



SAVANNAH
CONVENTION CENTER



SAVANNAH-GEORGIA CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY

ANNUAL REPORT | FY 2019

SAVANNAH-GEORGIA CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MARK V. SMITH, CHAIRMAN
Water Utility Management LLC

PATRICK FARRELL
Chatham County Commission

MARK SPADONI
Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa

JOSEPH MARINELLI, VICE CHAIR
Visit Savannah

MARTIN MILLER
Alcove Properties, LLC

HUGH "TRIP" TOLLISON
Savannah Economic Development Authority

LORRI SMITH, SECRETARY/TREASURER
Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp

BENJAMIN POLOTE, JR.
The Polote Corporation

ANSLEY WILLIAMS
Live Oak Restaurant Group

RUTH QUATTLEBAUM EDWARDS
Retired

JEANNE SEAVER
Jeanne Seaver Consulting Group, LLC



The **VISION** of the Savannah Convention Center is to be the premiere event destination delivering exceptional service and creating memorable experiences.

The **MISSION** of the Savannah Convention Center is to be the event venue of choice, driving economic growth and showcasing the uniqueness of Savannah, Chatham County, and the State of Georgia.

GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL AND MARITIME TRADE CENTER AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1995-2019

RUDY BAIRAS

REP. CARL GILLIARD

DENNIS BAXTER

BILL GRAINGER

DR. FELIX MAHER

OTIS BAZZARD

STEVE GREEN

DOUG MARCHAND

ALAN BEALS

BILLY HAIR

JOSEPH MARINELLI

REP. TOM BORDEAUX

ROB HERNANDEZ

MARTIN MILLER

MICHAEL BROWN

WILLIAM HUBBARD

HENRY MONSEES

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BROWN

ARNOLD JACKSON

BENJAMIN POLOTE, JR.

TONY CENTER

CATHERINE JACKSON

TED ROMINE

TREY COOK

GEORGE JACKSON

GREG SANDERS

TRAVIS COWART

DR. ROY JACKSON

ANNE SCHEER

MARK SMITH

STEPHANIE CUTTER

TED KLEISNER

HARRY SPIRIDES

BILLY STROZIER

GREG EADY

BOBBY LOCKETT

PATRICK SHAY

HUGH "TRIP" TOLLISON

RUTH QUATTLEBAUM EDWARDS

BOB MCALISTER

ROCHELLE SMALL-TONEY

ANSLEY WILLIAMS

ARTHUR GIGNILLIAT

TIMOTHY MACKKEY

LEE SMITH

LARION WILLIAMS

We express our sincere gratitude

to all of our previous board members that served on the board of the Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center Authority between 1995 and 2019. Thank you for your invaluable contributions and years of service!

GAME CHANGER (NOUN)

A newly introduced element or factor that changes an existing situation or activity in a significant way

LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

REP. CARL GILLIARD, House District 162

REP. CRAIG GORDON, House District 163

REP. BILL HITCHENS, House District 161

SEN. LESTER JACKSON, District 2

SEN. JESSE PETREA, District 166

REP. RON STEPHENS, District 164

SEN. BEN WATSON, District 1

Core Values

These four values shape every part of our culture and along with our Vision provide the foundation that guides our actions and decisions.



BE ONE

We achieve together.

BE HONEST

We hold ourselves and each other accountable to high ethical standards.

BE STEWARDS

We are focused on safety and committed to serving our customers, community, environment, and each other.

BE DYNAMIC

We seize the ever-changing, intense and exhilarating environment we work in.

Chairman's Report

On behalf of Governor Brian Kemp, The Chatham County Legislative Delegation, Chatham County, Garden City, Pooler, Port Wentworth, Savannah and Tybee Island, I am pleased to report a game-changing year of evolution and progress for our convention center.

We are so grateful to Governor Brian Kemp, our Legislative Delegation, and the State Legislature for their strong commitment to appropriate the necessary funds to complete the plans and the construction analysis for our much-needed expansion. This financial investment was coupled with the political support to elevate our board to a State Authority complete with all opportunities that accompany that special designation.

This year also brought about two name changes: For our facility, the name The Savannah Convention Center was chosen to acknowledge not only our location in the "Hostess City of the South," but the commitment this community has always shown for this economic driver. The Savannah Convention Center is now governed by the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority, a name selected to signify the strong partnership between our community

and the State of Georgia. The Authority was constituted in July 2019 and its members were sworn in by Governor Kemp in August. We would like to welcome our new authority members, County Commissioner Pat Farrell, Jeanne Seaver, Mark Spadoni, Lorri Smith and Ansley Williams. Their service will be complimented by the continued service of Ruth Quattlebaum Edwards, Joe Marinelli, Martin Miller, Ben Polote, Jr, Trip Tollison and myself. We are very excited and honored to serve our state and community on this Authority. We look forward to the 2020 legislative session with confidence that our shared vision of an expanded facility will become a reality underwritten by the necessary investment. Thank you to our outgoing members-at-large and all who previously served on the board of the Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center Authority over the past 24 years for their commitment and important work that has led us to this point.

2019 was another game-changing year for our Convention Center. We hosted 170 events welcoming 179,957 guests. We were designated by ConventionSouth as a top convention destination in the Southeast. We are in fact Coastal Georgia's Crown Jewel of Tourism with statewide economic



MARK SMITH
CHAIRMAN

impact. To date we have generated over \$1.3 billion of total economic impact for Georgia. This has been achieved under the managerial stewardship of the Georgia World Congress Center. We appreciate this partnership with GWCC and recently recognized their performance with a renewed contractual commitment through 2023.

These accolades and our economic performance underscore our need for expansion. We have more than 50 customers who tell us that they need more space. Our occupancy levels are at an all-time high and we routinely deny bookings due to lack of capacity. The time for expansion is now! We ask your support as an advocate at the State level for our expansion funding. Please join us on this exciting journey for our community and our great State of Georgia!

GWCCA Executive Director's Note



FRANK POE
GWCCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ABOUT THE GWCCA & THE SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER

The business relationship between the Savannah Convention Center and the Georgia World Congress Center Authority (GWCCA) links the state's two most popular visitor destinations, creating a marketing powerhouse that drives new business and tax revenues into the economy.

"The Georgia World Congress Center Authority continues to be honored to manage the Savannah Convention Center. Under the Board's leadership, our partnership over the past five years has seen revenues increase 100 percent while realizing a 71 percent loss reduction. A valuable asset for the state of Georgia, the Savannah Convention Center once again increased the number of events hosted, continued to provide excellent customer service based on customer surveys and support the continued growth in room nights in Savannah and Chatham County."



General Manager's Letter



SHERRIE SPINKS
GENERAL MANAGER

I am thrilled to share that FY2019 was a year of major game changers for the Savannah Convention Center. From Governor Kemp and the General Assembly creating the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority with a new governing board and six appointments by the Governor, to hosting a record 170 individual events at the facility, to transitioning from a private food service company to our own in-house full service food and beverage team, these changes

and achievements have us ready for an expansion and the opportunity to host the larger events and customers that are racing to our facility.

The year started with our board approving the game-changing installation of our new name and logo on the exterior of our building (in lights) facing the millions of visitors that visit River Street each year. After 19 years, those countless visitors finally know that the large building across the river is the Savannah Convention Center... and we are ready to welcome each one of them to our state-of-the-art facility!

Some of our team's additional game changing achievements this year include:

- *Increasing the diversity of our clients and hosting more than 80 new events at the facility including the Northwestern Mutual South Regional Meeting, ATI National Nurse Educator Summit, and the Association*

of Pediatric Hematology's Oncology Nurses' Annual Conference

- *Contributing a record number of 7,000+ hours of community service hours by our staff*
- *Increasing our already impressive customer service scores to nearly 4.8 out of 5*
- *Achieving our highest ever building revenue of \$8,915,981*

And of course, the most significant game changer for us this year was the approval of an additional \$13.7 million from the State of Georgia, bringing the total financial commitment to our expansion to \$23 million to complete the architectural design and start pre-construction of our much needed expansion.

These exciting changes have laid the groundwork for the biggest game changer of all – the expansion of the Savannah Convention Center. We are ready!

Expansion Updates

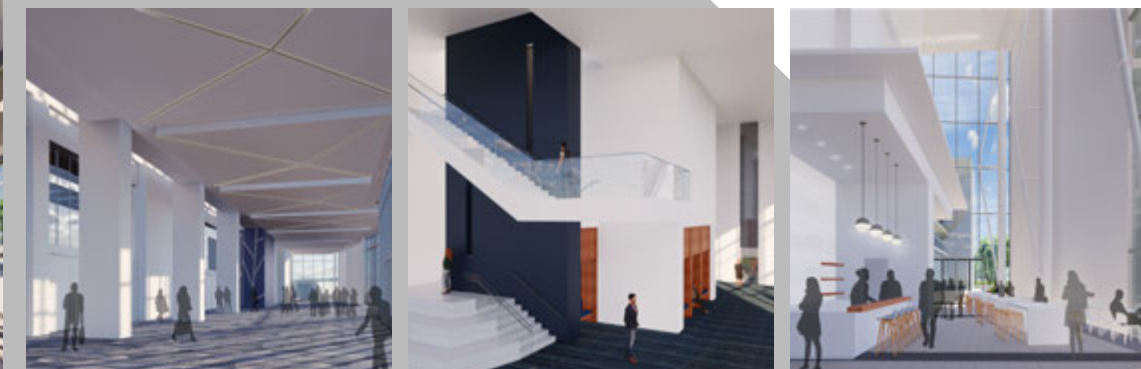
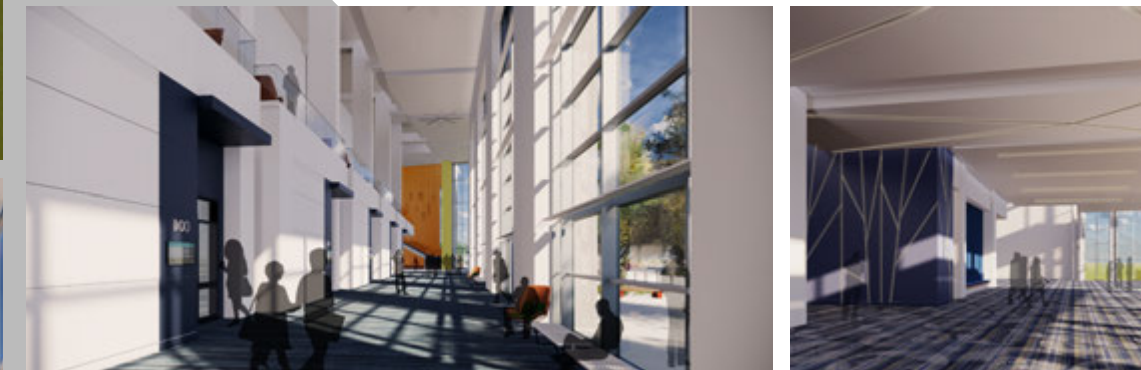
Since opening in 2000, the Savannah Convention Center has served a wide variety of clients and hosted a diverse array of events; however, the need to expand has become obvious. Demand for more space from our customers prompted a feasibility study which confirmed the need for expansion.

Clark Construction was hired by the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) in 2018 and an additional 100,000 square foot exhibit hall, 40,000 square foot ballroom, 15 meeting rooms and 900+ parking spaces have been planned for the Savannah Convention Center.

At the 2019 Georgia Governor's Tourism Conference, Governor Brian P. Kemp acknowledged that Georgia was the top state for business for the seventh year in a row and recognized the performance and impact of the state's tourism community. He clearly indicated his support of our expansion by signing a bill into law that created the new Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority to oversee operations as well as allow him six direct

appointments to the new state board. Governor Kemp and the Georgia General Assembly have approved a total of \$23 million in funding to complete the design and pre-construction for the expansion project.

The projected growth and development of our facility is one in which many are invested and eagerly anticipating. Upon completion, the expanded Savannah Convention Center will make our city and state the ideal place for some of the world's largest and most respected businesses and organizations to visit, invest, and/or relocate.





Outstanding Employees

At the Savannah Convention Center, our team is our greatest asset. Nothing would be possible without the dedicated, hard-working, and talented staff that work tirelessly each day to ensure that our clients have the very best event and experience possible. These employees shined particularly bright this fiscal year:



EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER - Q1

Gary Triplett

OPERATIONS

“Always on time for his shifts and willing to help any department in any way he can, Gary is a hard worker and a team player. He responds to all departmental calls quickly and efficiently and has taken ownership of maintaining all housekeeping equipment and preparing show floors prior to events.”



EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER - Q2

Horace Taylor

STEWARDSHIP

“Horace is always on time for work, and when he’s here, he works with everyone and every department. If anything needs to be done, Horace is already out there doing it. He is a hard worker and pays attention to the smallest of details in his work. He never stops until the task is done!”



EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER - Q3

Kimberly Phillips

EVENT SERVICES

“Kimberly goes above and beyond to assist everyone. In addition to providing great customer service to clients, she has always been willing to help her colleagues as well. She’s always early to work to make sure that her clients are taken care of as well as other Event Managers’ clients. She goes above and beyond.”



EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER - Q4

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR








Palamer “Pam” Moore

PUBLIC SAFETY

“Pam arrives each day with a positive attitude and a smile on her face. She welcomes every guest, client, and co-worker with a friendly greeting and is known for her exemplary customer service skills. When she’s not busy assisting guests with questions, directions, and restaurant recommendations, you’ll find her filling in as our front desk receptionist. Pam is a true team player, consistently going above and beyond to provide assistance whenever and wherever needed, and she is completely committed to making sure that everyone’s first impression of the Savannah Convention Center is an excellent one.”




SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER FY 2019

REVENUES

						
Food & Beverage	Event Labor	Space Rental	AV/Internet	Parking	Utility Services	Miscellaneous
\$5,707,045	\$403,821	\$1,317,010	\$501,459	\$468,434	\$304,565	\$213,647

RECORD FACILITY REVENUES **\$8,915,981**

EXPENSES



			
Operations	Sales, Finance, Executive	Food & Beverage	Overhead
\$2,734,876	\$1,961,753	\$3,184,112	\$1,344,714

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$9,225,455**

NET INCOME (LOSS) **(\$309,474)**

SAVANNAH-GEORGIA CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY

REVENUES

		
Center	Hotel/Motel Tax	Miscellaneous
\$8,915,981	\$4,290,741	\$507,505

TOTAL REVENUES **\$13,714,227**

EXPENSES

		
Center	Contract/Miscellaneous	Equipment/Projects
\$9,225,455	\$990,801	\$709,259

TOTAL EXPENDITURES **\$10,925,515**

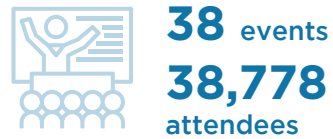
NET INCOME (LOSS) BEFORE DEPRECIATION & CAPITAL DEPRECIATION	\$2,788,712
DEPRECIATION	\$441,317
CAPITAL EXPENSES	\$1,078,450
RESERVE FOR ROOF REPLACEMENT	\$200,000
NET INCOME (LOSS) AFTER DEPRECIATION & CAPITAL	\$1,068,945

Economic Impact

The Savannah Convention Center is a world-class, state-of-the-art facility that has generated record breaking revenue, sparked re-investment in the surrounding area, and increased lodging occupancy in Chatham County. The Savannah Convention Center is one of the economic engines of Coastal Georgia and the anchor of the tourism community, creating thousands of jobs and contributing extraordinary economic lift to the state of Georgia.



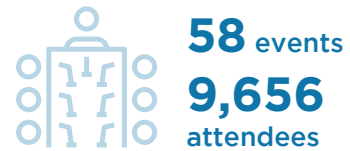
Trade Shows/Conventions



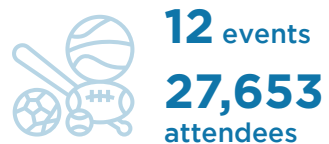
Public/Consumer Shows



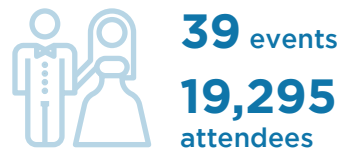
Meetings



Sporting Events



Banquets/Weddings



Graduations



Films/Festivals



\$120.3 MILLION

FY2019 Economic Impact to Georgia

\$1.3 BILLION

Total Economic Impact to Georgia

Capital Projects

The Savannah Convention Center is a unique and memorable venue for successful meetings, trade shows, and special events. We continuously reinvest in our building and its features to remain competitive and able to provide the best possible accommodations for our clients.

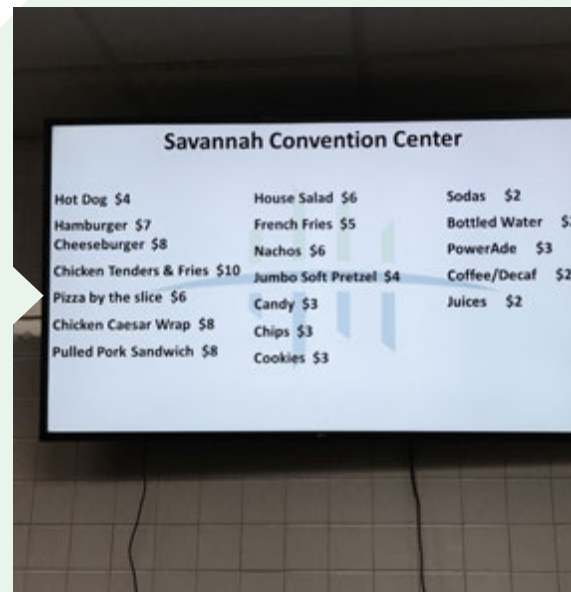
As a facility with a LEED Gold certification, a mark of quality and achievement in green building, we continue to make improvements as we consistently strive to be more energy and resource-efficient in all aspects of operations.

Some of this year's key projects include:

INSTALLED NEW JANUS VIDEO INFORMATION SYSTEM



NEW CONCESSION STAND MONITORS



REPLACED BALLROOM SHADES



NEW EXTERIOR SIGNAGE

Installed new 5' 4" letters of the name of the facility on the River Side along with adding our new logo

REPLACED EXTERIOR LIGHT POLES IN BRYAN SQUARE AND ACROSS THE RIVERFRONT OF THE FACILITY

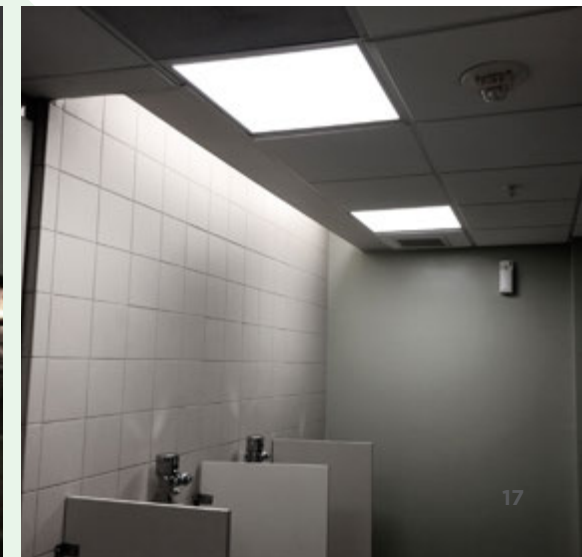
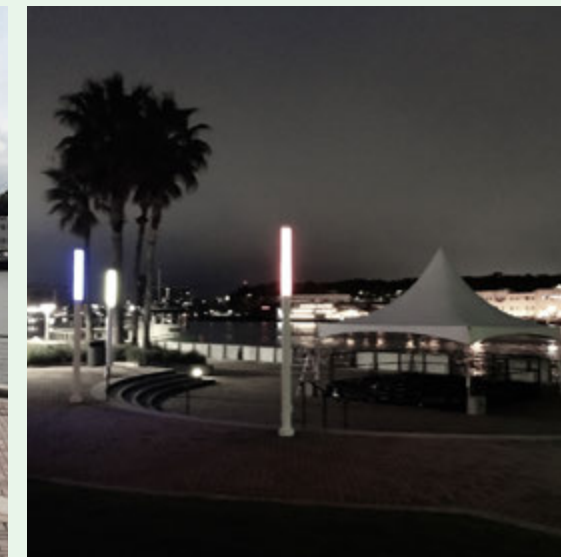
Replaced existing 175 metal halide light poles with new Nova LED fixtures and NLS poles that use only 40 watts. (Wattage reduction of 135 watts per pole at 65 total poles for a total wattage reduction of 8,775 watts)

REPLACED ORIGINAL DISHWASHER WITH A NEW HOBART FT1000 DISHWASHER

82% more water efficient (FT900 used 324 gallons an hour and new FT1000 only uses 58 gallons an hour)

MODIFICATION TO PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Replaced existing light fixtures that were 52 watts with new LED panels that are 30 watts and reduced the amount of fixtures needed. Installed new eco-friendly ceiling tile with humi-guard to prevent mold and mildew



Community Stewardship

In addition to being committed to our customers, the Savannah Convention Center team is equally dedicated to serving our community, environment, and each other.

For 2019, leadership at the Savannah Convention Center

set a goal for employees to complete **3,000 HOURS** of community service. The goal was far exceeded, as staff logged **7,600+ HOURS** by the end of the fiscal year. Non-profits supported included the 200 Club of the Coastal Empire, the

Emmaus House, Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Keep Savannah Beautiful, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the Salvation Army, the Savannah Harbor Foundation, Union Mission, and more than a dozen additional events and organizations.

Sales & Marketing

With a record number of events, record rental revenue, and high customer satisfaction scores, FY2019 was an incredibly successful year for the Savannah Convention Center's sales and marketing department. The team surpassed their revenue goal of

\$1,209,500 with a final rental revenue of **\$1,338,708**.

The diversity of our customers and the types of events held at the facility are rapidly increasing as is the amount of leads being received. The sales team set a goal of booking 30 new events

for 2019 and beyond, and in turn, they nearly doubled that goal with more than 80 new events booked during 2019. With numerous event organizers and meeting planners booking repeat events as well as events several years in advance, our future looks bright as we move forward together.



NEW CLIENTS/EVENTS HOSTED AT THE SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER IN 2019:

- 20th Century Fox
- AmChar Wholesale
- Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses 2018 Annual Conference
- ATI National Nurse Educator Summit
- Constitutional Officers Association of Georgia, Inc.
- Great Dane Conference
- Ingram Micro
- International Biomass Conference and Expo
- LERN - Learning Resource Network
- Northwestern Mutual
- Precepts LLC - Spa Show
- Savannah College of Art & Design Graduation
- Stellar Entertainment

Savannah Convention Center staff collected 73 sleeping bags, 36 packs of diapers, 94 pillows and more than 1,000 personal care items for Union Mission's Harvesting for Good Campaign for the homeless and families in need.

Food & Beverage

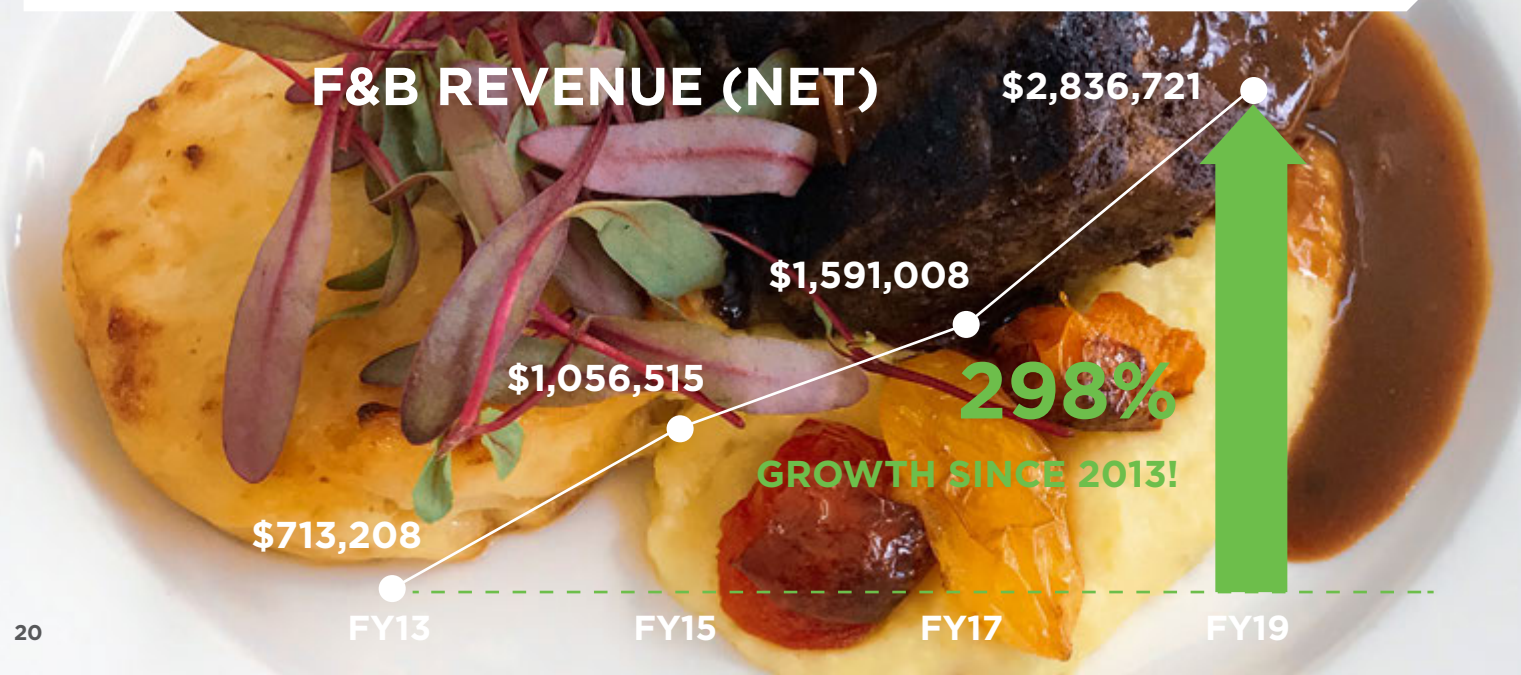
With the largest kitchen in Chatham County and an award-winning culinary team, The Savannah Convention Center catering department can accommodate any event from business meetings to formal galas. We're proud to be a member of Georgia Grown, a statewide network of farmers and suppliers, which has allowed us to increase our ability to offer local, sustainable options to all of our visitors.

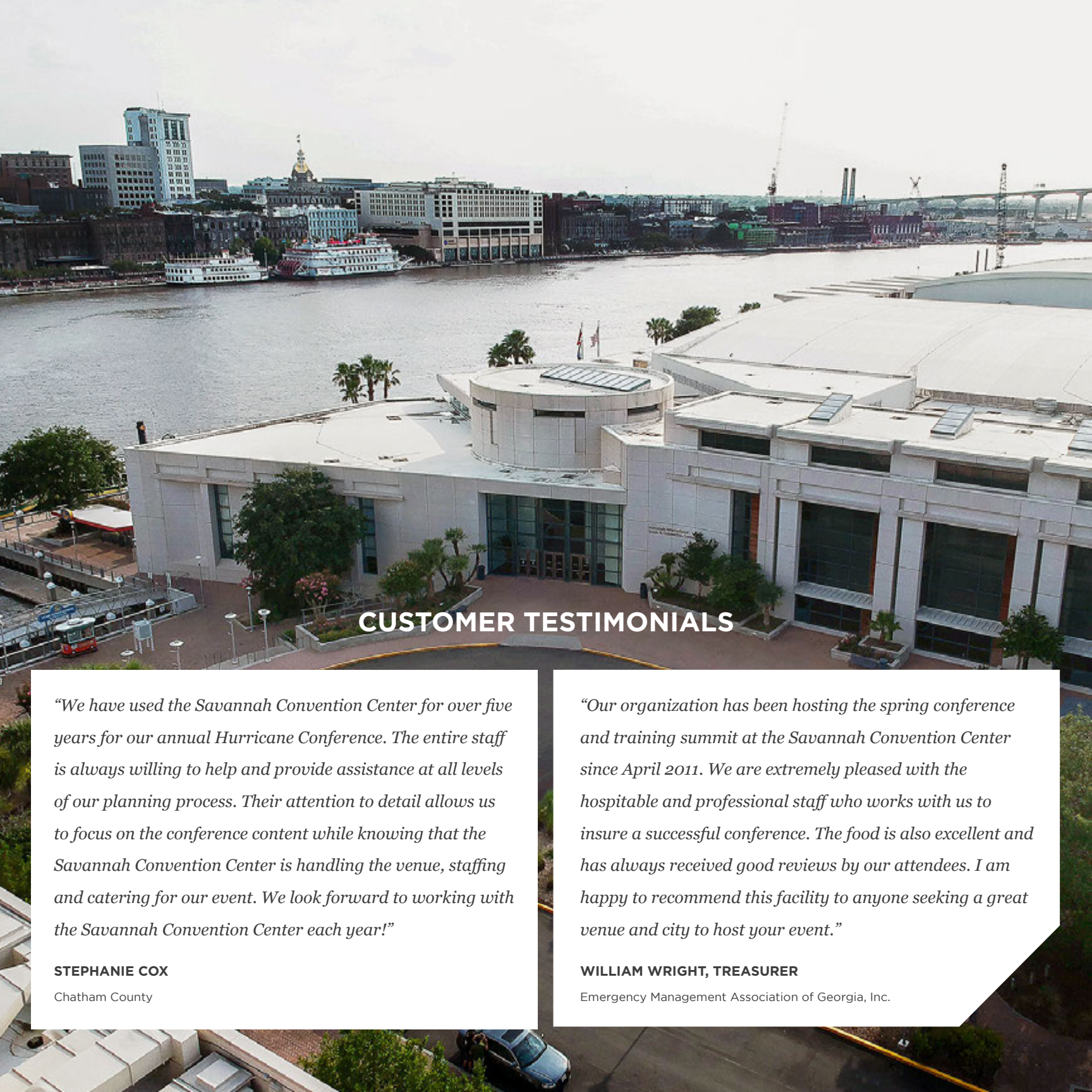
We've also adopted a noteworthy amount of green initiatives which include but are not limited to:

- Participating in an active food donation program
- Using certified sustainable fish and seafood
- Donating used frying oil to be recycled and converted to animal feed and bio-diesel

- Utilizing plates and utensils made of 100% compostable and disposable materials
- Recycling plastic, aluminum/tin cans, paper, and cardboard products in a co-mingled single stream program throughout the entire facility

At the beginning of FY 2019, the Savannah Convention Center brought catering in-house instead of continuing to utilize a third party food and beverage provider. This was a decision and effort that has resulted in a significant revenue increase and higher customer satisfaction rates. According to our customer evaluation surveys, the Savannah Convention Center Food and Beverage team scored higher in areas such as responsiveness, menu quality, cleanliness, quality of food, quality/appearance of service staff, and overall experience than we did compared to the year prior to the change.





CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

“We have used the Savannah Convention Center for over five years for our annual Hurricane Conference. The entire staff is always willing to help and provide assistance at all levels of our planning process. Their attention to detail allows us to focus on the conference content while knowing that the Savannah Convention Center is handling the venue, staffing and catering for our event. We look forward to working with the Savannah Convention Center each year!”

STEPHANIE COX
Chatham County

“Our organization has been hosting the spring conference and training summit at the Savannah Convention Center since April 2011. We are extremely pleased with the hospitable and professional staff who works with us to insure a successful conference. The food is also excellent and has always received good reviews by our attendees. I am happy to recommend this facility to anyone seeking a great venue and city to host your event.”

WILLIAM WRIGHT, TREASURER
Emergency Management Association of Georgia, Inc.

Customer Service & Satisfaction

Each member of the Savannah Convention Center staff holds themselves and each other accountable to high standards. In FY 2019, we utilized the eAutoFeedback software to evaluate our clients’ experience and satisfaction with our facilities, services, and staff. We are proud to celebrate the following successes:



BUILDING OPERATIONS STAFF

The overall impression that planners had of our Building Operations Staff is high with an average score of **94.5** out of 100.



SALES STAFF

The overall impression that planners had of our Sales Staff is very high with an average score of **95.6** out of 100 which is an “Excellent” rating.



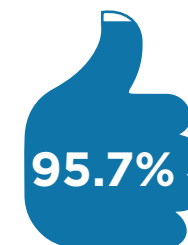
FOOD & BEVERAGE STAFF

The overall impression that planners had of our Food & Beverage Staff is very high with an average score of **96.5** out of 100 which is an “Excellent” rating.



EVENT SERVICES STAFF

The overall impression that planners had of our Event Services Staff was very high with an average score of **97.4** out of 100 which is an “Excellent” rating.



Overall, **95.7%** of our clients that completed our post-event survey indicated that they would recommend the Savannah Convention Center to a colleague.

Our Community Partners

SAVANNAH
savannahga.gov



GARDENCITY



OUR FUTURE



SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER



ONE INTERNATIONAL DRIVE
SAVANNAH, GA 31421

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