

# Tourism Report & 2017 Marketing Plan

—  
2016-2017

*Augusta*  
CONVENTION &  
VISITORS BUREAU

VISITAUGUSTA.COM

# Augusta's Brand Story

# 125+

For over 125 years, hospitality has been at the heart of Augusta, and that heart beats strong amid the ingenuity and innovation of today's prosperous and thriving community. There are those drawn to the city's history and heritage, but alongside the banks of the Savannah River they also discover an Augusta that is alive for a new generation: one that celebrates the city's arts and culture, flourishes with its dynamic recreational opportunities, revels in the renewed appreciation of the region's storied past, and pulses with a contagious vitality that promises a bright tomorrow for the new Augustan.

## Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau

### Executive Summary

All corners of Augusta's River Region are buzzing with new project announcements, and Augusta is poised for unprecedented growth and opportunity. The Augusta CVB is prepared for new opportunities, and we are pleased to share with you our 2016 Annual Report, 2017 Marketing Plan, 2017-2019 Strategic Plan, and Destination Blueprint.

In 2016, we began to shift our marketing strategy to a new target audience—millennials—those between the ages of 18 and 34. As we continue to focus on this younger market in 2017, our message will remain cognizant of boomers while filtering in more strategic elements for our new primary target audience.

One way we're reaching that new audience is through *The New Augustan* magazine, which was unveiled at the State of Tourism Luncheon last February. This regional lifestyle publication features unique articles and interviews from local experts on topics such as food, history, nature and culture. Because of the tremendous success of the inaugural issue, which was intended to be published annually, we accelerated our plan and introduced the Fall/Winter issue in October. You can look forward to the second bi-annual Spring/Summer issue in March 2017. We hope *The New Augustan* inspires visitors and locals to get out and experience all that Augusta's River Region has to offer.

In the Spring, we launched a new website. VisitAugusta.com creatively delivers up-to-date content and is designed to work on any size screen: personal computer, tablet, or phone.

Several planning initiatives took place in 2016. We embarked upon a comprehensive update of our three-year strategic plan. We conducted numerous stakeholder interviews and a comprehensive strategic planning session with our board of directors to ensure that the region's next steps in destination marketing and development are aligned with the community's needs.

An additional effort to enhance Augusta's quality of place and position the city as a preferred visitor destination was the creation of Destination Blueprint. This effort was the result of extensive reviews of more than seven existing regional plans along with feedback from thousands of residents and visitors. Destination Blueprint includes tourism and lifestyle products and experiences that will appeal to target visitor audiences and residents alike. We collaborated with the Greater Augusta Arts Council, the Recreation and Parks Department, and Georgia Forward's Young Gamechangers, a leadership program that brings together 50 of Georgia's brightest minds to solve persistent challenges in Georgia communities. Both the Strategic Plan and Destination Blueprint are available online in the corporate section of our website, at VisitAugusta.com/corporate.

Finally, plans to relocate Augusta's visitor center and the offices of the CVB and Augusta Sports Council have been many years in the making, and are closer to becoming reality. The new, more visible location at 1010 Broad Street will provide new and improved services and experiences for visitors and residents. Downtown is growing, and we are excited to be part of the transformation.

To echo Augusta Mayor Davis, we have the opportunity to reach our potential, and the time is now. With a healthy hospitality industry, unprecedented opportunity, and armed strategic plans, the CVB is prepared to act, to lead, and to help create Augusta's future. A future which positions Augusta as a preferred destination to visit, work, and live.



Barry E. White

**PRESIDENT/CEO** AUGUSTA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

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## Visitor Impact



VISITOR SPENDING BREAKDOWN

**\$509.4**  
MILLION

## Economic Impact

Employment	Tax Relief Per Household	State Taxes	Local Taxes
<b>4,615</b> Jobs	<b>\$492</b> As a Result of Taxes Generated by Tourism	<b>\$21.3</b> Million	<b>\$14</b> Million

Source: Georgia Department of Economic Development

## Visitor Profile

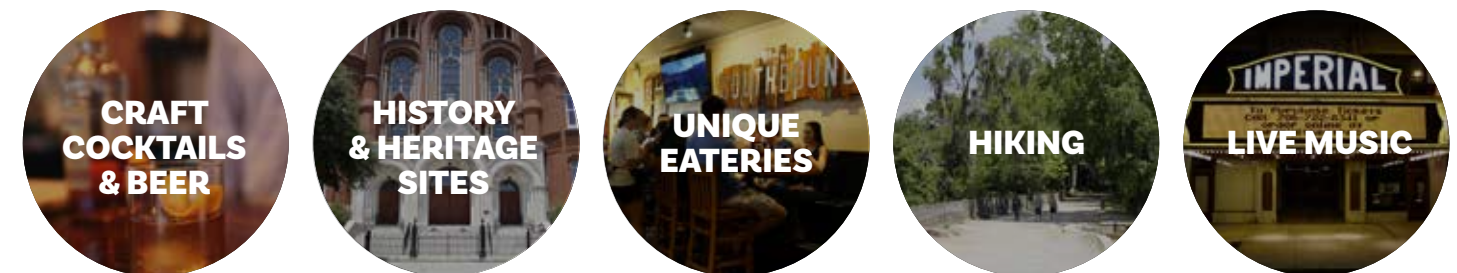
### Who is the Augusta Traveler?

<b>2.8</b> Average nights stayed	<b>\$50,000+</b> Average household income	<b>40</b> Average age	<b>76%</b> Use social media for travel
Well-educated, professional	Enjoys shopping, fine dining, historic sites, museums, and nightlife	Lives within driving distance	Travels without children

## Target Audiences



## Top Interests of Millennials



Source: Longwoods Travel USA, Augusta 2015 Visitors Report

# Marketing & Guest Experiences

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

## 2017 Marketing Objectives

- Develop and invest in a robust public relations program
- Utilize locals to tell Augusta's story
- Develop a content hub housed on VisitAugusta.com
- Develop group meeting markets with focus on religious, association, sports, and reunion
- Improve guest experiences through creative group and leisure services
- Enhance group servicing opportunities for meeting planners

## 2017 Film Marketing Objectives

- Provide first-class and proactive client support services to production companies
- Foster regional collaboration to ensure unified recruitment and servicing efforts
- Recruit and secure new productions to the region
- Join and maximize membership in the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI)

**IN 2017**  
The Augusta CVB will expand its film services and marketing efforts to position and promote the area as a preferred location for film and digital entertainment production to enhance economic growth in Augusta's River Region.

# 2017 Total Advertising Media INVESTMENT



# Advertising Samples



Print



Digital

# 2017 Media Plan

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>CO-OP MEDIA</b>												
Georgia Travel Guide 2018												
Southbound Magazine												
Facebook												
Digital Display												
Opt-in Email Campaign												
YouTube Pre-Roll Video												
<b>LEISURE MEDIA</b>												
Georgia Culinary Guide												
The Local Palate												
The Local Palate												
The Local Palate												
The Local Palate												
Facebook												
YouTube Pre-Roll Video												
Digital Display												
Pandora Radio												
<b>MEETINGS MEDIA</b>												
Georgia Society of Association Executives (GSAE) Connections Magazine												
GSAE Member Directory												
GSAE Digital												
Search Engine Marketing												

Print Digital

The New Augustan  
 Launched *The New Augustan*  
 magazine: A Celebration of  
 Augusta's River Region

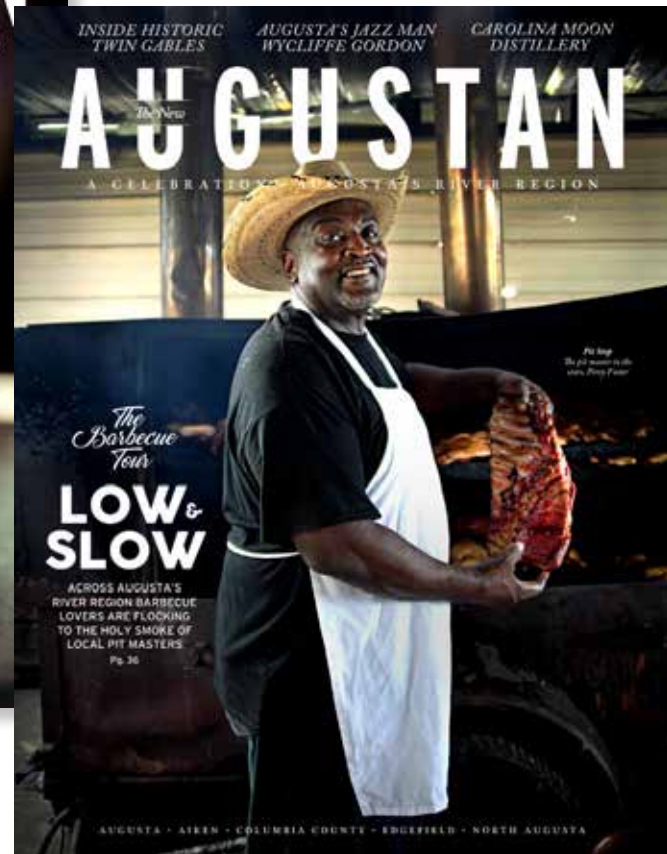
2016  
 Received Georgia  
 Association of Convention  
 & Visitors Bureaus'  
 (GACVB) award in the Best  
 Ideas Competition

Issue No. 1

79,900



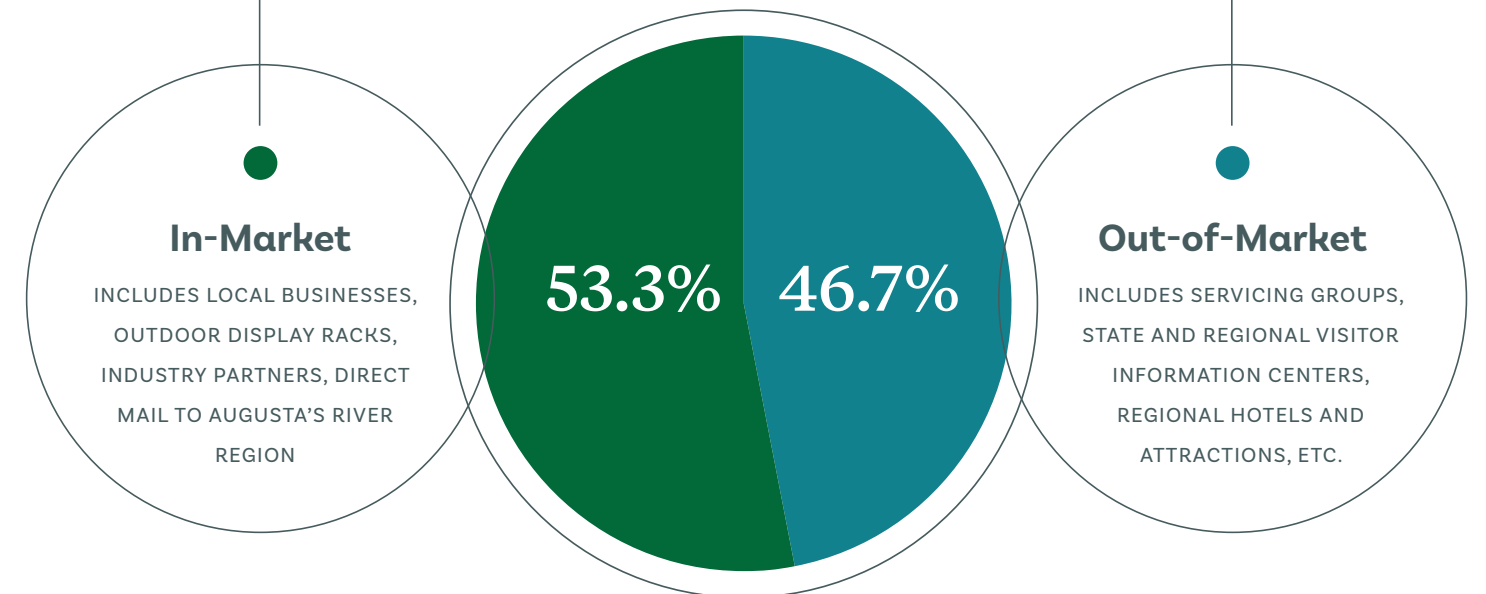
First Issue



Second Issue

A celebration of the spirit of Augusta's River Region, *The New Augustan* magazine is the authority on our distinctive style of Southern life—offering an ongoing narrative of her charm and energy, and giving our readers a novel look into the area's history and culture. Whether you are a local or guest, *The New Augustan* magazine offers stirring narrations of the diverse places and personalities that make Augusta and Augusta's River Region so captivating.

Magazines Distributed



“Just saw a copy of *The New Augustan*. It really looks great. Congratulations on putting together an awesome-looking magazine.”

—Peter B.

“*The New Augustan* is a beautiful showcase of what Augusta has to offer.”

—Winnie S.

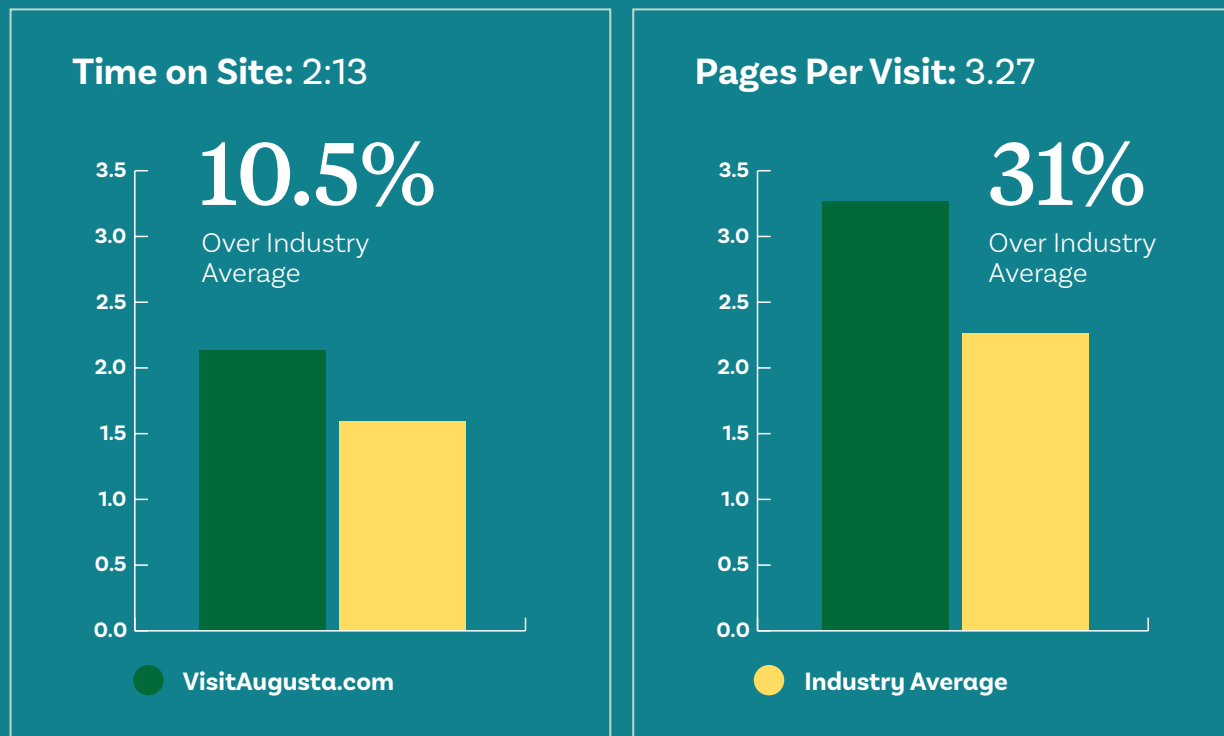
Because of the tremendous success of the inaugural issue, the Augusta CVB decided to move forward with a biannual publication. The second issue launched in October, and the third issue will be released in March 2017.

# VisitAugusta.com Launched a New Website

# VisitAugusta.com Top 5 Pages Visited

**Total Sessions**  
**206,803**

**Page Views**  
**677,203**



- 1. Events
- 2. Things to Do
- 3. Attractions
- 4. Food & Drink
- 5. Music & Nightlife

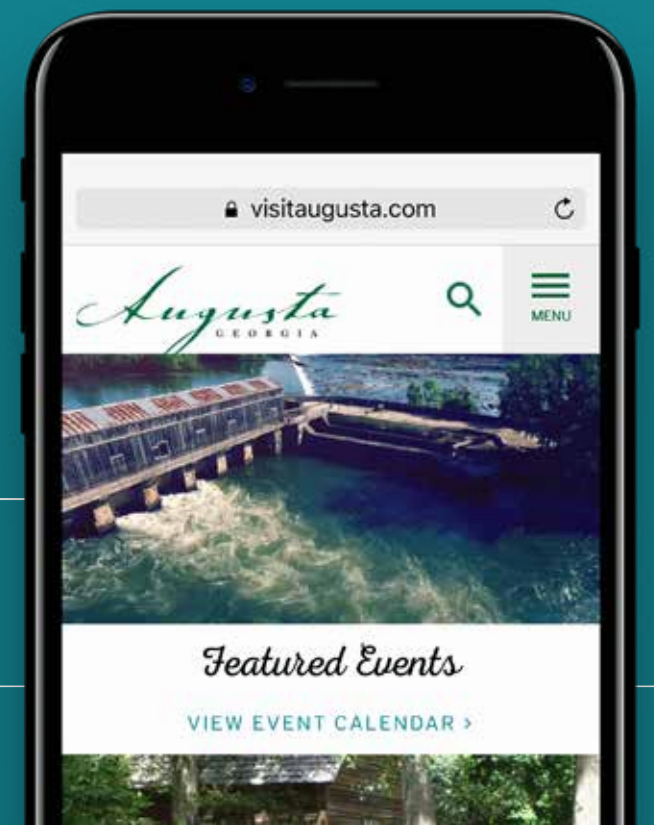
Source: Google Analytics and Simpleview Inc.

## VisitAugusta.com Top States of Origin



# 59%

59% of website visits were from a mobile device.



# Social Media


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


**HIGHLIGHT**  
 30+ Blogs  
 written/created on  
 VisitAugusta.com/blog


## NUMBER OF #LoveAugusta

ON INSTAGRAM & TWITTER

2,300+ (2016)    2,000+ (2015)    Increase of 13%

  
**Twitter Followers**  
**3,013**  
 (2016)  
 INCREASE OF  
**15%**

  
**Facebook Fans**  
**8,196**  
 (2016)  
 INCREASE OF  
**24%**

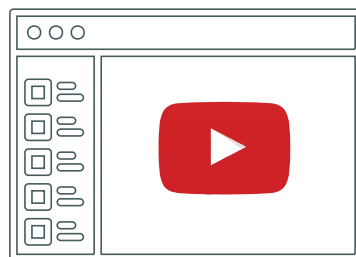
  
**Instagram Followers**  
**1,974**  
 (2016)  
 INCREASE OF  
**12%**

### Twitter Impressions

115,286 (2016)  
 Increase of 69%

### Facebook Organic Reach

676 (2016)  
 Increase of 84%



### YouTube Video Views

105,028 (2016)  
 Increase of 77%

# Public Relations

## Total Number of Impressions

# 182,809,706

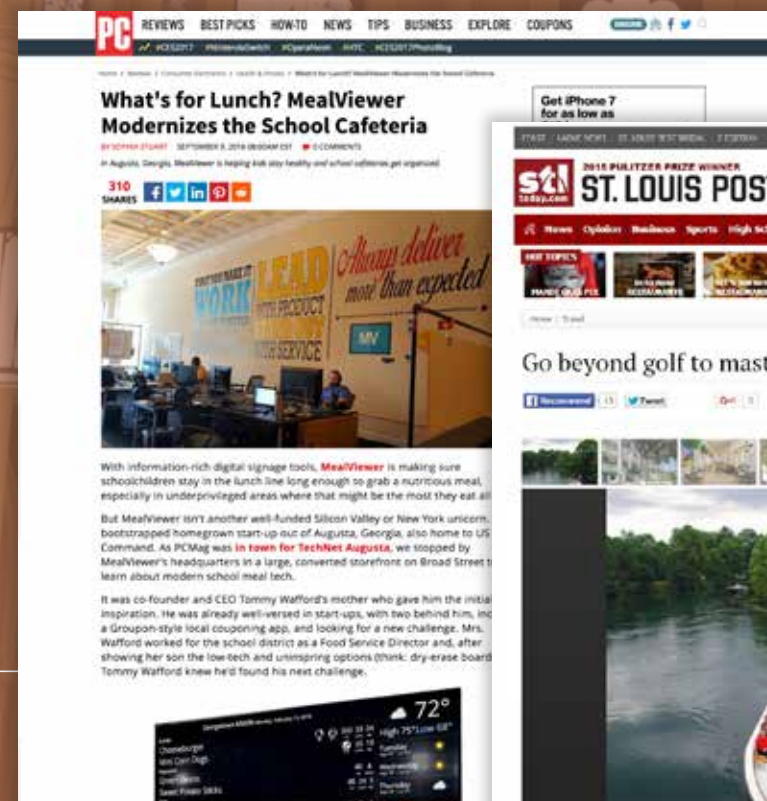
Print 8,316,360

Digital 174,493,346

  
**Travel Writers  
 Hosted**  
**18**

  
**Advertising  
 Equivalency**  
**\$2,151,892**

  
**Stories  
 Generated**  
**105**





# Guest Experiences

## 2017 Objectives

- Leisure, convention, and sports market development
- Improve guest experience through creative group and leisure services
- Enhanced digital promotion to meeting delegates prior to and during events
- Increased visibility through trade show promotional investments

2016 Total Estimated Economic Impact\*

# \$77,001,451

Groups Serviced

## 237

Delegates Serviced

## 323,313

### 2017 Trade Show Schedule

**EMERGE Religious Conference Management Association Trade Show**  
Chicago, IL

**Connect Marketplace** New Orleans, LA

**Connect FAITH** Cincinnati, OH

**Connect Georgia** Atlanta, GA

**Georgia Society of Association Executives Trade Show** Atlanta, GA

Trade Shows Attended **6** | Site Visits **31**

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

# Community Engagement

**Increase the community awareness of 1) visitor-related activities and attractions, and 2) the value of tourism and the CVB as an economic development partner.**

## 2017 Objectives

- Create and execute a community relations campaign to raise awareness of Augusta's offerings and CVB value
- Engage locals on social media

## 200+

People attended the annual State of Tourism Luncheon

## 90

Champions\* honored at the State of Tourism luncheon

### Record Breaking

Record participation at Augusta Destination Discovery Tour for frontline hospitality staff

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

## Masters of Hospitality

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

## 5

New in 2016, five attractions participated for the first time

## 123

123 front line hospitality staff nominated



# Destination Development

Enhance the visitor experience through destination development and visitor services.

## 2017 Objectives

- Promote and implement the destination blueprint and execute “early wins”
- Enhance and develop guest experiences
- Design and open the new visitor center
- Develop golf car tours



# Visitor Services

**HIGHLIGHT**  
New Visitor Center Coming in 2018

## Visitor Center

Total Visitors 18,501

## Retail Sales

2016 \$33,380.96

## Trolley

Trolley Tours 37

Passengers 599



**SHOP LOCAL**  
Augusta Honey Company available at the Augusta Visitor Center



# Operations and Governance

Function as a fiscally responsible and productive team.

## 2017 Objectives

- Oversee construction of the new office and visitor center
- Pursue sponsorships and funding partners for new office/visitor center
- Align staff responsibilities with strategic objectives
- Review and update by-laws

### HIGHLIGHT

Barry White  
Celebrates 25 Years  
with the CVB



# 2017 Staff and Board Directory

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

## Augusta CVB Staff

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Brenda Atkins</b><br>Administrative Assistant<br>brenda@visitaugusta.com<br>706.849.3245                     | <b>Paige Rodriguez</b><br>Convention Sales Manager<br>paige@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6617                |
| <b>Michelle Bovian</b><br>Convention Sales Manager<br>michelle@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6616                 | <b>Ashton Randall</b><br>Electronic Media Manager<br>ashton@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6607                |
| <b>Jennifer Bowen</b><br>Vice President of Destination Development<br>jennifer@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6613 | <b>Mary T. Sahn</b><br>Visitor Information Specialist<br>mary@visitaugusta.com<br>706.724.4067              |
| <b>Marjorie Chambers</b><br>Visitor Information Specialist<br>marjorie@visitaugusta.com<br>706.724.4067         | <b>Toni Seals-Johnson</b><br>Visitor Center Manager<br>toni@visitaugusta.com<br>706.724.4067                |
| <b>Deborah Dailey</b><br>Special Projects Coordinator<br>deborah@visitaugusta.com<br>706.849.3246               | <b>Lindsay Fruchtl</b><br>Vice President of Marketing & Sales<br>lindsay@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6606   |
| <b>Iman Hill</b><br>Group Services Manager<br>iman@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6615                             | <b>Trent Snyder</b><br>Vice President of Finance & Administration<br>trent@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6610 |
| <b>Carolyn Patricia Lewis</b><br>Visitor Information Specialist<br>carolyn@visitaugusta.com<br>706.724.4067     | <b>Barry White</b><br>President/CEO<br>barry@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6611                               |
| <b>Jay Markwalter</b><br>Director of Sales<br>jay@visitaugusta.com<br>706.823.6605                              |   |

## Board of Directors

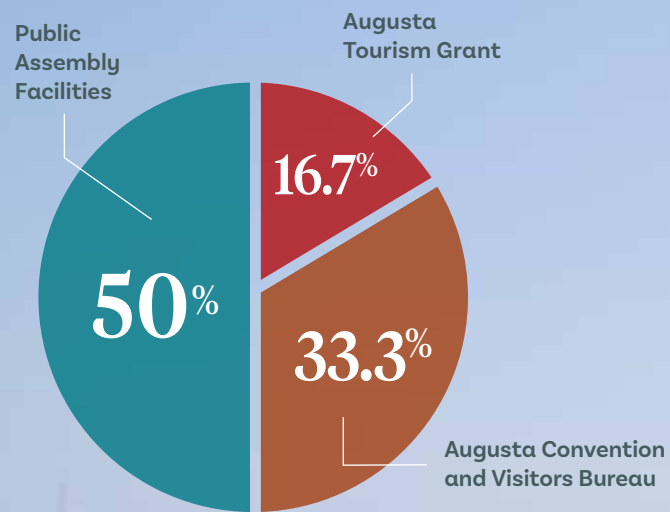
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Dennis Skelley</b><br>Chairman<br>Walton Foundation<br>for Independence                | <b>Velvet Perry</b><br>Perry Broadcasting<br>of Augusta                        |
| <b>Sue Parr</b><br>Vice Chair<br>Augusta Metro<br>Chamber of Commerce                     | <b>T. R. Reddy</b><br>Power Control Systems                                    |
| <b>Dayton Sherrouse</b><br>Secretary/Treasurer<br>Augusta Canal National<br>Heritage Area | <b>Krista Wight</b><br>Frog Hollow Hospitality<br>Group                        |
| <b>Eddie Bussey</b><br>Immediate Past Chairman<br>State Farm Insurance                    | <b>Stacie Adkins</b><br>Ex-Officio Augusta<br>Sports Council                   |
| <b>Mary Davis</b><br>Augusta Commission   | <b>Barry E. White</b><br>Ex-Officio Augusta<br>Convention & Visitors<br>Bureau |
| <b>Bill Fennoy</b><br>Augusta Commission  | <b>Scott Lewis</b><br>Legal Counsel<br>Fulcher Hagler                          |
| <b>Nancy Glaser</b><br>Augusta Museum of History  |  |
| <b>Joel Hortenstine</b><br>Singh Investment Group   |  |

### 2017 Board Meeting Dates

January 19	May 18	September 14
February 16	June 15	October 19
March 16	July 20	November 16
April 20	August 17	December 21

# The Augusta CVB

The official destination marketing and management organization enhancing the region's economy by positioning Augusta as a preferred visitor destination.



## Hotel Tax Allocations

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

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

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

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

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

# Augusta's River Region

## Together We Have a Lot More to Offer

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

When most people think of Augusta, they think the Masters® Golf Tournament and James Brown. But if you look past the city limits, the soul music, and the golf tournament, you'll find a diverse region of adventures and trailblazers.

*Augusta*  
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1450 Greene Street • Suite 110 • Augusta, GA 30901

**VISITAUGUSTA.COM**