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**Incentive
Adventures**
Outdoor inspiration abounds



CALIFORNIA INNOVATES
Opportunities for planners continue to evolve

NORTHEAST INSPIRATION
Iconic destinations create one-of-a-kind experiences

EXPLORE SOUTHEAST
Cities craft unique incentives

TEXAS, VIP-STYLE
These 6 destinations roll out the red carpet for groups

ON-LOCATIONS
Australia | Bradenton | Healdsburg
Las Vegas | San Diego | Sands Resorts Macao | Orlando
The Langham, New York | The Palm Beaches
World Equestrian Center



Explore Southeast

Southeast cities craft unique incentive experiences for groups.

By Steve Grasso

From underwater art exhibits to Appalachian culinary adventures or urban wilderness exploration, these Southeast destinations have plenty to offer for incentive planners.

ATL AIRPORT DISTRICT

"There's no shortage of unique venues and experiences in the District," says Kristin Schneider, VP of Sales, **ATL Airport District**. "The **Porsche Experience Center** boasts ultra-modern conference and boardroom spaces overlooking the two test tracks and luxury sports cars. Events reach new heights in the **Delta Flight Museum's** artfully renovated 1940s airplane hangars. The *Backstage Tour* of **Chick-fil-A's** headquarters offers an interactive teambuilding outing. If that isn't enough, the District is just 10 miles from popular downtown Atlanta attractions."

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is adjoined to the **Georgia International Convention Center (GICC)** by the **ATL SkyTrain** (providing free rides between the two 24/7), which makes it the only convention center directly connected to a major U.S. airport.

Recent openings in the District include the **Hilton Atlanta Airport College Park** and connected **Home2 Suites by Hilton Atlanta Airport College Park**, which both opened in September 2023 adding a combined 253 rooms to the **Gateway Center Campus**. Ground has also broken for a new **Sheraton** hotel projected to open in 2025, and in Q2 of 2024, the new **Gateway Pedestrian Bridge and Trail Project** will connect the Gateway Center Campus to **Downtown College Park**, making it easy for attendees to get to and from more meeting hotels, restaurants and entertainment spots.

"While there is a constant growing interest in sustainability, the aspects of what sustainability means to planners and event attendees has changed," says Schneider. "These days, environmental impact isn't the only sustainable measure being considered. Things like identifying locations with minimal travel, finding certified suppliers, and partnering with the local community to incorporate social responsibility opportunities have helped planners give their attendees a purpose-driven experience."

GREENVILLE

"We offer a plethora of incentive experiences that guests are fortunate to enjoy," says Jonathan Brashier, VP of Meetings, Conventions & Events, **VisitGreenvilleSC**. "The **Grand Bohemian**, situated amidst the picturesque **Falls Park** at the heart of downtown, provides opulent accommodations along with top-notch spa and dining options all within one elegant setting. Attendees have the exclusive opportunity to partake in the exhilarating **BMW Ultimate Driving Experience**, a bucket list activity offered at only two locations across the U.S. For outdoor enthusiasts, there's the chance to explore 28 miles of adventure along the **Swamp Rabbit Trail**, meandering through Greenville County and into the scenic foothills of the **Blue Ridge Mountains**."

Greenville's live music scene is set to evolve with the launch of two new projects. Performing arts venue the **Peace Center** is currently undergoing a \$36 million renovation, slated for completion by late-2024. The expansion will add several new music venues of various sizes and designs, enhancing

Previous page: The Porsche Experience Center, ATL Airport District
Below (l-r): Camp Creek Inn, South Walton; Peace Center, Greenville

the city's cultural landscape. Additionally, **Trueline**, a new music venue led by Michael Grozier, co-founder of House of Blues, will feature a 1,700-seat main hall plus a 400-seat intimate performance space.

"Planners emphasize the paramount importance of accessibility, cleanliness and safety for their attendees, which aligns perfectly with our core strengths," says Brashier. "Our destination prides itself on offering these key attributes, making it an ideal choice for events. We boast a diverse array of distinctive venues, ranging from expansive arenas and convention centers to charming open-air and rooftop spaces. Moreover, the authenticity of our local community and the richness of our regional offerings make it effortless for visitors to fully immerse themselves and experience life like a local."

SOUTH WALTON

"One of our largest convention hotels, **Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa**, is in the final stages of a \$35 million property-wide renovation," says Karen Morris, CMP, Director of Sales, **Walton County Tourism Department**. "Set to be complete spring 2024, the refresh will include all 590 guest

rooms and suites, meeting space, six dining outlets, three swimming pools, beachfront deck space, full-service *Serenity by the Sea Spa* and more."

Recent 2023 openings in South Walton include **Camp Creek Inn**, a 75-room, 3-story boutique inn located near **Watersound Club's Camp Creek Golf Course**. The property offers two dining venues, as well as a golf pro shop, executive boardroom and a meeting room that can accommodate up to 50. Also new is **The Lodge 30A**, an 85-room boutique hotel located on an 15,000-acre nature preserve and close to the sugar-white sand beaches of the Gulf of Mexico. Attendees can choose to spend time exploring nearby beaches, coastal dune lakes and miles of hiking and biking trails.

Top incentive experiences in South Walton include stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking or canoeing on a coastal dune lake. These natural geological features only occur in a few other locations around the world, such as New Zealand, Australia, Madagascar. Adventurous attendees may also dive to the **Underwater Museum of Art**, North America's first permanent underwater sculpture park. Located less than a mile from

Grayton Beach State Park, the museum can be found at a depth of 58 ft and its sculptures attract a wide variety of marine life.

"The beaches of South Walton consistently make lists of the most beautiful beaches in the U.S. for our stunningly clear, turquoise water and soft, sugar white sand," says Morris. "There are no large sediment-heavy rivers directly influencing the water in South Walton so the reflection of the sun on the white sandy bottom of the Gulf of Mexico creates the water's brilliant turquoise hue."

KNOXVILLE

"New for Knoxville is the opening of our downtown minor league baseball stadium," says Chad Culver, Sr. Director, Sports Commission and Convention Sales, **Visit Knoxville**. "We're excited to have baseball back in downtown in 2025. The stadium will be a multi-use facility with meeting space and a great asset for our community. We have a full-service CVB that can help in all aspects of an event if needed. We're also very fortunate that all our hotels and local partners see the importance of tourism and always support us to make all of our conventions a huge success."

