

# A YEAR *in Review*

ANNUAL REPORT  
FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017



**VBC**  
VON BRAUN  
CENTER



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's a great time to live, work and play in this fantastic, electric, little-big city we call home – **Huntsville, Alabama**. So many great things are happening and I'm excited to be a part of the change and future growth.

The Von Braun Center (VBC) is a great venue for hosting a variety of events. This past fiscal year we hosted over 550 events with over 800,000 people walking through our doors. To highlight a few of our events from 2017 we will start with our two largest conferences. **AUSA Global Force Symposium** returned for the 4th consecutive year and the **Space & Missile Defense Symposium** returned for the 17th consecutive year. *We are very thankful to have the opportunity to work with both AUSA and SMD.*

This year the VBC hosted the **Small Market Meetings Conference**, which is the industry's first conference designed specifically for meeting professionals who seek smaller destinations and venues. The impact of this conference will benefit Huntsville for many years. We also hosted **TBEX North America** in May – the largest conference and networking event for travel bloggers. *Thank you to the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau for making it possible.*

The VBC hosted one of the final shows of the **Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus** before its end in 2017. The show was led by the first-ever female ringmaster and featured talented parkour runners, BMX-riders, Danquir High Wire Troupe, the Human Cannon Ball and of course the animals. We, like many of you, were very sad to hear of its closing.

*Basketball came to the VBC this year by way of the Rocket City Classic. The **Crimson Tide** played Arkansas State in a sold out Propst Arena. We are already looking forward to next year!*

Another new event this year was the **Von Brewski Beer Festival**. The winter beer festival was part of Huntsville's Beer Week and brought in over 1,500 beer enthusiasts to sample beer not only from Huntsville brewers but from brewers all over the country. *The date is already set for next year and we are planning for an even bigger and better event!*

As many of you may know, the VBC is also home to two hockey teams. The **University of Alabama Huntsville Chargers** have been playing hockey at the VBC for 35 plus years. We are proud to have UAH as one of our premier partners. The **Huntsville HAVOC** is a professional hockey team playing in the SPHL. We have an outstanding partnership with the HAVOC and I believe we are in our 15th year. *Thank you to Huntsville's hockey community.*

Another great honor the VBC experienced this year was hosting the **President of the United States**. *It's not every day you have a sitting President visit your venue!* Our team, along with the help of some political leaders, Senator Luther Strange's office, White House staff and the City of Huntsville we were able to successfully host the President of the United States with only

four days of planning and lots of hard work. It was a privilege and an honor to be involved, not only for me, but for the entire staff. *I was given the opportunity to greet the President and share with him the news of a record breaking crowd.*

**Now to share exciting news about the future of the VBC... we are expanding!!!** The Huntsville City Council approved a hotel tax increase of 2% plus \$1 per room night in July. The hotel tax increase was earmarked for tourism, with \$42 million going toward the expansion and renovation of the VBC.

The first phase of the expansion is a **new music hall** located at the corner of Clinton Avenue and Monroe Street and plans are to break ground in early spring of 2018. The new music hall with an estimated capacity of 1,200 will have a VBC operated food & beverage component. There will also be a beautiful roof top bar with a great view of downtown. *We are expecting this to be the place to be before and after events!!!*

The second phase of the expansion is the addition of a new state of the art **35,000 square foot ballroom**, 14,000 square feet of multi-purpose meeting rooms, a concourse that will seamlessly connect to the existing South Hall concourse and an underground parking garage that will connect to our current garage. The new ballroom will be the largest most vibrant state of the art room of its kind in Huntsville and possibly in the state. We anticipate to break ground in 2019-2020. When the expansion is completed North Hall will receive a much needed and long overdue renovation. *I invite you to visit our website for more information on the expansion.*

We are so excited about the expansion and renovation projects. Consultant studies by two different companies indicate the expansion will lead to increased demand and more event activity with a significant economic impact for Huntsville. We believe our investment for the future will entice a convention center hotel development. We strongly believe a convention center hotel is needed and we would like to see one located on Clinton Avenue adjoining the VBC.

I would like to say a special thank you to the **staff of the VBC**. Our staff gets the job done and I'm extremely proud of them. We have 65 full time and several hundred part-time employees that either work directly for the VBC or with a service contractor. The Senior Management Team is made up of 8 members (myself included) with over 200 combined years of service among us.

Of course, our number one asset is **YOU**, our patrons. *Thank you for a great year and we look forward to the upcoming new year.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Steve Maples".

Steven G. Maples, CFE,  
Executive Director

## THE ORGANIZATION

The Von Braun Center is governed by a seven-member Board of Control appointed by the Mayor of Huntsville and the City Council.

The Von Braun Center is an anchor within its community. Located in downtown Huntsville, the VBC offers a beautiful facility for local, regional, and national events. The VBC provides multiple venues for the presentation of cultural, educational, entertainment, sporting and social events. The VBC has a staff of proven professionals ready to contribute to the success of your event.

## THE HISTORY

The Von Braun Center was built thanks to the foresight of local leaders and a very real civic demand. The facility built in 1975 was welcomed by the community and the demand for use continued, leading to three additions within a ten year period driven largely by local and civic demand.

## THE MISSION STATEMENT

The Von Braun Center is a multipurpose facility with the primary objective of facilitating and promoting events and activities in addition to generating economic benefit and improving the quality of life for the Huntsville community and surrounding areas.

## BOARD OF CONTROL



Wayne Bonner,  
Chairman



Betty Schonrock,  
Vice Chairman



Evans Quinlivan,  
Secretary



Dr. John Johnson



Randy Schrimsher



Dr. Bill Sullins



Eddie Turner



## MANAGEMENT TEAM

*The VBC Management Team is committed to facilitating and promoting the vision of Huntsville.*

Steve Maples, CFE, has served as the Von Braun Center's Executive Director for the past eleven years. As Executive Director, Maples oversees the entire operation of the Von Braun Center.

Michael Vojticek, CPA, has been a member of the senior management team of the Von Braun Center for 26 years.

Left to right: MICHAEL VOJTICEK, CPA, Assistant Director  
STEVE MAPLES, CFE, Executive Director;

# THE WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT

DOLLY PARTON



STEVE MILLER BAND



RINGLING BROTHERS AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS



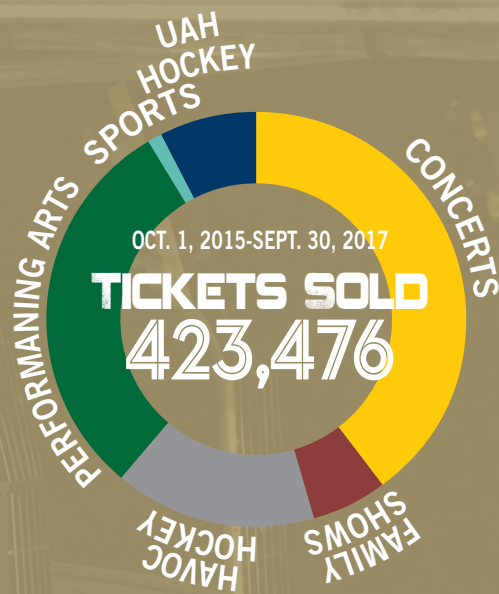
FOREIGNER



STYX

## A Concert Line-up to Rival Any...

An Evening with Sarah Vowell  
 Bill Engvall  
 Black Jacket Symphony - *Fleetwood Mac's Rumours*  
 Black Jacket Symphony - *Prince's Purple Rain*  
 Black Jacket Symphony - *Queen's A Night at the Opera*  
 Black Jacket Symphony - *The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*  
 Bob Dylan  
 BOSTON  
 Celtic Woman  
 Charlie Daniels Band  
 Chonda Pierce  
 Clint Black  
 Cole Swindell  
 Corey Smith  
 Decades Rewind  
 Dolly Parton  
 Dwight Yoakam  
 Elvis Tribute Concert  
 Fantasia  
 Festival of Praise Concert, featuring Fred Hammond  
 Firefighters Association presents Neal McCoy  
 Firefighters Association presents Sister Hazel  
 Foreigner  
 Gallagher  
 Gov't Mule  
 Gucci Mane -  
     Alabama A&M Homecoming Concert  
 J. Anthony Brown  
 Jamey Johnson  
 Jason Isbell  
 Justin Moore  
 Kool & The Gang -  
     Harris Home for Children Fundraiser  
 Listen Local  
 Love Is So Funny Tour  
 Lynyrd Skynyrd  
 Martina McBride  
 Migos  
 Monica  
 Newsboys  
 Oak Ridge Boys  
 Patti LaBelle  
 PLT Party Featuring Crowder, Tedashii and  
     More - Presented by NE AL FCA  
 Rock and Worship Roadshow 2017  
 Ron White  
 Sara Evans  
 Spirit of the City  
 Stephen Fite Children's Concert  
 Steve Miller Band  
 Styx  
 Ten Tenors  
 The Fab Four



The Priceless Tour  
 The Sweepings  
 The Temptations and The Four Tops -  
     Huntsville Classic  
 Tim Hawkins  
 Travis Tritt  
 UAH Music Department  
 ZZ Top

## The Symphony...

Huntsville Symphony Orchestra presents  
*A Beach Boys Celebration*  
*Beethoven Pastoral*  
*Mahler Five*  
 POPS  
*The Rite of Spring*  
*Video Games Live*  
*Wagner Without Words*  
*Wicked Divas*

## A Variety of Family Shows...

Artrageous  
 Discover The Dinosaurs  
 Harlem Globetrotters  
 Jurassic Quest  
 Monster Jam  
 Octonauts Live!  
 Peppa Pig Live!  
 Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus  
 The Wild Kratts Live!

## Theatrical Shows Galore...

Broadway Theatre League presents  
*42nd Street*  
*Annie*  
*Cinderella*  
*Dinosaur Zoo*  
*Dirty Dancing*  
*Odd Squad*  
*Once*  
*Riverdance*





Rocket City Classic - Alabama vs. Arkansas State Basketball

# CONVENTIONS, CONFERENCES, TRADESHOWS, & SPORTS



Alabama State High School Wrestling Championship



The Boat Show

## Conventions & Conferences

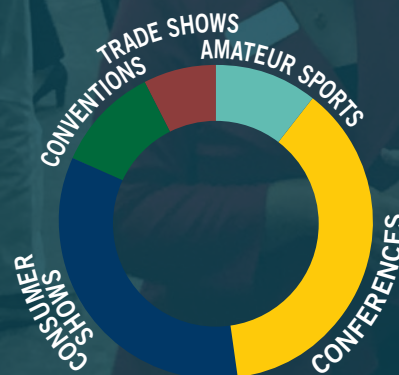
AUVSI  
Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses  
Circuit #AL 1-4  
DevSpace  
Exposure Youth Camp  
Express Refresh Leadership Live  
Fifth Episcopal District CME Conference  
FIRST Robotics Regional Competition  
Future and Beyond Huntsville  
HAMA - MiniCon  
HAMACON  
Joseph P. Cribbins Aviation Product Symposium  
Lift Tour  
MDA Small Business Conference  
National Cyber Summit  
NCMS  
Non Profit University  
North Alabama Conference of the UMC  
North Alabama Medical Reserve Corp  
Volunteer Conference  
Northeast Alabama FCA Power Leadership  
Training  
Sergeant Major's Association Reunion  
Small Market Meetings Conference  
SMD Symposium  
Southern Automotive Quality Summit  
Southside Church of Christ Homecoming  
TBEX North America  
TVA Communications

## Consumer/Trade Shows

Alabama Black Expo  
Alabama RV Super Show  
All Star Pool and Spa  
Babypalooza Baby & Maternity Expo  
Building, Home and Remodeling Show  
Celebrations Bridal Event  
Collectors & Shooters Gun Show  
Fall Home and Garden Show  
Family Fun Festival & Expo  
Greater Alabama Survival Expo  
Halsey Food Show  
Huntsville Comic and Pop Culture Expo  
Huntsville Hamfest  
Huntsville Regional Job Fair  
Naturals In The City  
NEACA Craft Show  
Randolph School Under The Christmas Tree  
Rocket City Broadcasting Bridal Fair  
Rocket Fair  
South East Women's Expo  
The Boat Show  
Tennessee Valley Hunting and Fishing Expo

## Sports

AL.com Classic - High School Basketball  
Alabama State High School  
Wrestling Championship  
Big Spring Volleyball Bash  
Cotton Row Run & Expo  
EA Sports Madden 18 Release  
Huntsville Gymnastic Center  
Jemison & Lee High School Basketball  
"Downtown Dunk"  
Regional High School Volleyball Tournament  
Rocket City Classic - Alabama vs. Arkansas  
State Basketball  
Rocket City Marathon and the Health &  
Fitness Expo



## Banquets

Boys & Girls Club Leaders and Legends  
 Chamber of Commerce Alabama Update  
 with Governor Kay Ivey  
 Chamber of Commerce Armed Forces Celebration  
 Chamber of Commerce Best Places to Work  
 Chamber of Commerce County Update  
 with Dale Strong  
 Chamber of Commerce Redstone Update  
 Chamber of Commerce Small Business  
 Awards  
 Chamber of Commerce State of the City with  
 Mayor Tommy battle  
 Chamber of Commerce Washington Update  
 with Congressman Mo Brooks  
 Chamber of Commerce Washington Update  
 with Senator Luther Strange  
 Christian Women's Job Corp Circles Luncheon  
 Friends of the Bradford Scholarship Gala  
 Funset Social and Charity Club  
 Beautillion Ball  
 His Way Banquet with special guest  
 Jep Robertson  
 Holy Spirit Regional School Bash  
 Huntsville Bible College "Vision" Banquet  
 Huntsville Symphony Orchestra Guild  
 Debutante Ball  
 Huntsville/Madison County Athletic Hall of  
 Fame Banquet  
 Martin Luther King Unity Breakfast  
 Morning Star Lodge #50  
 Northeast Alabama FCA Home Team  
 Celebrations  
 Oakwood UNCF Gala  
 Societies of 1895 & 2012 Recognition  
 Dinner - Huntsville Hospital Foundation  
 St. John's Benefit Gala  
 Stars Dancing for Heals  
 Victorian Cotillion Ball  
 Village of Promise  
 WEDC Women Honoring Women

## Social Functions

100 Black Men Holiday Gala  
 Associated Builders & Contractors  
 Excellence in Construction Banquet  
 Auburn University  
 AUSA Holiday Celebration  
 Avion Holiday Party  
 Boeing End of the Year Celebration  
 Colsa Corp Holiday Party  
 Councill Training All School Reunion  
 Diatherix Holiday Party  
 Dog Ball  
 ERC Christmas Party  
 Hanks, Hanks & Associates Holiday Party  
 Hazel Green High School Prom  
 Hexagon Safety & Infrastructure Holiday  
 Party (formerly Intergraph SH&I)  
 Huntsville Symphony Orchestra Guild  
 Crescen-Dough Auction  
 Jerry Damson Auto Group Holiday Party  
 Margarita Ball  
 Omega Psi Phi Vegas Night  
 Redstone Federal Credit Union Employee  
 Appreciation Day  
 Sparkman JROTC Military Ball

## Meetings

5th Annual BIG Marketing & PR Event  
 Alabama Virtual Academy Standardized  
 Testing  
 Best Buy Stores, L.P.  
 Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting  
 Cove United Methodist Christmas Eve  
 Services  
 Downtown Huntsville, Inc. Annual Meeting  
 Faith Family Finance Town Hall Meeting  
 Huntsville City Schools iRegister Fair  
 Huntsville City Schools Meeting  
 Huntsville Rotary Luncheon  
 Huntsville/Madison County Convention &  
 Visitors Bureau Tourism Summit  
 IAVM Region 5 Chapter Meeting  
 Judge Roy Moore Rally  
 Luther Strange for Senate Rally  
 with President Trump  
 Madison Co. Schools Institute  
 North Alabama IFMA Chapter Meeting  
 Oakwood Alumni Assoc.  
 Redstone Federal Credit Union  
 Annual Meeting  
 Rocket City Alabama Chapter of SGMP  
 Suicide Prevention Training  
 Visions Beauty Distributors Meeting

# BANQUETS, MEETINGS, & SOCIAL EVENTS





## VBC EXPANSION

On July 13, 2017 the Huntsville City Council approved the funding necessary for the Von Braun Center to expand. The funding will be generated by a 2% lodging tax and \$1 per room night surcharge. The expansion brings new business opportunity for the Von Braun Center, more entertainment to the patrons of Huntsville, as well as a polished fresh look to downtown Huntsville. The additional 113,000 square feet expansion will provide to the already 483,000 square foot VBC will attract larger conferences as well as provide needed additional space and amenities for current clients and patrons. The project will be completed in two phases. The first phase will be the Music Hall and Food & Beverage component. The second will be the convention space and necessary renovations. Construction for the Music Hall is to start Spring of 2018. The convention space and renovations are expected to begin within two years. This component will include an additional ballroom/multi-purpose space, more meeting rooms, a large kitchen equipped for serving a high number of plated meals, additional parking and needed renovations to the existing facility.



The 2017-18 season of **Huntsville Havoc** looks to continue the tradition of the fast-paced, hard-hitting, family entertainment. The 14th season will not disappoint as head coach Glenn Detulleo and the team take on SPHL rivals Fayetteville Marksmen, Knoxville Ice Bears, Evansville Thunderbolts, Mississippi RiverKings, Pensacola Ice Flyers, Peoria Rivermen, Macon Mayhem, Roanoke Rail Yard Dogs and the Birmingham Bulls. With two back to back seasons of breaking the league attendance record, can the Havoc make it 3 years in a row of record setting attendance?

## SPORTS



The **University of Alabama in Huntsville hockey team** is looking forward to the fifth season in the prestigious Western Collegiate Hockey Association. The Chargers will welcome seven schools to the Von Braun Center for the upcoming season with featured promotions and giveaways at each home game.

# FOOD & FUN



## *Von Brewski Beer Festival*

This year the VBC held the inaugural **Von Brewski Beer Festival** on January 21. Von Brewski Beer Festival brought over 1,500 people to the South Hall of the VBC. The attendees were able to sample over 150 different craft beers from 50 different breweries from across the nation. Brewers traveled from as close as Huntsville to as far Washington state. The lively atmosphere was set with music by .45 Surprise as attendees paraded around South Hall with their souvenir sample glass, pretzel necklaces and bratwursts! They also posted pictures with #vonbrewski for a chance to win giveaways throughout the day. During a season known for being cold, Von Brewski was the perfect addition to Downtown Huntsville. We can't wait to see what next year's Von Brewski Beer Festival will bring!



## *Heads-N-Tails Crawfish Boil*

The Heads-N-Tails Crawfish Boil began for its seventh year with a remarkable crowd! Attendees had a great time at the VBC stuffing their faces with crawfish, dancing to zydeco music and enjoying kid-friendly activities. New unique crawfish dishes were introduced including crawfish nachos. It was a successful event and we are looking forward to year eight!



## *Family Fun Festival & Expo*

This year marked the 4th year for **Family Fun Festival & Expo** at the VBC. It was a day filled with magical characters for kids of all ages to enjoy. A fun-filled day and a nice break from the Alabama scorching heat is what Family Fun Festival is all about. Families danced, played, and most importantly learned at this year's event. Family Fun Festival & Expo continues to grow and is blossoming into an amazing community event. There were over 10,000 in attendance this year. As the event only gets bigger and bigger each year who knows what next year has in store for us!



## *Christmas Parade*

On December 1st the people of Huntsville lined the streets in anticipation of the Mix 96.9-Von Braun Center Downtown Huntsville Christmas Parade! The whimsical floats took the streets at 6pm for the second nighttime parade. This year floats were decorated to the theme of Dr. Seuss! We can't wait to see what people can dream up for next year's Christmas parade!

# IN THE WORDS OF OUR CLIENTS

*The staff was extremely helpful and committed to making sure my event was special. It all contributed to the success of my party. The price was very reasonable and the food was very good. I will definitely consider the Von Braun Center for future events.*

Linda Harris  
Linda Harris Retirement Party

*Thank you again for the amazing service provided by the VBC staff. Everyone from food service to security to the technicians to Event Coordination was wonderful to work with and nothing but helpful. This event wouldn't be as successful without the help of the VBC staff! Thank you for another wonderful year!*

Eileen Beardsley  
2017 Dog Ball Chair

*I appreciate your customer service and your ability to make AUSA feel extremely valued and welcomed. The attention to detail and responsiveness makes planning the Global Force Symposium extremely pleasant. Additionally, I would like to thank you and your team for always making our staff, attendees, exhibitors and speakers feel welcome and well cared for.*

Melissa Wenczkowski, CMP  
Meetings Manager, AUSA Global Force Symposium

*Great coordinators with excellent planning skills! Very easy to work with. Day-of changes handled quickly and professionally – very pleased.*

Tara Hutchison  
Huntsville Regional Job Fair

*Thanks for everything. Job well done!*

Davelle King  
Westminster Christian Academy Graduation

*We were in great hands for this event from start to finish and I truly enjoyed working with each of you. Our event went incredibly smooth and was a great success and I heard many compliments on the venue, the set up of the general session and exhibit hall and the very delicious food. Thank you for all of your work to help make all of this happen.*

Lynsey Delane  
Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association

*As the 2016 Symphony Ball Chair, I just wanted to write an email so that I can sing the praises of all your staff who were involved in helping me put together Saturday night's Ball.*

*The Ball could not have been more perfect!!!*

Linda Akenhead  
Huntsville Symphony Ball

*Alabama Reading Association was more than pleased with all the VBC employees. We found everyone to be helpful and courteous in every way. Any request that we made was answered quickly, efficiently and with great courtesy. We'd like to thank VBC for providing a wonderful conference facility and experience for us.*

Renee Chambers, Conference Chair  
Alabama Reading Association

*We appreciate the awesome customer service. Thanks to the entire VBC staff for making our event a success!*

Diatherix Holiday Party





- Paper, Plastic, Aluminum Cans, and cardboard- 66,140 lbs. or 33.07 tons
- Electronic Waste- 1,020 lbs.
- Spent Fluorescent Lamps- 532

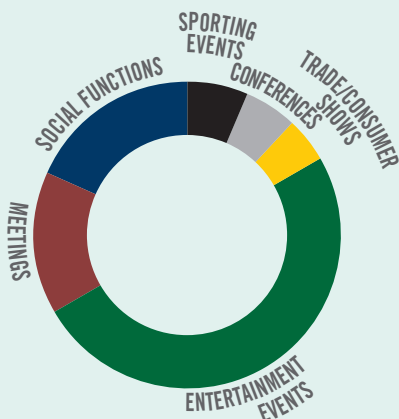
The Von Braun Center diverted 162.12 tons or 324,230 lbs. of trash from the local landfill by transporting our trash to the Waste to Energy facility via our waste provider Republic Services. By sending our trash to the Waste to Energy facility, we were able to achieve an average diversion rate of 79.4% for the year.

## Energy Consumption Reduction Goal

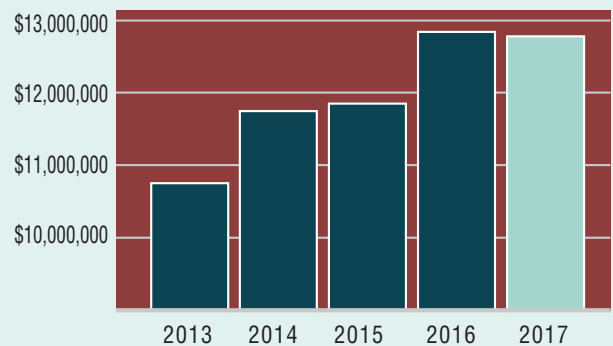
The Von Braun Center is committed to continuous improvements in energy efficiency. Taking energy savings seriously, the Von Braun Center commits to achieve at least a 20% reduction in energy consumption within the next 10 years. The Von Braun Center is reducing operating costs in order to deliver more resources and benefits to the Huntsville community. In 2017, the VBC joined North Alabama Buildings Performance Challenge.

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

## VBC Event Composition



## VBC Gross Revenue





700 Monroe Street | Huntsville, Alabama 35801  
256.533.1953 | [vonbrauncenter.com](http://vonbrauncenter.com)