



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

DESTINATION

AUGUSTA





JAMES BROWN
The hardest working man in Show Business



R&B Hall of Fame
2013 inductee 2017 Songwriter



Over a 100
50 All-time
Top Charts



Our **MISSION**

- » Destination Augusta develops and promotes our community, inspiring people to have unforgettable experiences.

Our **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- » Community Building
- » Customer Engagement
- » Organization Sustainability



Bennish Brown

BENNISH BROWN

President & CEO

Destination Augusta

LEADERSHIP. INNOVATION. COLLABORATION.

YES, IT WAS A YEAR OF INSPIRATION!

There are many ways to describe 2021. I choose to call it a “Year of Inspiration.” After all, that’s what we do in the tourism and hospitality space. We tell stories to capture people’s interest in Augusta, inspire them to travel, and then direct them to unforgettable experiences.

With this in mind, the priorities set in our 2021 Business Plan were very clear: (1) help the local industry get back to work, (2) get early travelers to the destination, (3) build the destination brand, and (4) maintain relationships with decision makers who bring meetings, conventions, and events to our hotels, convention center and other local businesses.

The tourism and hospitality industry fell from the third largest source of employment due to



the ongoing pandemic. In particular, our hotels and restaurants struggled to fill vacant positions. An inspirational response to this shortage was led by the city government and our community, who hosted a job fair that provided the opportunity for employers to make job offers on the spot. Members of the Destination Augusta team were intimately involved in the effort.

Consumers' interest in outdoor activities grew during the pandemic and many new start-up businesses got off the ground, becoming unique and unforgettable Augusta experiences. Examples include Dayon Walker, who started Augusta Reserve and Ride Watersports jet ski rentals after being impacted by a trip to Jamaica, and Christina and Alvin Watson, who opened Bike Bike Baby bicycle tours after being inspired by the nighttime bicycle rides offered in New Orleans. In addition, Gregory LaBelle and Steven Cox started Two Dudes and a Boat Kayak Rentals, turning their hobby into a business after being inspired by the number of times their own circle of friends asked to borrow their kayaks to get out on the Savannah River.

We were beyond amazed at the floodgates of movies and television series that brought their

productions to Augusta. Some of the high-level productions that scouted our city yet selected elsewhere signal that film productions grow more aware of our film-friendly city.

Finally, we were inspired by how receptive the local and regional marketplace was to our new brand and new messages. Our "Come See Augusta" campaign won the 2021 Shining Example Award as one of the Best Marketing Campaigns by the Southeast Tourism Society (STS). Not only did our new brand resonate, we affirmed Augusta's hospitality with our commitment to diversity and inclusion, declaring Augusta as "a welcoming community for all."

I hope you will be equally inspired as you read our 2021 Annual Report. ■



2020 VISITOR ECONOMIC IMPACT*

*Visitor Economic Impact calculations are made available at the end of the current calendar year for the year prior.

\$544.7 MILLION VISITOR SPENDING

BREAKDOWN:

\$174.3 MILLION Dining

\$97.4 MILLION Lodging

\$95.3 MILLION Entertainment

\$94.0 MILLION Shopping

\$83.7 MILLION Transportation

AUGUSTA JOBS SUPPORTED



6,914

TAX RELIEF

\$584 SAVED PER HOUSEHOLD as a result of taxes generated by tourism

\$1.7 BILLION STATE TAXES GENERATED

\$41.7 MILLION LOCAL TAXES GENERATED

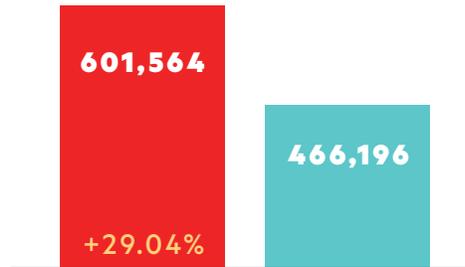
Source: Georgia Department of Economic Development

Source: Explore Georgia via Tourism Economics, LLC.

2021 MARKETING REPORT

VISITAUGUSTA.COM

2021 2020

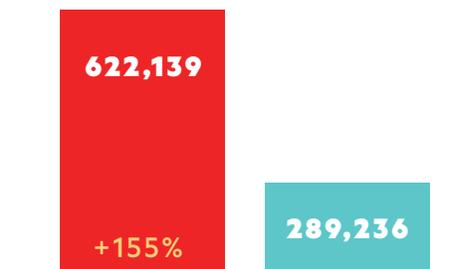


TOTAL WEBSITE SESSIONS

Top Site Pages

- » Homepage
- » Things to Do in Augusta
- » Things to Do: Attractions Augusta Canal
- » Events
- » Restaurants

SOCIAL MEDIA

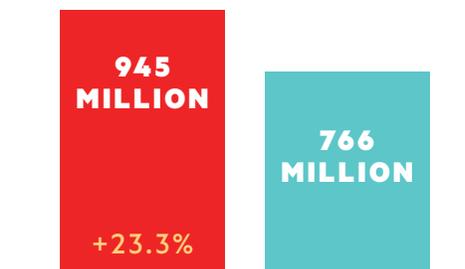


TOTAL IMPRESSIONS / REACH

Total Followers

- 10,757 ▲
- 13,646 ▲
- 4,022 ▲
- 1,596 ▲

PUBLIC RELATIONS



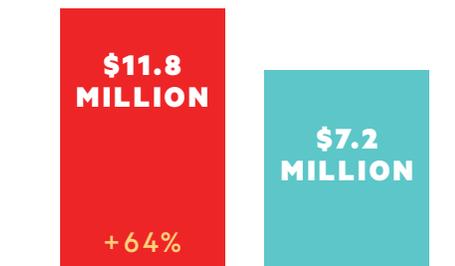
TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

Impressions

1. Digital: 885.5 Million (+16%)
2. Social: 55.3 Million (+8,648%)
3. Print: 4.1 Million (+92%)

PUBLICITY HITS (-8%)

98 < 106



ADVERTISING EQUIVANCY



MARKETING

THIS YEAR, THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT FOCUSED ON SEVERAL INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO BUILD AWARENESS OF OUR DESTINATIONS BRAND AND ENTICE TRAVELERS TO COME SEE AUGUSTA.

★ NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

IN Q1, WE LAUNCHED a new VisitAugusta.com to align with the “Come See AugUSta” destination marketing campaign. The design and navigation are driven by data collected on what visitors are searching for when researching Augusta. It prioritizes those areas of interest to allow for improved functionality, and overall user-friendly digital experience. New tools on the site include Yelp integration, a Trip Builder tool that encourages users to create customized travel itineraries, and an extensive filtration system for easier accessibility to business listings. VisitAugusta.com delivered **67,000+** referral links to Augusta tourism and hospitality businesses in 2021.

★ NEW BRANDING UNVEILED

DURING NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK in May, our new corporate brand, Destination Augusta, was unveiled. The name does double-duty. It reflects our priority to inspire and convert people to travel to Augusta. It also addresses our responsibility to work at

many levels with residents, businesses, and organizations within our region to physically enhance our city as a destination.





Board Chair Brandon Haddock and President/CEO Bennish Brown unveil the rebrand of the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau to Destination Augusta in May 2021.

★ NEW TEAM MEMBERS



WE WERE PLEASED TO WELCOME two new Marketing team members. **Natasha Carter** serves as the Marketing Manager for Destination Augusta. Carter's principal role is the planning and management of all marketing programs, content, media placement, production, and metrics reporting. Carter also manages the organization's Content Management System (CMS) which includes VisitAugusta.com and affiliated microsites and serves as the social media lead and the organization's local media liaison. **Rachel Wilkerson** serves as the Communications Manager for Destination Augusta. Wilkerson's principal role is to provide marketing and communications support to all staff teams, manage the organization's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, travel media program, and serve as the project lead for the Augusta Experience Guide, Augusta's official city guide produced by Destination Augusta. Carter is pictured top left and Wilkerson is bottom left.



★ MOMENTUM INTO 2021



TO BUILD OFF THE MOMENTUM of the 2020 “Come See AugUSta” campaign launch, we were pleased to welcome several new local faces to the campaign. These community backyard advocates align with the diverse audiences we are targeting and aid in telling Augusta’s authentic story. We executed leisure and co-op marketing campaigns featuring the ArtsCity Festival, Augusta Canal, Augusta Museum of History, the Golden Blocks Walking Tour, Morris Museum of Art, Paceline Ride, and the Augusta Sculpture Trail. Come See AugUSta digital ads were seen over **33 million** times with **157,260** users taking the action to click through to VisitAugusta.com for more information. In addition, we were able to track **3,849** travelers who were exposed to campaign messages and visited Augusta. Our area billboard campaign generated over **16 million** impressions. We partnered with The VeryVera Show on a Best of Augusta episode, Augusta Getaway contest, and ran our “Come See AugUSta” broadcast spot in the 30+ markets her show airs in throughout the year.

WE LEVERAGED OUR MARKETING DOLLARS by partnering with Explore Georgia to execute leisure and meetings co-op marketing campaigns with Tripadvisor and Northstar Meetings Group. The Tripadvisor leisure campaign generated **\$198,000** in economic impact attributable to travelers exposed to our Augusta ads, signaling a strong ROI compared to the \$50k media investment. The Northstar meetings campaign targeted meetings planners interested in hosting meetings in the Southeast. Augusta meetings e-blasts were opened by 19,000 meeting planners with a strong click-through rate exceeding benchmarks.

WE PARTNERED WITH the Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Development Authority to launch the Downtown Small Business Experience Network. We hosted our inaugural workshop featuring Scott Caufield, Senior Principal

Client Partner with Tripadvisor. Downtown businesses learned how to manage their online reviews and drive foot traffic to their businesses.

IN OCTOBER, Destination Augusta was awarded the 2021 Shining Example Award by the Southeast Tourism Society (STS) for Best Marketing Campaign in its budget category for the “Come See Augusta” campaign. Finalists were announced at the STS Connections Conference in Spartanburg, SC.

THROUGH OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM, we were able to host two Atlanta-based influencers in Q4. Foodie influencers Carolina and Christina Jimenez with @alwayshungryatl executed a social media campaign highlighting Augusta’s food scene and drivability from Atlanta. The campaign ran from October 30 – November 5 featuring Edgar’s Above Broad, Vance’s Bakery Bar, Laziza, Craft + Vine, and Ubor, generating 5,614 Instagram static post impressions and a total reach of 4,451. The Augusta GA Foodie City Tik Tok video produced and posted by the duo has been viewed more than 160,000 times! Dayna Bolden @daynabolden visited Augusta, December 8-10 to execute a social media campaign to her 146,000 followers. She dined at The Brunch House Augusta and Farmhaus Burger, enjoyed our public art scene, and the Augusta Canal generating 180,300 Instagram static post impressions and a total reach of 70,071 on Instagram stories.



2021 PUBLIC RELATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

365 ATLANTA TRAVELER

“A Guide to Your Weekend Getaway in Augusta from Atlanta”

AJC

“TravelPulse Deems this Georgia’s Best Spring Break Staycation Spot”

BLACK SOUTHERN BELLE

“Heritage Travels: African American Museums in Georgia”

FORBES

“Georgia’s Top 5 Summer Relaxation Destinations”

GEORGIA TREND

“Inviting Garden and Rooftop Dining—Georgia’s Lovely Outdoor Sports for Sipping and Tasting”

KIPLINGER

“25 Cheapest U.S. Cities to Live In”

LONELY PLANET

“The Best Museums for American Art in the U.S.”

MARKETWATCH

“5 U.S. Cities with Rich Black History You May Not Know About”

OPRAH DAILY

“The 60 Most Scenic Drives in America”

This Come See AugUsta ad was a branded collaborative effort with other area economic development stakeholders in “Georgia Trend” magazine.

PGA.COM

“Everything You Need to Know to Plan a Trip to Augusta”

SOUTHERN LIVING

“Meet the Boutique Southern Distilleries You Need to Know About”

“How to Store Donuts So They’re Not Stale the Next Day”

“Best Places to Retire in the South”

STYLE BLUEPRINT (ONLINE)

“Four of the Most Haunted Hotels in the South”

TRAVEL AWAITS

“11 Inspiring African-American History Tours in the U.S.”

WANDERLUST

“A Taste of the Peach State: Your Full Travel Guide to Georgia, USA”

YAHOO FINANCE

“35 Surprising Cities with Low Cost of Living”

talent work

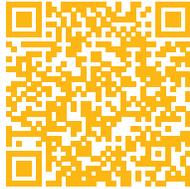
AUGUSTA TECHNICAL COLLEGE
OUR BUILDER ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM IS THE ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND IN THE STATE. THE PROGRAM WAS RATED WITH HIGHEST RANK PRODUCTION PARTNERS AT PLANT, FACILITY, JUNE, AND MORE.

AUGUSTA METRO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OUR TALENT WORK PROGRAM PROVIDES WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS THAT BUILD BARRIERS, TRANSFORM OPPORTUNITIES, LEARNER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, DIGITAL INCLUSION, AND EMPLOYER RETENTION.

THE ALLIANCE FOR FORT GORDON
AUGUSTA IS HOME TO THE ARMY'S STRATEGIC CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, NEW GEORGIA, AND NEW ARMY STRIKE COMMAND. THE OFFICE OF BUNKER ROSS, COMMANDER, AND THOUSANDS OF JOBS IN THE FORT GORDON STRIKE DISTRICT.

Come See AUGUSTA

See for YOURSELF
VisitAugusta.com



Scan this QR code with smart phone to watch a Small Business Saturday promotion video on Instagram.

AUGUSTA & CO.

★ SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

A MISSION OF AUGUSTA & CO. is to encourage shoppers to visit local small businesses and make purchases. The Augusta Downtown Development Authority and our team partnered with 12 participating small businesses to support a Small Business Saturday event that promoted shopping at downtown retail shops on Saturday, November 27. All of the participants reported record-breaking response to this promotion and more than 800 proof of purchases were collected as part of the grand prize drawing for a gift basket that included items from all of the participants.

For Augusta & Co., this community-minded event paid dividends in exposure for Augusta & Co., which served as the event headquarters. Not only did Augusta & Co. have a line prior to opening doors to collect a free tote bag (photo above), we had record breaking visitation of 588 people and set a new one-day sales record of just over \$4,000. The tote bags for the first 200 shoppers were completely gone after being open for only 45 minutes.

★ MISTLETOE MARKET

AUGUSTA & CO. HELD IT'S SECOND ANNUAL Mistletoe Market in December. Held traditionally on the last Saturday before Christmas, this specialty market features local makers exposing them to locals and visitors. This year the market included Scott Family Farm, The Kulture Cabinet, Handcrafted Cutting Boards, Trevathan Goat, Edenberry House Lettering, Candy Cloud Designs, and Oh Sweet Cookies.

Lettering said, "I absolutely love working with Augusta & Co., and the Mistletoe Market is extremely special. This was my second time attending as a vendor and it was so wonderful to see Augusta area locals supporting small businesses right before the holidays! Because of events like the Mistletoe Market, I have had the wonderful opportunity to meet other local business owners who are all very supportive and encouraging of one another."

Adrian Eason, owner of Edenberry House

BY THE NUMBERS

2021

2020



TOTAL FOLLOWERS

5,539 ▲

2,908 ▲

TOTAL POP-UP OR COMMUNITY EVENTS
25



Mistletoe Market vendors, Edenberry House Lettering (top) and Scott Family Farm (below right)





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

★ COMMUNITY PRIDE CAMPAIGN FEATURES AUGUSTA STAR ICON

CREATING COMMUNITY PRIDE and extending the AUG brand began in 2021 in two very visible outlets.

To promote authentic Augusta experiences an AUG star icon window cling was created and distributed to area experiences and attractions visibly marking it for visitors to know it is unique and visitor friendly. A QR code is contained within the window cling which directs users to the Trip Builder page on the Destination Augusta website. From there users can find more information on Augusta and create their own custom itinerary.

Additionally, to extend the Augusta brand and to give local corporations and makers a way to proudly signal their product was made in the AUG, Destination Augusta staff encouraged the use of the AUG star icon on locally made products. Savannah River Brewing Company was the first to see the value in adding the star on one of their locally brewed beers, Son of Kong.

★ DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN AUGUSTA & CO.

AS THE EXPERIENCE CENTER FOR AUGUSTA, Augusta & Co. is committed to showcasing the vibrancy of our diverse community. One way Augusta & Co. tells this story is through the intentional inclusion of vendors representing the wide array of cultures and races of our city. Products included in Augusta & Co. are also indicative of the pursuit of inclusion and of the desire to welcome all people. Destination Augusta recognizes and advocates the importance of creating an environment where



This is an ongoing campaign open to local businesses. To add the

AUG star icon to your products please contact Sarah Childers at sarah@visitaugusta.com.

all people feel welcome and included. We will always uphold the fundamental beliefs of respect, equity, inclusion, collaboration, creative freedom, and hospitality to all. (This DEI statement can also be found on VisitAugusta.com) On the next page please find some statistical data providing a snapshot of the vendor diversity represented in Augusta & Co.



North Augusta's Mayor Briton Williams speaking to a group during the FAM tour.

Arts panel held at Le Chat Noir



★ AUGUSTA AND NORTH AUGUSTA TOUR

KNOWING AUGUSTA AND NORTH AUGUSTA'S unique attributes is essential to telling others what to see and do in the region. To make sure the hospitality industry has that knowledge and personal experience, Destination Augusta collaborated with North Augusta City Staff to organize a joint familiarization (FAM) tour providing training on the two-state area's quality of place. More than 25 people attended the event which featured attractions and

businesses in both downtowns. Attendees enjoyed riding on the North Augusta shuttle to their points of interest and also learned about area arts organizations at a special luncheon which was included. Attendees left equipped with information to help them make recommendations to their own clients to enjoy Augusta's River Region.

DEI STATS

59% WOMEN OWNED
RETAIL PARTNERS

15% ASIAN OWNED
BUSINESSES

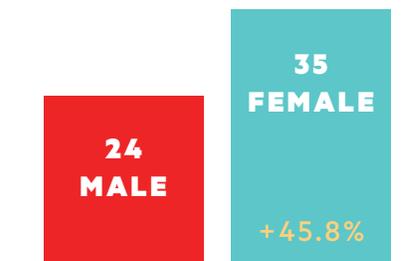
18% AFRICAN AMERICAN OWNED
BUSINESSES

7% HISPANIC/LATINO OWNED
BUSINESSES

**ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY
OR VETERAN/SPOUSE OF
A VETERAN**



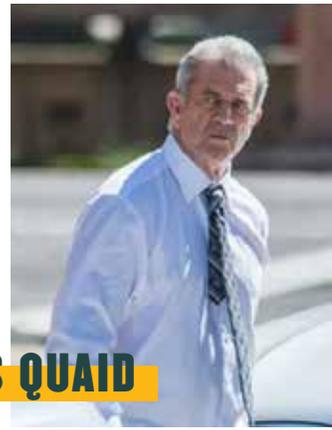
GENDER



Scan code to view the full DEI statement on our website.



FILM AUGUSTA 2021



★ GETAWAY DRIVER, MEL GIBSON, & DENNIS QUAID

THIS YEAR LITERALLY TOOK OFF LIKE A GETAWAY DRIVER when television series “Getaway Driver” was filmed on location in Augusta, Georgia in the beginning months of 2021 for the Discovery Channel and Discovery+. This explosive and ambitious new driving challenge show chose Augusta as its location in 2020. Choosing Augusta was a result of Film Augusta hosting location scouts and many months of negotiations with the production and location owners. “Getaway Driver” stars Michelle Rodriguez plus 24 drivers and pursuers in a real-life chase challenge. The show premiered July 19 on the Discovery Channel airing on Mondays at 9 p.m. and streaming anytime on Discovery+. Film Augusta estimates this production generated upwards of \$1 Million in economic impact for the area.

Rolling right out of that project, the second quarter of 2021 continued to bustle in film activity. “Agent Game,” an independently produced film starring Dermot Mulroney and featuring Mel Gibson, shot in Augusta and the surrounding area during April and May. Much of downtown Augusta got front-row seats to the action film watching Mel Gibson in a chase and gunfight scene in the middle of Broad Street. “Agent Game,” hired local crew, stayed in hotel rooms and short-term rentals, and injected

just under \$1 Million into the area’s economy. “Applewood,” another independently-produced film, began production in May. This project filmed in Augusta and neighboring counties, hired local crew, purchased local goods and services, and featured many local actors as cast. During the summer, Augusta came very close to being in a major Marvel production. Film Augusta hosted the location manager, director, first AD, director of photography and art director more than once for consideration in an upcoming blockbuster. In the end, an artistic decision led the production to an out-of-state location, but relationships were built, and Augusta gained more exposure to key decision makers in the film industry.

Closing out 2021, the production “The Hill” starring Dennis Quaid and directed by Jeff Celentano filmed in Augusta and surrounding areas during November and December. The film tells the true-life story of Ricky Hill who overcame a childhood physical disability to play professional baseball. Scenes were filmed at Lake Olmstead Stadium, Eisenhower Park, Masters City Little League, various Augusta houses and neighborhoods as well as in neighboring counties. Economic impact of “The Hill” is estimated at just under \$2 Million.

★ HOLLYSHORTS PRODUCTION RECRUITING VISIT

Film Augusta went to Hollywood to entice filmmakers to bring productions to Augusta. In a second year partnership with HollyShorts Film Festival (HSFF), Film Augusta was a premier

sponsor of this well-known Oscar qualifying film festival. This opportunity is made available through a relationship with local resident Daniel Sol, a co-founder and co-owner of the festival.



★ GEORGIA FILM ACADEMY COMES TO AUGUSTA

THE GEORGIA FILM ACADEMY HAS COME TO AUGUSTA through Augusta Tech and partnering with IndieGrip. The Georgia Film Academy (GFA) is a collaboration of the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia created by state leadership to meet education and workforce needs for high demand careers in Georgia's film and creative industries. Since creation, GFA has offered classes and training through more than 20 University System of Georgia and Technical College System of Georgia partner institutions and now will be offering those hands-on courses in Augusta. Film Augusta has long seen the value in GFA having a presence and investment in Augusta. Through strategic planning with Augusta Tech's President Dr. Jermaine Whirl, this partnership has become

a reality. In June, FILM Augusta led a planning meeting with GFA, Augusta Tech, and IndieGrip to imagine a future partnership. Out of that meeting, it was decided that GFA classes would be offered through Augusta Tech and Augusta University and taught on location at IndieGrip. Offering these classes in Augusta will help grow the film industry workforce for our community, receive the acknowledgement that the film industry is growing in our city and region, and become a key component to an overall strategic plan to grow the film industry in the area. Augusta Tech and GFA have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding and classes will begin in January 2022.

Scan code to view the full Film sizzle reel on our website.



BY THE NUMBERS

■ 2021

■ 2020

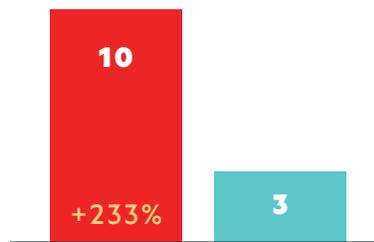
💰 ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$3.18M

🖥️ REGISTRATIONS COMPLETED*

19 = 19

🏢 LOCATION TOURS



📞 TOTAL INQUIRIES YTD*

50 < 55

🏠 LOCAL FILM INDUSTRY JOBS SUPPORTED

204

**While the registrations and inquiries are similar in quantity year over year, note the stark difference in the economic impact via the Local Spend section. This tells the story of the larger scale projects occurring this year. The local spend for the full year of 2020 was \$119,275.*



SALES TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

★ CERTIFIED MEETING PROFESSIONAL



WE ARE INCREDIBLY EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE our Senior Sales Manager, Iman Johnson, CGMP is now a Certified Government Meeting Professional recently designated by the Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP).

This designation will allow her to expand her reach in sales and provide meeting services to government professionals. Founded in 1981, SGMP is the only national organization dedicated exclusively to government meetings.

★ CONNECTING WITH INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS



DESTINATION AUGUSTA'S Group Business Development team connected with 90+ industry professionals at the Third Annual Georgia Group Sales Symposium in Roswell, GA presented by Southeast Tourism Society & the Georgia Association of CVBs.



★ JOB FAIR COLLABORATION

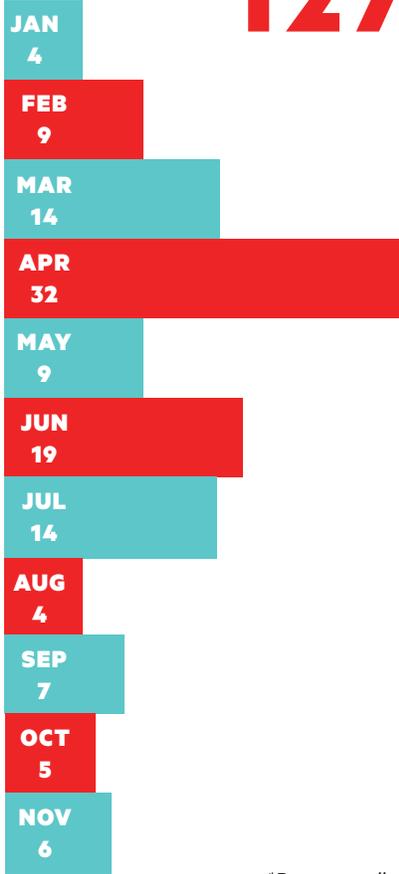
GROUP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT collaborated with the City of Augusta Career Fair 2021. The Destination Augusta team was tasked to reach out to the Augusta Hospitality Industry which included Hotels, Restaurants, and Attractions. Digital fliers

were created and distributed in an email blast and distributed door to door. More than 12 Hospitality Industry partners attended from a total of 60 diverse industries, and 600 career seekers attended the fair.

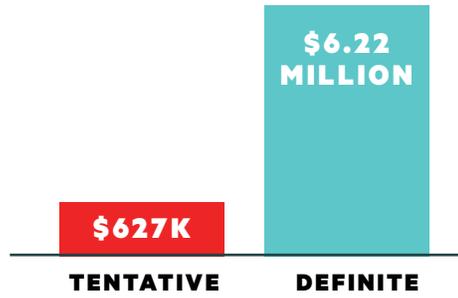


PROSPECTING CALLS YTD*

127



ECONOMIC IMPACT TENTATIVE VS. DEFINITE



SALES CALLS MADE YTD*

82



LEADS GENERATED YTD*

77

*Prospect calls are cold calls to qualified or vetted meeting planners. Sales calls are in-person or digital meetings with vetted meeting and event planners. Leads are requests for group blocks and rates we distribute to hotels to submit proposals.



NEW TEAM MEMBER



TAYLOR WOOD HAS BEEN HIRED AS THE MANAGER OF GROUP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT for Destination Augusta. Wood will work to identify, build, and maintain industry partner relationships and to help promote Augusta as a meeting and convention destination. She will focus on the management of client-oriented destination packages that represent Augusta to those

in the areas of events and festivals; educational, medical, and trade associations; team sports; and weddings. Wood brings seven years experience in sales from Experience Columbia, the Convention and Visitors Bureau in Columbia, South Carolina. Wood has a bachelor's degree from Clemson in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management with a concentration in Travel and Tourism.



PARTNERSHIP APPRECIATION

DESTINATION AUGUSTA'S Group Business Development team delivered treats to 29 partners for partnership appreciation and the Holiday season.





DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

TOGETHER, WE HAVE A LOT MORE TO OFFER.

PLYWOOD MURALS, Public Art Sculptures, and a **disc golf course** got their start in 2021 adding to Augusta's inventory of tourism product offerings. As recommended in Destination Blueprint and the Public Art Master Plan the Greater Augusta Arts Council (GAAC) brought public art to life in 2021 with the Augusta Sculpture Trail. 10 pieces of temporary

art adorn the streets and corners of downtown Augusta enhancing the destination and creating an authentic Augusta experience for locals and visitors. The tourism product development grant provided funds to GAAC to activate the sculpture trail with special events including live music and talks with artists. Additionally, tourism product



development grant funds will go towards the purchase of one of the sculptures in 2022 giving it a permanent home in Augusta. Continuing on the theme of public art in downtown, tourism product development funds helped to fund plywood art murals on a vacant building. This GAAC- led art project added further enhancement to the property at 806 Broad Street.

A new disc golf course is in the making at the Savannah River Keepers property along the banks of the Savannah River. The Levee Course is intended to be an 18-hole disc golf course, each hole inspired by professional women disc golf athletes. The course had a soft launch in December and logistics of the course will be adjusted throughout 2022. Tourism product development grant funds were provided to add this additional outdoor experience in Augusta.



2021 STAFF & BOARD DIRECTORY

★ DESTINATION AUGUSTA STAFF

BENNISH BROWN

President/CEO

bennish@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6611

BRENDA ATKINS

Operations Office Manager

brenda@visitaugusta.com
(706) 849-3245

MICHELLE BOVIAN

Director of Group Business Development

michelle@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6616

JENNIFER BOWEN

Vice President of Destination Development & Community Engagement + FILM Augusta Liaison

jennifer@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6613

NATASHA CARTER

Marketing Manager

natasha@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6605

SARAH CHILDERS

Director of Community Engagement + FILM Augusta Assistant Liaison

sarah@visitaugusta.com
(706) 849-3246

FIONNA CHEW

Augusta & Co. Customer Service Supervisor

fionna@visitaugusta.com
(706) 724-4067

LINDSAY FRUCHTL

Vice President of Marketing + Communications

lindsay@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6606

IMAN JOHNSON

Senior Manager of Group Business Development

iman@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6615

TRENT SNYDER

Vice President of Finance & Administration

trent@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6610

RACHEL WILKERSON

Communications Manager

rachel@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6607

TAYLOR WOOD

Manager of Group Business Development

taylor@visitaugusta.com
(706) 823-6602

AUGUSTA EXPERTS

(706) 724-4067

Megan Jones

Keallie McCarley



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DESTINATION AUGUSTA is governed by a Board of Directors that represents a cross section of business and hospitality industry partners. Board meetings are held six times per year and are open to the public.

BRANDON HADDOCK

Chair

Textron Specialized Vehicles

CHRIS BIRD

Augusta Entertainment
Complex

PHIL WAHL

Immediate Past Chair

Security Federal Bank

JAMES HEFFNER

Vice Chair

First Community Bank of
South Carolina

BRANDON GARRETT

Augusta Commission

BRIAN GRAHAM

Ex-Officio

Greater Augusta Sports
Council

JOEL HORTENSTINE

Singh Investment Group

RANDALL BLUMBERG

Treasurer

Hyatt House

DAYTON SHERROUSE

Augusta Canal National
Heritage Area

SUE PARR

Secretary

Augusta Metro
Chamber of Commerce

DENNIS WILLIAMS

Augusta Commission

Destination Augusta 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 Destination Augusta 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. Destination Augusta also operates the Visitor Center, Augusta & Co., now an Augusta Experience Center, which is on the first floor of their building at 1010 Broad Street.

DESTINATION
AUGUSTA 

WWW.VISITAUGUSTA.COM

