



2019-2020

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ANNUAL  
REPORT



# *dear* **STAKEHOLDERS,**

The ATL Airport District Convention and Visitors Bureau is pleased to provide our 6th Annual Report for fiscal year ending June 30th, 2020 — a year that literally brought our industry, our nation and our world to its knees.

Our fiscal year end saw travel reduced 51%, resulting in \$309 billion lost according to US Travel Association. The ATL Airport District saw an occupancy drop of over 40% year over year, down to 48% from 80.6% the year prior, as reflected in our June Smith Travel Report. Our team has been working virtual since March 13th, and as the number of Covid-19 cases continue to climb, we will continue to do so until we feel safe to return to an office environment.

Also, in March, the ATL Airport District immediately discontinued our advertising and social media campaigns. We cancelled our cycling event, Spin the District, which had quickly become the 2nd largest cycling event in the state. Restaurant Week was postponed and may ultimately be cancelled, and our highly anticipated Annual Meeting was also cancelled. The District suspended our NAV (Neighbors Assisting Visitors) volunteer program indefinitely. These measures were all in an effort to contain our costs, as we watched our shrinking hotel/motel tax percentages reduced to single digits.

Several of our District hotels were closed in mid-March and remain closed, along with our local attractions, the Delta Flight Museum and Chick-fil-A Backstage Tour. This has been a year unlike any other in the history of the Hospitality Industry and one that will take significant time to recover from.

However, through the bleakness, we are resilient. In spite of all of the negativity associated with our new “normal”, we remain steadfast in our optimism. Our location next to the world’s busiest airport, the size and scope of our business model, and the cost effective and efficient product we sell will enable us to recover at a much faster pace than most. We saw our groups mostly postpone their meetings rather than cancel and were able to work closely with the team at the GICC to move

those groups to new dates and times. Our sales team is starting to see flurries of meeting business recover already, which included conducting several site inspections during the month of June and several bookings for the year that resulted in room nights for our hotel partners.

Our hotel occupancy numbers are slowly climbing back up and are far better than most major cities right now. The District restaurants are now open and slowly seeing diners returning while maintaining social distancing and confirming a new dedication to cleanliness and safety. Our new normal — we are embracing it and steering our marketing and sales efforts in this new direction. Safety remains a top priority and we are laser focused on this messaging moving forward.

2020 has certainly been a challenging year and we are only halfway there. However, we remain optimistic and resolute in our efforts. We thank you all, our partners, stakeholders, and Board of Directors for your continued support of our efforts. You all push us to be the very best we can be.

On behalf of our entire team and our Board of Directors we extend our sincere gratitude for your support and trust of the ATL Airport District Convention and Visitors Bureau and our mission to attract tourism and convention business to our cities.

We look forward to working together in our new climate to bring about more successes. Together we are stronger.

## *yours* **TRULY,**



**Cookie Smoak**  
PRESIDENT, ATL AIRPORT DISTRICT



**David Offenhauser**  
ATL AIRPORT DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRPERSON &  
GENERAL MANAGER, MARRIOTT GATEWAY COMPLEX



# MISSION *statement*

The mission of the ATL Airport District is to generate economic development for the cities of College Park, East Point, Hapeville and Union City by effectively marketing the community as a preferred tourism, convention and meeting destination.

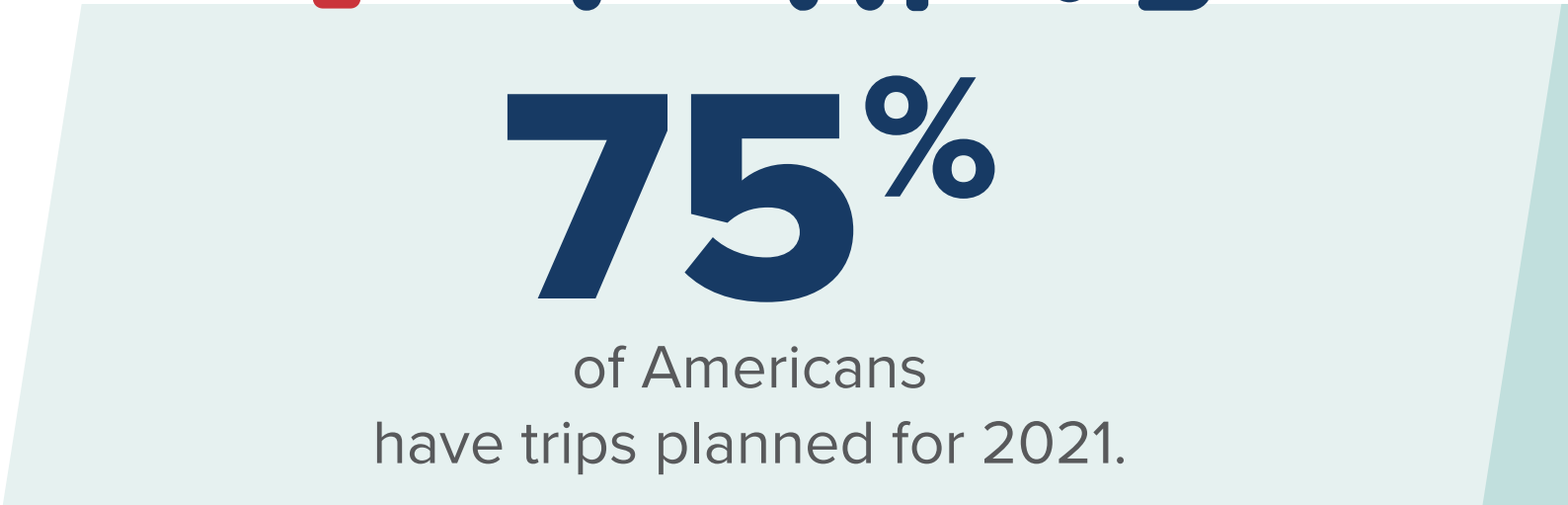


# VISION *statement*

To be the most accessible, customer-focused destination in the US for conventions, meetings and visitors.



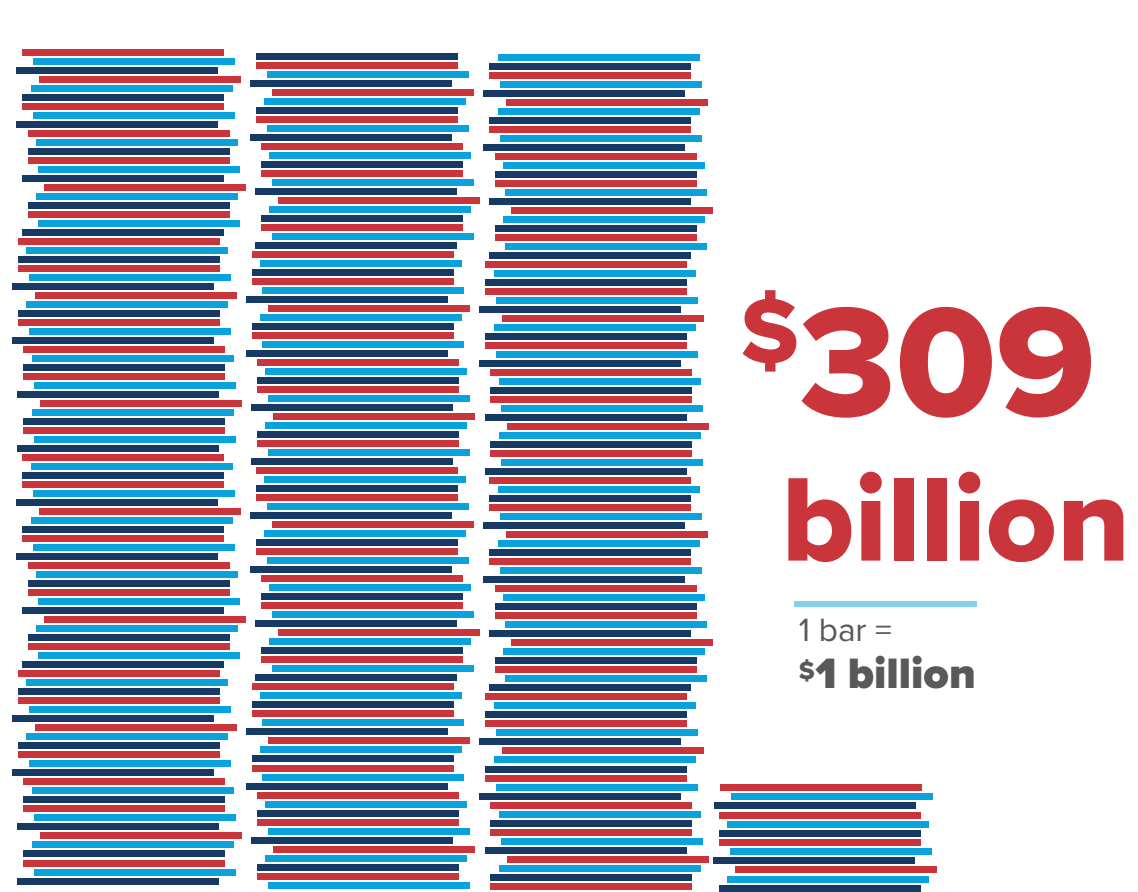
Fiscal year 2019/20 started out as any other year, with much anticipation, plans and goals. The ATL Airport District team was slated to outperform the previous fiscal year numbers and in early March the Sales Team had already reached 95% of their annual goal. However, once the COVID-19 Pandemic started to reach US soil in March, all bets were off, and our industry took a significant hit. Here are some data and insights from leaders in our industry.



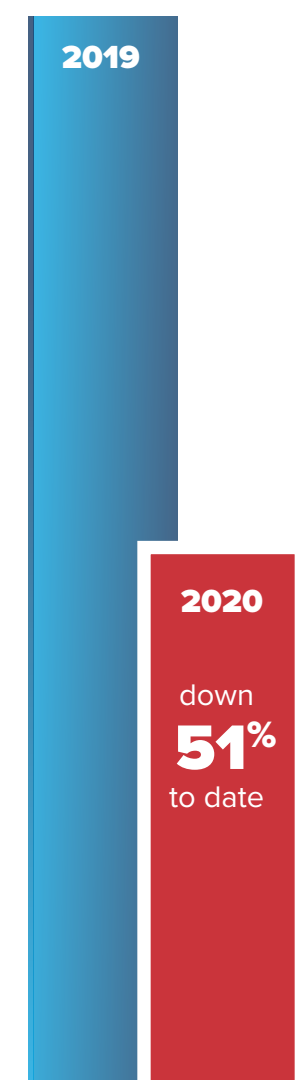
US Travel reports the Travel and Tourism Industry accounts for **38% of all US jobs lost** so far. Additionally, they state **overall travel is down 51%** and has resulted in a **\$309 billion loss** overall to date.

Destination Analysts reports that in 2021, **three-quarters of Americans** have at least tentative trips planned right now. Just 25% say they have no plans to travel through 2021.

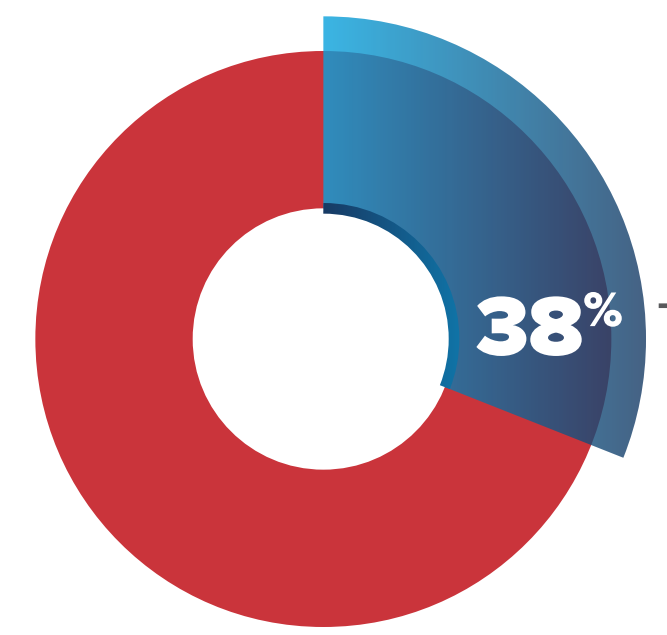
The new buzzword is **Staycation** and we hope to capture local and regional traffic to that end.



**Travel Losses**  
in 2020 to Date



**Overall Travel**



**Job Losses**  
in 2020 to Date

Despite suffering the greatest performance declines in the history of the US Lodging Industry during 2020, the nation's hotels will benefit from what is expected to be a **relatively rapid economic turnaround** in 2021 and 2022, according to the June 2020 edition of CBRE's Hotel Horizons forecast report. Demand for US lodging accommodations is expected to return to pre-crisis levels in the **third quarter of 2022**.

*industry update*  
**SNAPSHOT**



Pre-COVID  
(JULY 1, 2019 – MARCH 31, 2020)

Year End Totals  
(JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020)

Sales Leads



557

620 2018–2019

TOTAL DEFINITE  
Room Nights



30,604 (79% TO GOAL)

46,639 2018–2019

Economic Impact (EIC)



\$34,779,471

\$56,482,357 2018–2019

SALES  
*report*



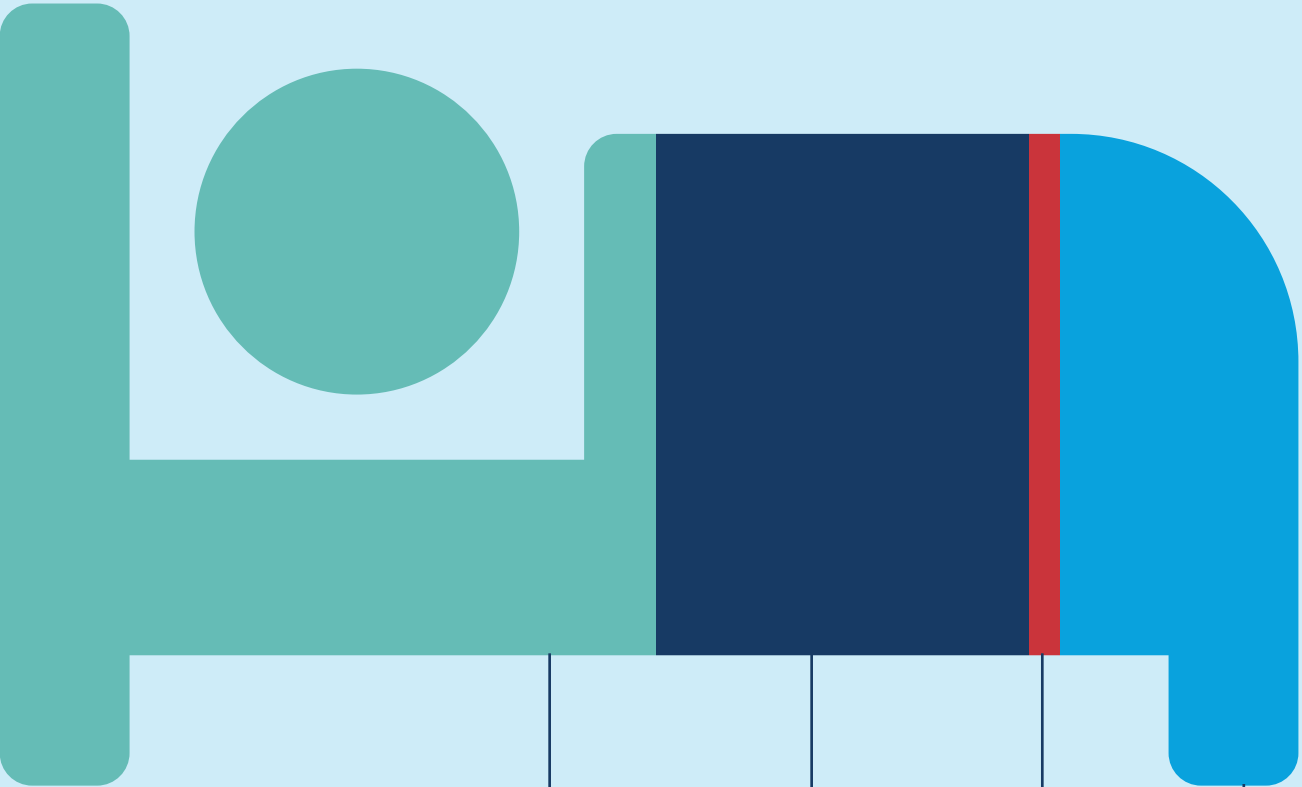
Booked for Future during COVID

Total Definite Room Nights Booked April 2020 thru August 2020:

14,633 rooms

\$20,520,491 EIC

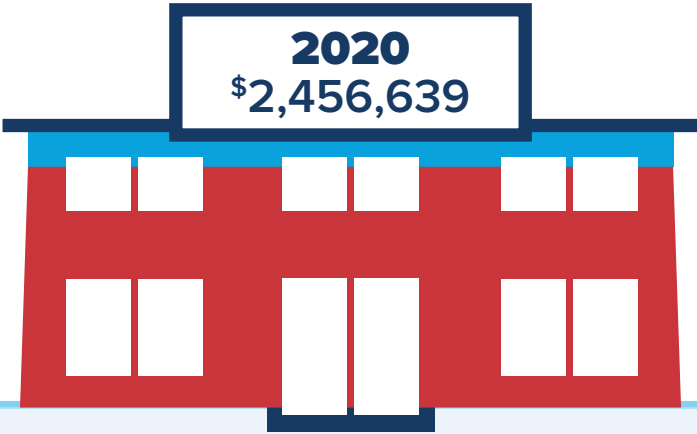
Key Groups Booked April thru August 2020:



	March	April	May	June	Total
TOTAL CONTRACTED ROOMS	6,387	3,133	50	2,975	12,545
EIC	\$9,479,163	\$5,360,537	\$34,324	\$3,476,533	\$18,350,556

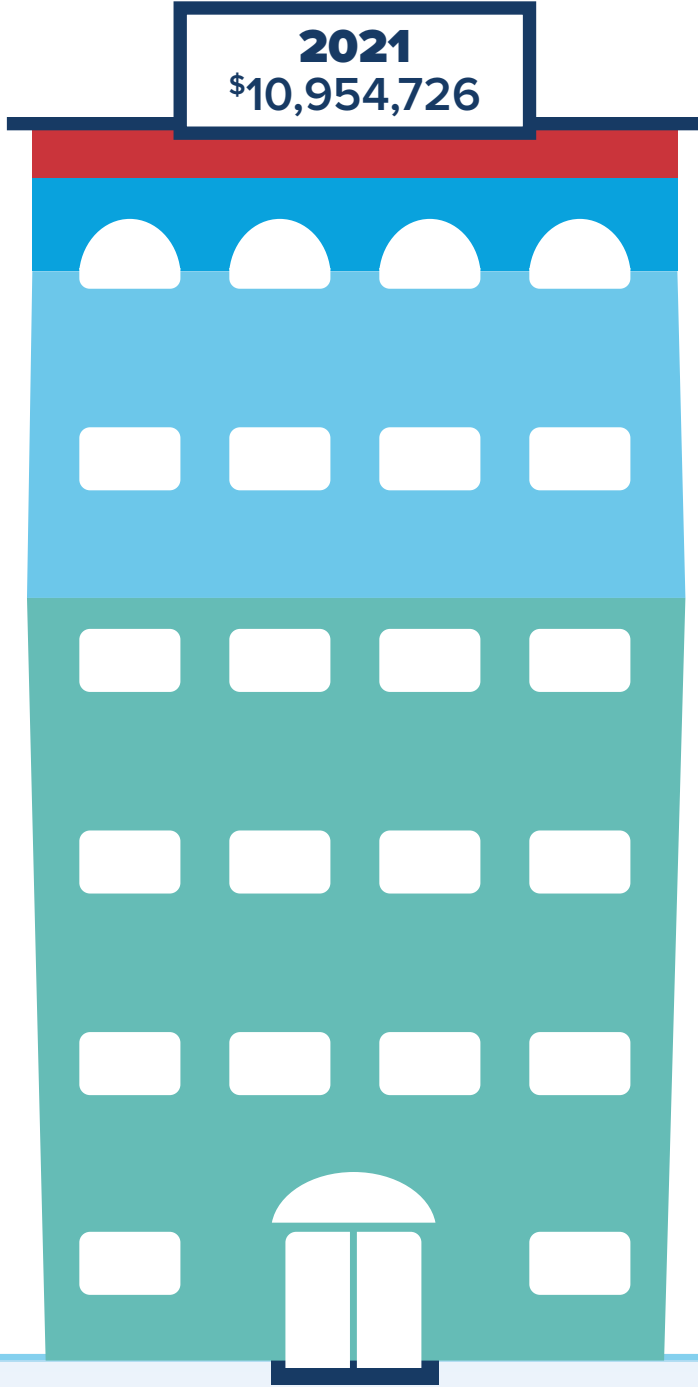
Definite Business Lost to COVID

(current and future years)



AUGUST 2020  
Warthogs Rendezvous 2020  
471 rooms • \$319,377

DECEMBER 2020  
Repeat Varsity Spirit Cheerleading Group\*  
2284 rooms • \$2,137,263

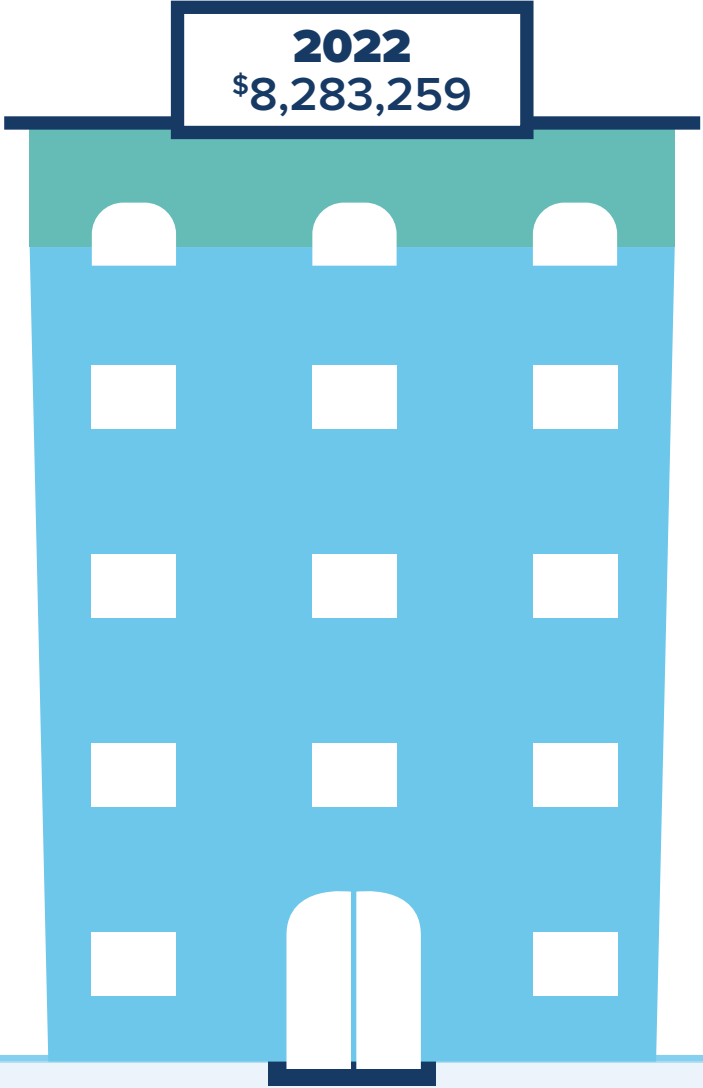


JANUARY 2021  
United Conference and Pastors Convocation 2021  
505 rooms • \$461,504

FEBRUARY 2021  
Repeat Southern Volleyball Group – First Lady’s Challenge\*  
350 rooms • \$822,869

Beast of the Southeast\*  
3585 rooms • \$2,900,495

OCTOBER 2021  
Chick-Fil-A Regional Meetings  
4840 rooms • \$6,769,858



SEPTEMBER 2022  
Rebook of an event cancelled due to COVID – Badcock Semi-Annual Dealer Meeting  
1365 rooms • \$1,052,545

OCTOBER 2022  
Chick-Fil-A Regional Meetings  
5050 rooms • \$7,230,714

\*Some repeat projections based on last year’s bookings



The **Convention Services** department supports meetings and conventions by providing customers with personalized assistance and services that benefit and enhance the success of their meeting. We achieve this by providing destination marketing resources, utilizing supplier relationships, and welcoming attendees upon arrival — the end goal being a commitment to return to the District with future business.

## Key Programs

### NAV Ambassador program

*(Neighbors Assisting Visitors)*

The NAVigators program connects local community members to convention and event attendees. This program will utilize volunteers for welcoming visitors at AAD venues, instead of outsourcing the service.

We had the first meet and greet in February and generated momentum and community support. Our NAV Facebook page has over 90 members and we plan to have our first training session in the beginning of 2021.

**NAV** Neighbors  
Assisting Visitors



### Restaurant Partner Program

*(Dining.Incentives.Support.Hospitality)*

Our DISH program is an opportunity to build relationships with our local restaurants and provide them with resources to better the dining experience of convention attendees and visitors.

We had our first Open House in December and offered complimentary ServSafe certification for attendees. Our DISH Facebook page is continuously updated with industry news and resources.

### Welcome Packages

Provided AAD Welcome packages to key groups, which includes:

- » Window signs (10 GROUPS)
- » Airport greeters (4 GROUPS)
- » Hotel key card holders (5 GROUPS)
- » AAD swag baskets (18 GROUPS AND PLANNERS)
- » Buttons for hotel and convention center staff (4 GROUPS)
- » AAD destination info distribution (100 GROUPS)
- » Airport signage (8 GROUPS)



THE ATL STARTS HERE



In the shadow of the Great Interruption, the hospitality industry is evolving into something different we haven't fully realized yet. In response, we, too, are evolving to adapt how we sell and market our destination.

In the nearly six months since this crisis emerged, we rapidly responded to meet the changing landscape. We created a COVID-19 microsite as a resource to our community and partners. We hosted our first-ever webinar. And we revamped our website to meet the current needs of our clients. Additionally, our sales team moved from attending in-person conferences to virtual conferences, still connecting with meeting planners and proudly selling the ATL Airport District.

A sharp decline in revenues combined with a marketplace that is still hesitant to meet and travel, have necessitated our focus on meaningful and cost-effective ways to communicate with clients and consumers.

Even though the world has changed, we are changing with it and are well-equipped to take on 2020/21! Focuses for the upcoming year include... **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



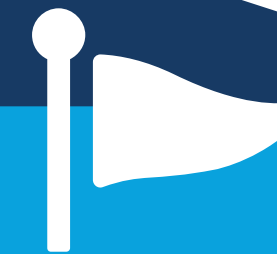
*the year*  
**AHEAD**





## SAFETY ADVOCACY

For our destination to successfully rebound from the Great Interruption, safety is the singular most important message and requirement. The AAD team will serve as safety advocates, by exemplifying and promoting appropriate safety measures to our local community and partners through videos, one sheets, and our website.



## EMERGING MARKETS

The team will work to creatively identify and target new, different or emerging markets to generate new business. Early indications suggest that small local and regional meetings, special interests and sports are among the earliest segments to rebound. Our team will forge and strengthen relationships that will ideally transform the smaller events we are able to sell today, into the large-scale, profitable events of tomorrow.



## NEW SELLING TOOLS

With in-person sales conferences, trade shows and site visits on hold, we will craft new tools and ways to reach our target markets. We will expand the capability and flexibility of our new virtual site visit platform and focus on third-party meeting planner and direct booking channels to engage existing, new and potential clients.



## OWNED MEDIA

We will devote a significant and expanded amount of time and resources into our web, digital marketing and social media channels. The focus will be on building relationships through content that is oriented to local and regional health and safety protocols, and positive messages and developments.



## EARNED MEDIA

A heightened focus will be placed on securing online, search and media exposure. The AAD team will aggressively pursue opportunities for our clients and partners to gain additional coverage and publicity.

*the year*  
**AHEAD**

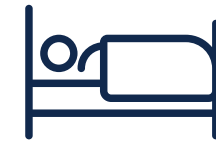




**400K** <sup>sq</sup> <sub>ft</sub>  
convention center



**FREE RIDE**  
to GICC & hotels



**8,000**  
hotel rooms



**BIG** <sup>or</sup> **SMALL**  
we serve all groups



**SAFE**  
spacious & clean

» Convention Center  
& Arena with high  
ceilings and multiple  
space options

» Free 2-minute ATL  
SkyTrain from baggage  
claim to the GICC  
and Rental Car Center

» Hotels offer free  
airport shuttle service

» Over 8,000 hotel  
rooms within a 3-mile  
radius of the airport

» 40+ hotels include  
onsite meeting and  
event spaces

» Individualized service  
for groups of all sizes

» 150+ Domestic  
Destinations  
connected by nonstop  
service to Atlanta's  
airport

» Outdoor Event  
Spaces for distanced  
gatherings

» Parks, Trails and  
Patios to stay safely  
entertained

**STRATEGIC**  
*messaging*





# WE'RE STILL *awesome*

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IN THE DISTRICT



The Great Interruption. That's the name Destinations International, the official professional association representing CVBs nationwide, has coined for this unprecedented time. And the name is certainly fitting. A fundamental shift in behavior for the meetings, conventions and trade shows, and the tourism market is taking place, and compels our team to throw out the old rule book and forge new ways to build customer relationships.

The classical view of how to market a destination – the “build a brand, they will come” mentality – will be balanced by the responsibility to cultivate and nurture a potential market with a longer conversion cycle. The traditional brand-led marketing model will be complemented by a contemporary consumer-engagement approach.

We continue to believe that the meetings and tourism markets will resume, just likely not at the volume we have experienced in the last 10 years. It will take time. And with volumes unlikely to match pre-interruption highs, a focus on quality, targeting and the patience to attract the right customers will be paramount.

**STRATEGIC**  
*messaging*



# Three Principles

Here are three primary emerging principles resulting from the Great Interruption:

1

The meetings, conventions and trade shows market will struggle to rebound, **hindered by consumer sentiment** and the optics of encouraging gatherings of large groups being largely considered socially and corporately irresponsible for the time being.

2

The psyche of the traveling consumer is **drastically altered**. People will view travel in a different light and embrace travel at different paces and with different levels of comfort.

3

**Local and regional** trips and meetings will be the preferred entries back into the meetings and travel markets.

WE'RE  
STILL  
*standing*



STRATEGIC  
*messaging*



	PHASE 1		PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
	SUPPORT / RESPOND	PRE-RECOVERY / ENGAGE	RECOVERY / REBOUND	EXPAND	RESUME
WHEN	Shelter in place / staged re-opening	Re-opening continues and cancellations / postponements stabilize	Tourist attractions / remaining businesses open	Inbound travel ban lifted (by market)	All markets open and booking patterns normalize
ROLE(S)	Trusted Resource / Inform	Engage / Build Teamwork	Leadership / Optimism	Welcoming host	Host and Brand Ambassador
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide resources and information</li> <li>• Build positivity and hope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen community relations</li> <li>• Create engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build community confidence</li> <li>• Encourage restricted visitation (local and drive)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate and support return to bus.</li> <li>• Begin encouraging broader visitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full return to marketing in new normal with revised KPIs</li> <li>• Support growth of industry partners</li> </ul>
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create relevancy in new world</li> <li>• Maintain and build awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lay foundation for travel readiness</li> <li>• Strengthen relationships with community stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote safety</li> <li>• Encourage visitation to open businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase likelihood of visitation outside of DMA</li> <li>• Build meeting planner confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build brand awareness in reemerging markets</li> <li>• Leverage partner relationships to grow business</li> </ul>
TARGET MARKETS	Local Markets:	Local Markets:	Local Markets:	Local Markets:	Local Markets:
	Residents, Business Owners / Employees, Local Government				
	Metro DMA (Leisure)				
	Meetings, Conventions & Trade Shows (general)				
		Business Travel			
			Leisure Drive	Family Reunions, Culture and Heritage, Weddings	
				S.M.E.R.F.	
				Assn., Corporate, Govt., 3rd Party Planners	
				Group travel	
KEY MESSAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are stronger together</li> <li>• Still here for you</li> <li>• Place to be for updates and info</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin safety conversation</li> <li>• We will be ready when you're ready</li> <li>• How AAD businesses are getting ready</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAD partner safety protocols</li> <li>• Example social distancing itineraries: outdoor rec + food &amp; beverages to go (AADventure safely)</li> </ul>	Re-explore the District	TBD

## Phased Recovery Framework

In response to the Great Interruption, we have developed a phased recovery messaging framework, which will guide our sales and marketing efforts in the coming months.



## Key Tactics

In light of the unfamiliar, new landscape thrust upon us, our marketing, sales and convention services teams have refocused efforts, and are collaborating more than ever to devise new campaigns and messaging concentrated on virtual experiences and recovery.

These efforts are being designed to offer peace of mind to our visitors and planners, and to show the District is a great place to revisit, reconnect, refocus, rediscover, re-engage, and rebook. Our goal is to position the District as a trusted resource for our community and a professional, well-organized partner in business, dedicated to the highest standards.

We've already created two campaigns aimed at positioning the ATL Airport District as a safe and welcoming host for local and regional visitors as well as meeting planners through our "Still Awesome" and Great "Meeting Places and Wide-Open Spaces" campaigns.

**Here are a few of our tactics for the coming year.**

# GREAT MEETING PLACES

and wide open SPACES

With direct flights and low-effort transit options to all our hotels and meeting facilities, **there's no place like the ATL Airport District.**

Over **8,000** hotel rooms within a 3 mile radius of the airport, all with free airport shuttle service

40+ hotels include onsite meeting and event spaces

- 150+ Domestic Destinations** connected by nonstop service to Atlanta's airport
- Free 2-minute ATL SkyTrain** from baggage claim to the GICC and Rental Car Center with no other stops
- Outdoor Event Spaces** for distanced gatherings
- Parks, Trails and Patios** to stay safely entertained

## UPDATED COLLATERAL

» We are updating and featuring appropriate content to align with the current environment

**400,000 ft<sup>2</sup>** all on one level

**150,000 ft<sup>2</sup>** Exhibit hall

**40,000 ft<sup>2</sup>** Metro Atlanta's largest ballroom

**16,000 ft<sup>2</sup>** Meeting space

**90,000 ft<sup>2</sup>** Pre-function space

**100,000 ft<sup>2</sup>** 5,000-seat event arena

...and **2,000** parking spaces

with street level loading docks

**THERE'S AN alternative**

# THE DESTINATION

that goes the DISTANCE

THERE'S AN *alternative CVB choice* IN ATLANTA.

Over **8,000** hotel rooms within a 3 mile radius of the airport, all with free airport shuttle service

**950+** hotel rooms in the Gateway Center complex and walkable to your event.

- 150+ Domestic Destinations** connected by nonstop service to Atlanta's airport
- Free 2-minute ATL SkyTrain** from baggage claim to the GICC and Rental Car Center with no other stops
- 10 Miles** from Downtown Atlanta, **14 miles** from Six Flags
- Parks, Trails and Patios** to stay safely entertained
- Family-friendly** restaurants and hotels
- Big or Small** Individualized service for groups of all sizes

**150k ft<sup>2</sup>** exhibit space

**100k ft<sup>2</sup>** **3500** seats

**Georgia Soccer Park**

- 6 full-size international soccer fields
- 12 fields for ultimate events

**John D. Milner Athletic Complex**

- 18 acres
- 4 baseball fields

**South Fulton Tennis Center**

- 20 hard courts
- 4 clay courts
- lighted facility
- \$400k renovation in 2014

**Dick Lane Velodrome**

- One of fewer than 30 velodromes in the U.S.
- Training facility for the 1996 Olympics

**Bring your A-game to A-town.**

Across the street from the world's busiest airport, the District is an easy flight from anywhere in the country. Upon arrival, our unparalleled local transit options put travelers in control. Grab a speedy ATL SkyTrain direct to the Gateway Center or take a shuttle ride to dozens of convenient hotels, free of charge. This one-of-a-kind combination requires minimal contact and allows safe, simple access to the events and amenities that matter most—while priced about **30% cheaper** than the big city.

Convention & Visitors Bureau

404.334.7508    Sales@ATLdistrict.com

ATLdistrict.com

## KEY *tactics*





## UPDATED WEBSITE

» New visuals on the homepage and meeting planner landing page reinforce the concept of safe visitation and highlights the benefits of hosting in the District.

KEY  
tactics



REDESIGNED MAIN WEBSITE: This will focus on functionality and user experience. Implementation is in progress.

ATL AIRPORT DISTRICT  
Convention & Visitors Bureau

MEETING PLANNERSSPORTS GROUPSMEDIAPARTNERSCONTACT US

FacebookTwitterLinkedInInstagram

VISITPLANDISCOVERMY TRIP 4

the  
ATL  
STARTS HERE

LET US  
LEAD THE WAY

Pre-built itineraries to help you find the best restaurants, things to do, and places to stay in the area.

POPULAR ITINERARIES

GO YOUR  
OWN WAY

Click around and find exactly what you're looking for or build your own personal itinerary.

ITINERARY BUILDER

WELCOME TO  
THE DISTRICT

It's where every Atlanta adventure begins!

The ATL Airport District is the sweet spot between Downtown Atlanta and the world's busiest airport. Come and experience the easy, quirky, laid-back side of the A, where the atmosphere is one-of-a-kind—and the hotels cost 30% less.

DISCOVER THE DISTRICT

get a room  
FIND A HOTEL

Save up to 30%  
by booking your hotel in the ATL Airport District, compared to the same amenities downtown.

FROM  
01/08/20

TO  
01/13/20

DATES ARE FLEXIBLE

TARGET PRICE RANGE  
\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

I NEED...  
FITNESS FACILITY POOL  
CABLE/HBO LAUNDRY  
FREE WIFI BREAKFAST

GET ME CLOSE TO...  
AIRPORT ATLANTA ATTRACTIONS  
SHOPPING & DINING ART & CULTURE  
THE CONVENTION CENTER TRANSIT  
NATURE SPORTS NIGHTLIFE

SEARCH HOTELS

happening  
UPCOMING EVENTS

FROM  
01/08/20

TO  
01/13/20

PRICE  
FREE \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

TYPE  
Select event type

MUSIC  

01/11/20  
KATHLEEN TURNER OVERDRIVE  
Duis at tellus at urna. Lectus sit amet est placerat in egestas erat imperdied sed. Blandit cursus risus at ultrices...  
MORE INFO

ADD TO TRIP MAP IT

SPORTS  

01/14/20  
SKYHAWKS VS BAYHAWKS  
Duis at tellus at urna. Lectus sit amet est placerat in egestas erat imperdied sed. Blandit cursus risus at ultrices...  
MORE INFO

ADDED | EDIT MAP IT

SPORTS  

01/14/20  
SPIN THE DISTRICT  
Duis at tellus at urna. Lectus sit amet est placerat in egestas erat imperdied sed. Blandit cursus risus at ultrices...  
MORE INFO

ADD TO TRIP MAP IT

EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON IN THE DISTRICT

News, prefab travel plans.

ATL AIRPORT DISTRICT  
Convention & Visitors Bureau

MEETING PLANNERSSPORTS GROUPSMEDIAPARTNERSCONTACT US

FacebookTwitterLinkedInInstagram

VISITPLANDISCOVERMY TRIP 4

HOME » DISCOVER THE DISTRICT

DISCOVER ATL AIRPORT DISTRICT

MEET COLLEGE PARK. EXPLORE EAST POINT.  
IMAGINE HAPEVILLE. UNCOVER UNION CITY.

In the shadow of the world's busiest airport, just 10 minutes from the bright lights and hustle of Atlanta, you'll find ATL Airport District, one of the South's premiere destinations for business meetings, large and small, provides businesses and meeting planners unique and valuable advantages in efficiency and convenience.

Minutes to Atlanta

DOWNTOWN  
East Point

DOWNTOWN  
College Park

DOWNTOWN  
Hapeville

CAMP CREEK  
MARKETPLACE

ATL  
Hartsfield-Jackson  
Atlanta International  
Airport

GICC  
Georgia  
International  
Convention  
Center &  
Gateway  
Center Arena

Union City

AIRPORT SOUTH

VIRGINIA AVENUE

NORTH CENTRAL AVENUE

CAMP CREEK PARKWAY

WASHINGTON ROAD

75

285

85

285

KEY  
tactics



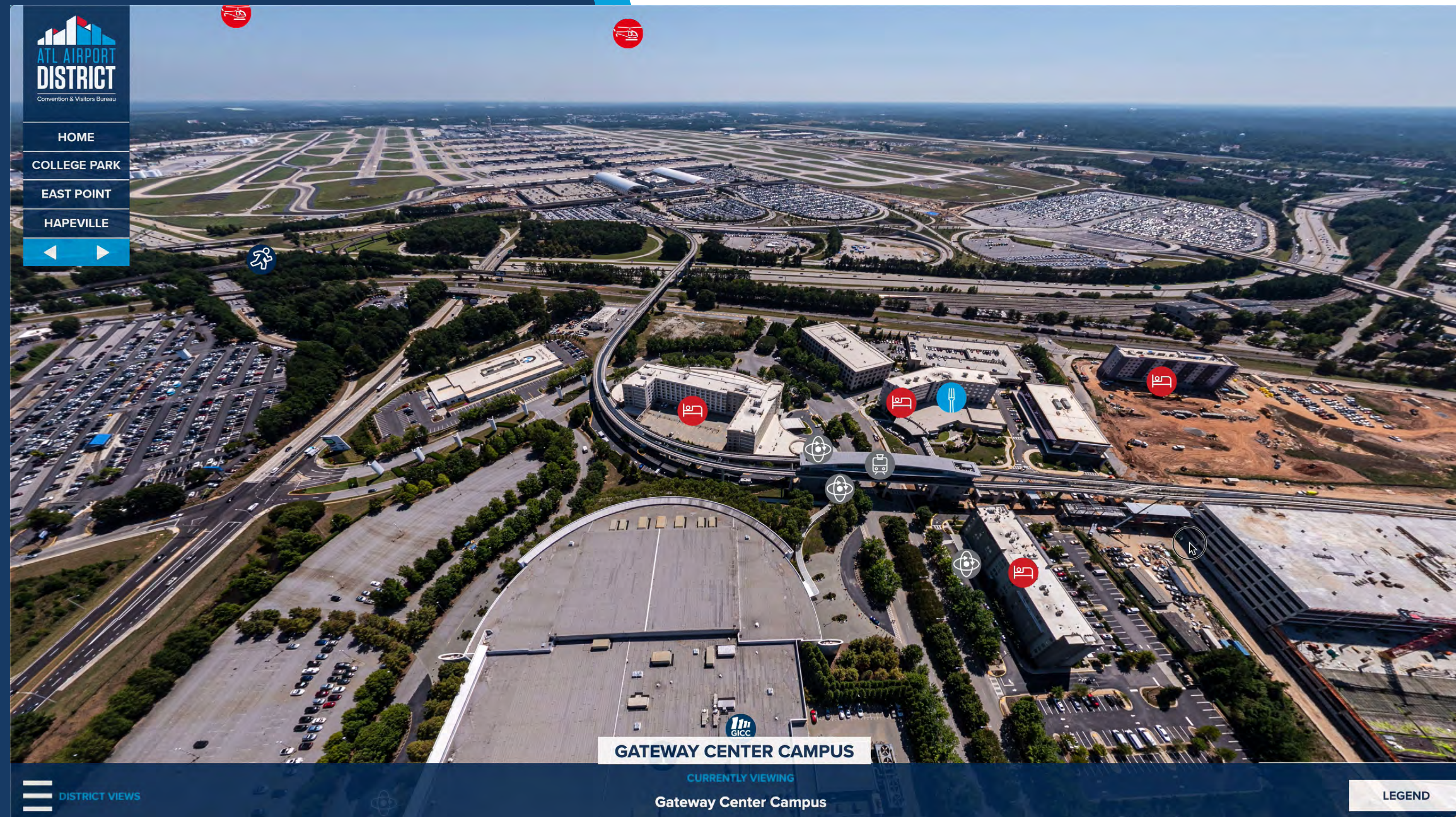


## VIRTUAL MEETINGS & SITE VISITS

- » Our sales team has and will continue to participate in a variety of virtual trade shows.
- » We have also developed a virtual platform allowing meeting planners to experience the District from the comfort of their home. We will continue expanding and refining this powerful new tool in the coming year.

[Launch the District's 360 platform »](#)

**KEY**  
*tactics*





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

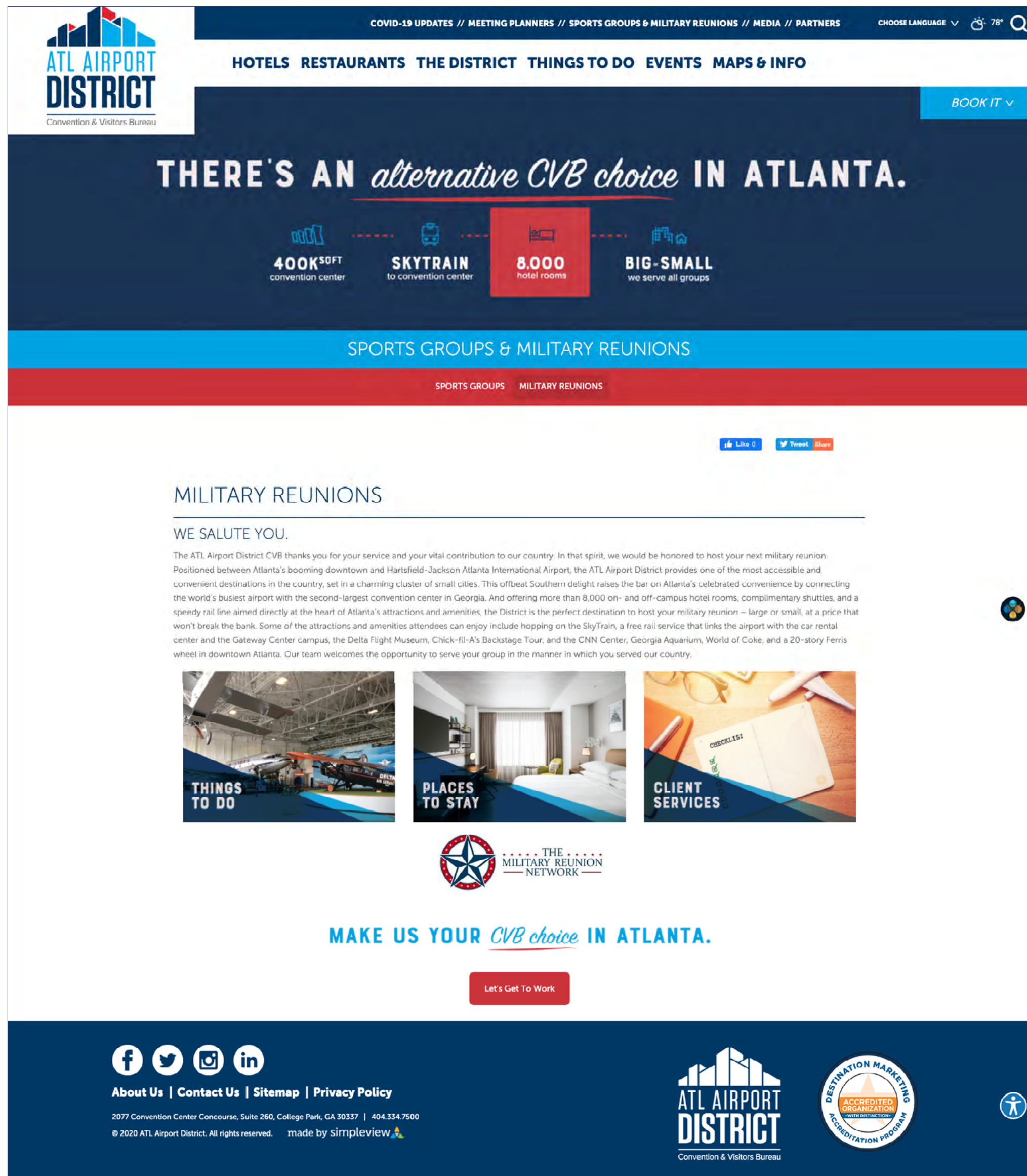
- » We are working to keep the members of our DISH Facebook group and NAV Ambassador program engaged with our organization and to provide industry updates. Another focus is to keep our local residents informed of updates and any new developments happening in the District with our COVID-19 resource microsite.



**NAV** Neighbors  
Assisting Visitors

**KEY**  
*tactics*





Destinations International  
DESTINATION MARKETING  
ACCREDITATION PROGRAM  
(DMAP) ACCREDITATION WITH  
DISTINCTION



Religious Conference  
Management Association  
CERTIFIED FAITH-BASED  
MEETING PROFESSIONAL



Cvent  
SUPPLIER NETWORK  
CERTIFICATION



Florida Atlantic University  
HOSPITALITY & TOURISM  
MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION



Events Industry Council  
CERTIFIED MEETING PLANNER

## EMERGING TARGET MARKETS

» The sales team will continue to explore and embrace new market segments to generate new business. One such market segment is military reunions, which is poised to be one of the first markets to recover. And we will continue to uncover more marketing in the year to come.

## STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

» Our team has taken this opportunity to get trained and certified in a number of areas that will undoubtedly benefit our organization as a whole as we continue to recover. Trainings and/or certifications include:

KEY  
*tactics*





# POWERED BY COFFEE: DRIP-THRU COFFEE IN COLLEGE PARK

Christy Deen founded, owns and operates Drip-Thru Coffee in Metro Atlanta, where she lives with her husband and daughter. She has worked for over 20 years in the food and beverage industry, managing restaurants from Disney World to the Atlanta Airport.

## Q: Where are you from and what led you to open a business in College Park?

CD: I was born and raised in Jonesboro, Georgia. Native to the area, I took my first job scooping ice cream at age 14 in a neighboring city - Stockbridge, Georgia.

## Q: Can you tell us a little more about Drip-Thru Coffee®?

CD: Drip-Thru Coffee® was formed in 2015, and we opened our first store in Stockbridge in December 2016. The Pacific Northwest inspired us to bring this coffee stand concept to Georgia. It is specialty coffee at the convenience of a drive-thru. Shortly after opening our first location, a Woodward Academy parent asked that we consider expanding to College Park. We certainly did, and opened our second location in College Park in December 2018.

## Q: What did opening Drip-Thru Coffee® in College Park look like?

CD: As we'd previously experienced with our first location, some issues arose with a lack of understanding of what our drive-thru only concept was. Local government was at first reluctant until they understood our plan. It was definitely easier having gone through the process once already.

## Q: Did you have any specific goals for Drip-Thru Coffee® before opening? If so, what did that look like, and has it changed along the way?

CD: We really only had a guess of what we would be doing in College Park based on assumptions and local traffic counts from our Stockbridge location. However, we were blown away by the community embrace, and we quickly doubled our staff and expanded hours to accommodate the volume.

## Q: What sets Drip-Thru's coffee apart from other coffee shops?

CD: We're a specialty coffee shop with drive-thru convenience. However, we do not use headsets or speaker boxes. We want people to have the personal experience of getting to know our baristas, and we want to get to know them as well! We want everyone to leave with a five-star experience.

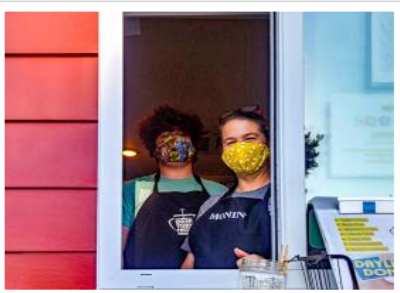
## Q: Can you tell us a little more about your local suppliers and vendors?

CD: Partnering locally is something we love! We're a small business and pay it forward by sourcing local, whenever possible. We currently offer Daylight Donuts four days a week, SQUOZE craft lemonade throughout this summer, and we'll be launching Jake Rothchild's of Jake's Ice Cream (who is planning for a project in neighboring Hapeville) hot chocolate this fall!

## Q: Can you tell us more about your Georgia roaster delivering freshly roasted coffee to Drip-Thru each week?

CD: Our roaster, Cafe Campesino, was founded in 1998, becoming Georgia's first and only 100% fair trade, organic coffee company. All of our coffee and espresso is fresh roasted and delivered to us weekly. It's the freshest, 100% organic, fair trade cup of coffee you can get at a drive-thru! Our partnership with Cafe Campesino allows us to keep our supply chain short and even gives us the opportunity to meet our farmers. How many coffee shop owners can say they have met their farmers? It's important we pass that on to our customers over the course of operating, and it's important to convey that people know their farmer, roaster, barista and coffee!

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chains, we took the first leap of faith to set up shop in College Park with a coffee drive-thru. We are a small business focused on customer service and food safety. Employing youth and adults from the tri-cities allows us to be engaged in local needs. I serve on the College Park Main Street board, and on behalf of the community, we applied for and were granted a Little Free Library that will be installed soon. Also, we have hosted a number of free coffee events and continually look for ways to serve and develop our staff. We like to say we are "more than coffee."

## Q: What is your favorite thing about being a part of this community?

CD: The small town vibe nestled against the cosmopolitan Atlanta. I often think of *Cheers*, "where everybody knows your name."

## Q: What is a business accomplishment you're really proud of?

CD: We successfully opened two locations in two years. Even while faced with the current global pandemic, we've managed to modify operations and have kept the coffee flowing!

## Q: Did you have any mentors or people you admired when starting Drip-Thru Coffee®?

CD: A majority of my career development took place at Walt Disney World. There are a series of leaders who mentored me into management, and we've stayed connected all these years later. A special nod to Connie, Carrie, Deborah, Jackie and Mim.

Photos courtesy Noel Mayeske

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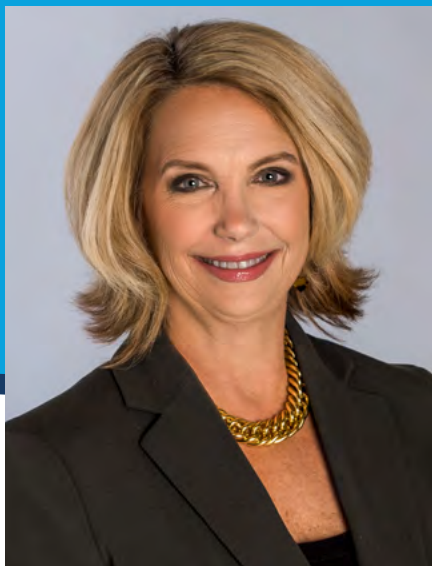
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» We have shifted our focus from paid advertising, to devote more effort and resources to owned and earned media channels.

KEY  
tactics



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**Thank you for being a part of the ATL Airport District.**