons to visit Augusta, Georgia

Barbara Noe Kennedy  
Lonely Planet Writer

SHARE



Visiting Augusta, Georgia, has long been the holy grail for golf fanatics, thanks to the world-famous

Southern Living

### 10 Things To Do In Augusta, Georgia

Whether you're coming for the Masters weekend or just looking for a springtime ramble, there are plenty of reasons to visit.



5 of 11 The Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau

Home of the Masters...and So Much More

Forbes  
TRAVEL GUIDE

## Why Augusta, Georgia, May Be The South's Best-Kept Secret

By Forbes Travel Guide Editor DeMarco Williams

JUNE 11, 2018



Augusta, Georgia, is the epicenter of the sports world every April, when the planet's finest golfers converge at Augusta National Golf Club for the Masters. For a week, the town erupts in concerts, cool restaurant events and the occasional Tiger sighting. But the excitement doesn't stop once the tournament ends.

# Sales

## 2019 Objectives

- Meetings, conventions, and sports market development
- Improve guest experiences through creative group and leisure services

2018 Total Estimated Economic Impact\*

# \$61,799,010

From Conventions, Events, and Sports

Groups  
Served

228

Total  
Attendees

256,129

### 2019 Trade Show Schedule

**EMERGE Religious Conference  
Management Association Trade Show**  
Greensboro, NC

**Connect Marketplace** Louisville, KY

**Georgia Society of Association Executives  
Trade Show** Greenville, SC

**Connect Faith** Greenville, SC

Trade Shows  
Attended

4

Site Visits

19

\*Total Estimated Economic Impact (EEI), the sum of all the direct, indirect, and induced spending estimates, is calculated based on research commissioned by both the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEd) and Destinations International in conjunction with globally recognized research vendors, the U.S. Travel Association, and Tourism Economics. Tourism Economics, a partner company of Oxford Economics, created the industry standard in event economic impact analysis using localized metrics that are updated annually.

# Community Engagement

## Tell our story by sharing the community vitality and economic growth with the public.

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### 2019 Objectives

- Conduct a community relations campaign to create awareness of the value of tourism and foster community pride
  - Create network of local crafters, makers, artists, and entrepreneurs with Augusta-made products to offer at Augusta & Co.
  - Create grand opening event for Augusta & Co.
  - Reimagine and execute an annual tourism event
- 

### 2018 State of Tourism Event

In February, we took time to thank our Augusta Champions and tourism partners for a strong 2017, and updated stakeholders on the future of the ACVB.

# 150+

People attended the annual State of Tourism Luncheon

# 100+

Champions\* honored at the State of Tourism luncheon



\*Augusta Champions assist the Augusta CVB in bringing meetings and events to the community. These individuals played a direct part in stimulating the economy of Augusta by influencing groups to visit the area.

### 2018 Masters of Hospitality

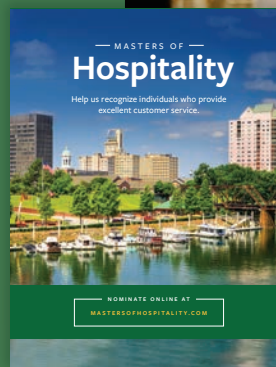
This service recognition program allows hotel and attraction guests to nominate hospitality staff members for providing excellent customer service.

# 20+

More than 20 hotels and attractions participated

# 125+

More than 125 front line hospitality staff nominated



# Destination Development

Enhance the visitor experience through destination development and visitor services.

## 2019 Objectives

- Open and Operate Augusta & Co. – Augusta's new experience center
- Implement Personal Transportation Vehicle (PTV) Tours & shuttling
- Foster an International Soul Festival by working with a committee to contract with a national promoter to create an International Soul festival for 2020
- Implement Downtown District Signage
- Work with the Public Art Advisory Panel to implement Augusta's Public Art Master Plan

### Destination Blueprint Initiatives Completed in 2018

#### 1010 Broad St.

Moved into fully-renovated new building in downtown Augusta

#### Augusta & Co.

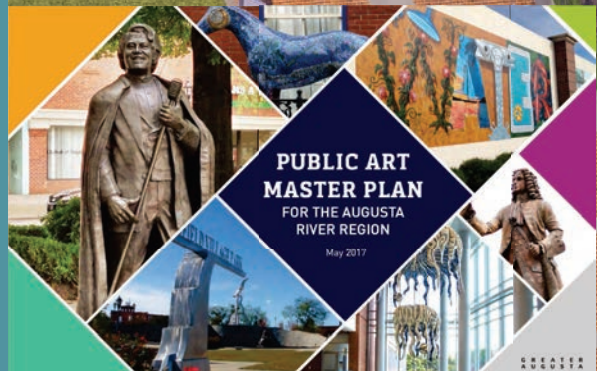
Retail space designed and pre-construction began in December. Soft opening in March 2019.

#### PTV Ordinance

The Mayor and Commissioners approved a plan for a permitting process which will allow commercial operators to use PTVs for tours and conduct prearranged shuttling.

#### Entertainment Zone

In October, the Commission voted to create a special district with more lenient rules for outdoor drinking, food trucks and late-night noise.



# Operations and Governance

Elevate the organization's reputation for productivity and accountability. .

## 2019 Objectives

- Support opening and operation of Augusta & Co.
- All in Campaign Management
- Enhance human resource development and productivity
- Identify and pursue additional revenue for the organization

### HIGHLIGHT

Bennish Brown  
became the new  
President/CEO in  
July 2018

## Lodging Metrics

The below hotel market data was provided by STR. We saw growth in all of the following areas in 2018\*.

<b>Annual Occupancy</b>	<b>+5.5%</b>
<b>Average Daily Rate</b>	<b>+1.2%</b>
<b>RevPar</b>	<b>+6.7%</b>
<b>Room Revenue</b>	<b>+9.6%</b>
<b>Demand</b>	<b>+8.3%</b>

\* Data from January to December 2018

# 2019 Staff and Board Directory

The Augusta CVB is governed by a board of directors that represents a cross section of business and hospitality industry partners. Board meetings are held monthly and are open to the public.

## Augusta CVB Staff

**Bennish Brown**

President/CEO  
bennish@visitaugusta.com  
706.823.6611

**Aisha Ashley**

Marketing & Sales  
Coordinator  
aisha@visitaugusta.com  
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**Brenda Atkins**

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**Michelle Bovian**

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706.823.6616

**Jennifer Bowen**

Vice President of Destination  
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**Trent Snyder**

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706.823.6610

**Keaton Thurmond**

Marketing Manager  
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706.823.6604

## Board of Directors

**Phil Wahl**

Chair  
Security Federal Bank

**Joel Hortenstine**

Vice Chair  
Singh Investment Group

**Krista Wight**

Secretary/Treasurer  
Frog Hollow Hospitality  
Group

**Randall Blumberg**

Hyatt Place

**Mary Davis**

Augusta Commission

**Nancy Glaser**

Augusta Museum of History

**Brandon Haddock**

Textron Specialized Vehicles

**Chris Moloney**

TaxSlayer

**Sue Parr**

Augusta Metro  
Chamber of Commerce

**Dayton Sherrouse**

Augusta Canal National  
Heritage Area

**Sammie Sias**

Augusta Commission

# Public Launch of All In Augusta

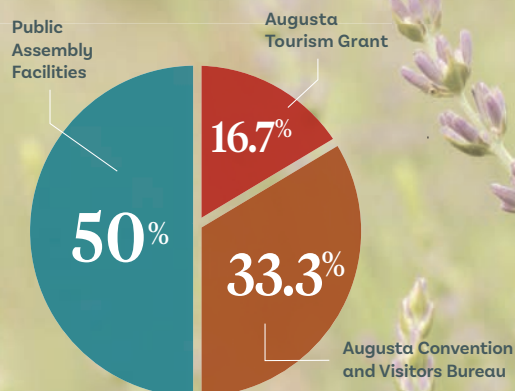
In 2018, the All In Augusta campaign was launched by the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau alongside more than 50 local, corporate, and community leaders, as well as elected officials. The campaign is an economic development initiative seeking to enhance and accelerate community and tourism development through private and public investment. Projects supported by the All In Augusta campaign were first identified in Destination Blueprint, which was unveiled in February 2017.

Former Augusta Mayor and entrepreneur Deke Copenhaver is the Campaign Chair. Priority projects from the campaign focus on innovative marketing of the Augusta region, linking downtown development to the Savannah River, and developing new attractions and festivals. To accomplish these goals, the campaign goal is set at \$6 million.

*To learn more visit [AllInAugusta.com](http://AllInAugusta.com)*

## The Augusta CVB is

**Growing the economy and community vitality for all Augustans by creating memorable travel experiences for visitors throughout Augusta's River Region.**



### Hotel Tax Allocations

Primary funding is derived from a portion of a six percent hotel tax. The CVB receives 33.3 percent of the hotel tax, which is designated for marketing and promotions. The CVB administers a tourism grant with an additional hotel tax restricted for that purpose.

The Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau, Inc. (CVB) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) corporation responsible for promoting tourism in the Augusta area. This destination marketing organization is Augusta's exclusive provider of tourism promotion services.

Augusta's first CVB was established in 1980 as a department of the Metro Augusta Chamber of Commerce. In 1988, the city and county created the Augusta-Richmond County Convention and Visitors Bureau as a joint entity of the two governments. On January 1, 1997, Augusta CVB, Inc. was created

and entered into a service agreement with the city of Augusta.

The primary objective of the CVB is to look beyond daily occupancy rates of hotels and position Augusta as a destination by developing an image that will attract visitors. This is accomplished through effective strategies, aggressive advertising and public relations campaigns, sales efforts within the convention and meeting markets, and destination development. The Augusta CVB also operates the Visitor Center, which is located inside the Augusta Museum of History.

# Augusta's River Region

## Together We Have a Lot More to Offer

Beyond the city of Augusta lies a larger and more diverse area we refer to as Augusta's River Region, which encompasses the Savannah River and the neighboring cities including Augusta, Aiken, Columbia County, Edgefield and North Augusta.

This region has all the flavors of the south with a growing culture of artists, foodies, athletes, adventurers, historians, and families.

Augusta's River Region includes areas of Georgia and South Carolina, so you can experience everything from horse racing to barhopping, from textiles to kayaking along the region's waterways.



1450 Greene Street • Suite 110 • Augusta, GA 30901

**VISITAUGUSTA.COM**