



SAVANNAH
CONVENTION CENTER

Annual Report FY20

Be Our Guest

THE SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER PRIDES ITSELF ON THE CUSTOMER BEING THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. SERVICE AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL ARE OUR EXPERTISE.

WE RECEIVE COUNTLESS CUSTOMER SERVICE REMARKS PRAISING OUR STAFF AND EFFORTS IN PROVIDING A SUCCESSFUL EVENT. THE SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER INVITES YOU TO "BE OUR GUEST".

TABLE OF

Contents



05 **Mission, Vision and Values**



06 **Greetings from the Governor, Brian P Kemp**



08 **Messages from Frank Poe and Sherrie Spinks**



07 **Letter from Chairman, Mark Smith**



08 **Board of Directors/ Legislative Delegation**



10 **Expansion Feature Story**



14 **Financials**



SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER

16 **Community Service/ Employee Recognition**

BE OUR GUEST

Our Mission

TO BE THE EVENT VENUE OF CHOICE,
DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SHOWCASING THE UNIQUENESS OF SAVANNAH,
CHATHAM COUNTY AND THE STATE OF GEORGIA.



18 **Capital Projects**



Our Vision

BE THE PREMIER EVENT DESTINATION,
DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AND
CREATING MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES.

20 **Customer Testimonials**



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.

- 1 **BE ONE**
We achieve together.
- 2 **BE HONEST**
We hold ourselves and each other accountable to high ethical standards.
- 3 **BE STEWARDS**
We are focused on safety and committed to serving our customers, community, environment, and each other.
- 4 **BE DYNAMIC**
We seize the ever-changing intense and exhilarating environment we work in.

23 **Area Partners**



22 **Happenings in Savannah**



Greetings from the Governor



B R I A N P K E M P
83rd Governor of Georgia

Georgia's tourism industry is a key economic driver in communities throughout the Peach State. With beautiful natural resources, historic sites, world renowned restaurants, and our unmatched Southern hospitality, it's no surprise that families, businesses, and organizations around the country have Georgia on their minds.

In Coastal Georgia, the Savannah Convention Center is a magnet for tourism, investment, and economic development. From conventions to concerts, exhibitions to training exercises, this state-of-the-art facility plays host to some of the world's most notable companies and causes. Supporting thousands of jobs and businesses, the Savannah Convention Center is truly the crown jewel of "The Hostess City of the South".

During the pandemic, as travel came to a standstill and group gatherings were indefinitely postponed, local leaders utilized the Savannah Convention Center as a meal preparation hub and supply distribution center to support those struggling to weather the economic storm created by COVID-19 containment efforts. Even in these challenging times, the Savannah Convention Center finds a way to bring value and opportunity to the local community and beyond.

With an expansion project underway, the future of the Savannah Convention Center is bright. This investment will yield an incredible economic return for our state, ensure an outstanding experience for our visitors, and create a bright future for all Georgians.

Letter from Chairman



M A R K S M I T H
Chairman

"It was the best of times,
it was the worst of times."

So begins the classic "The Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens. The sentence also summarizes the fiscal year 2020 for the Savannah Convention Center.

The first eight months of the year were fantastic. We were beating our budget significantly and headed for operational positive cash flow for only the second time since opening in 2000. We were having our absolute best year ever. It was the best of times.

Then March arrived with the COVID-19 virus. St Patrick's Day was canceled, and with it, the Hibernian Society Banquet. The cancellations mounted, and rescheduling began. Many of the rescheduled events were also canceled. It was the worst of times.

Our staff rose to the occasion. Emergency planning was implemented. Extensive cleaning and sanitation protocols were established. We eventually attained Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC) certification for creating and maintaining a rigorous and effective cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention program.

During the year, we worked closely with Governor Kemp's office on our expansion. We kept them informed of our progress on the plans and the anticipated pricing of our addition. We secured a commitment from the Governor's office for a \$70 million allocation in the state bond package to enable us to begin construction of the new building in 2021.

The pandemic interrupted the Legislative session before a budget could be passed. When the Legislature returned in June, our appropriation was approved. It was the best of times.

Thank you Governor Kemp; thank you Speaker Ralston, Majority Leader Burns, Delegation Dean Ron Stephens, and the entire Georgia House of Representatives. Thank you Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan, Senators Watson and Jackson, and the entire Georgia State Senate. We appreciate your vision for and confidence in the Savannah Convention Center.

We now turn our attention to executing the expansion. Construction plans are complete, and pricing has been secured by Clark Construction. We are ready to pour concrete. Opening is

scheduled for the summer of 2023. The task before us now is to bring the project in ahead of schedule and under budget.

I cannot write enough good things about Sherrie Spinks and the incredible staff she has assembled. They have gone above and beyond the call of duty with our customers, employees, and facilities in this time of unprecedented turmoil.

I would also like to acknowledge Frank Poe and the staff of the Georgia World Congress Center for providing oversight, direction, insight, and support to the Savannah Convention Center.

We believe we will experience a sharp recovery when the pandemic subsides. We believe there is tremendous pent-up demand for meeting events and trade shows. The pandemic has proven that people are social creatures and demand interaction socially and economically.

We look forward to the return to normalcy with great confidence. We will be ready!

Message from Frank Poe

Message from Sherrie Spinks



F R A N K P O E
GWCCA Executive Director

For the past six years, the Georgia World Congress Center Authority has served in a management role with the Savannah Convention Center – a business relationship that links the state’s two most popular visitor destinations and drives new business and tax revenues into the economy. This partnership has seen its share of successes and a few challenges along the way, but nothing that could have prepared us for 2020.

Despite the ramifications of a global pandemic quelling what was to be the best financial year on record, the Savannah Convention Center’s collective spirit could not be broken. From the team members’ resolve to assist customers with rebooking canceled events and re-imagining shows with social distancing protocols in place to achieving GBAC STAR™ accreditation, the Center’s focus on delivering exceptional service paid off with shows returning to the venue over the summer.

The Center gained momentum on its expansion project during the fiscal year thanks to the General Assembly’s approval of additional bond funds. The vision for a larger venue will double the size of exhibit hall space and undoubtedly bring new business and other revenue to the city, region, and state is coming into focus.

The future looks bright for the Savannah Convention Center.



S H E R R I E S P I N K S
General Manager

Our theme is “Be Our Guest”. With only 18 staff members to manage operations, we have all learned new skills and cross-trained in different areas. While it has tested our resilience and determination, it’s also turned out to be a great experience.

It has been a remarkable year for the Savannah Convention Center. We were on track to have our best year yet for revenue and profit before the worldwide pandemic effectively shut down business travel. It was something none of us could have anticipated, and it led to cancellations, postponements, and many other challenges. The silver lining to the dark clouds is that we are blessed with a passionate and talented team that has rallied impressively during this crisis.

That effort was rewarded this year when the center was notified that we had earned the Global Biorisk Advisory Council STAR Accreditation. GBAC Star Accreditation is recognition for creating and maintaining a rigorous and effective cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention program. The GBAC

Accreditation has been a significant factor in making our customers feel comfortable in returning to the convention center, and we have used it in the marketing of our facility. Come “Be Our Guest” and be comfortable and safe while you enjoy our beautiful city.

This is also a time to celebrate approval by the General Assembly and Governor Kemp of \$70 million in funds for our much-needed facility expansion. The expansion is already underway. New cooling towers have been constructed, and electrical and gas utilities have been relocated. Construction of the new building will begin in 2021, with completion of the expanded facility expected in 2023. The new development will double the building’s size offering the opportunity to host larger groups and more simultaneous events. The project generates significant economic benefits for the region and Georgia, including 600 construction jobs. Throughout construction, the facility will continue to host events – come “Be Our Guest” and watch our exciting progress in 2021 and beyond.

Board of Directors

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
- Rep. Jesse Petrea, District 166
- Rep. Ron Stephens, District 164
- Sen. Ben Watson, District 1
- Rep. Mickey Stephens, District 165

Mark Smith,
Chairman
Water Utility Management LLC

Joseph Marinelli,
Vice Chairman
Visit Savannah

Lorri Smith,
Secretary/Treasurer
Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp

Ansley Williams
Live Oak Restaurant Group

Benjamin Polote, Jr.
The Polote Corporation

Jeanne Seaver
Jeanne Seaver Consulting Group, LLC

Mark Spadoni
Consultant

Hugh “Trip” Tollison
Savannah Economic Development Authority

Martin Miller
Alcove Properties, LLC

Patrick Farrell
Chatham County Commission

Ruth Quattlebaum Edwards
Retired

EXPANSION PLANS

Northeast view

Expansion

Tourism is a staple of Georgia's economy and workforce, generating \$63 billion in annual economic impact to the state, supporting 460,000 jobs in Georgia, over 28,000 of those in the Savannah area. To keep this vital industry growing, we must remain competitive. For tourism to thrive, we must expand one of Georgia's most prized facilities.

Between 2017 and 2019, the Georgia General Assembly approved \$24 million for design and planning. In 2020, Governor Kemp and the Legislators approved another \$70 million to begin construction, and the project is now underway.

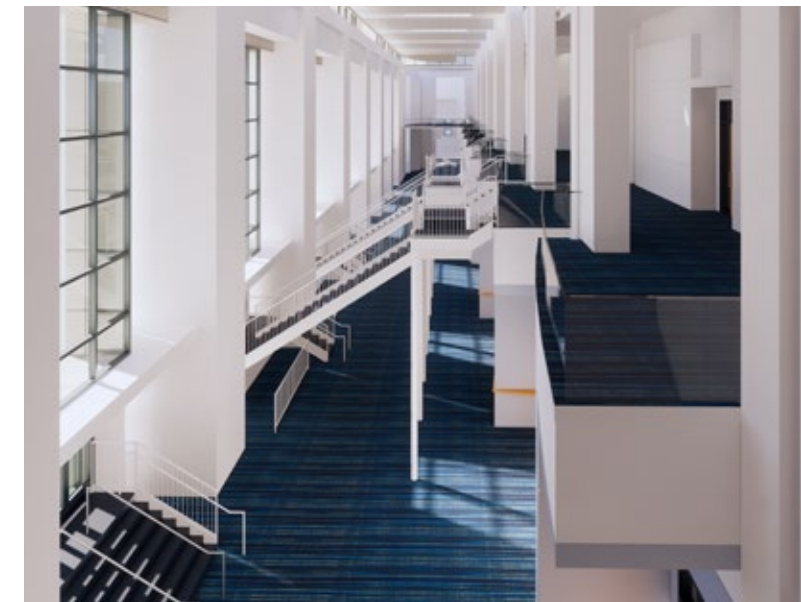
The \$271 million-dollar expansion will double the exhibit hall space to accommodate more extensive indoor exhibits and attendees, fund a 40,000 square-foot ballroom, 15 new meeting rooms, and a 900-space parking garage.

Upon completion, the expanded Savannah Convention Center will make our city, region, and state the ideal place

for some of the world's largest and most respected businesses and organizations to visit, invest, or relocate. This expansion will create an economic benefit in our community with more shoppers, more diners, more customers, and more jobs.

The Savannah Convention Center's economic impact will generate more funds created in sales tax revenue for our local schools, public safety, increased investments in tourism, more infrastructure projects, and recreation. Every dollar spent will generate more economic opportunity for Coastal Georgia families and all of Georgia and impact every corner of our state. The return on the investment will be tremendous and obvious.

Georgia is the top state for business and a leader in agriculture, aerospace, cybersecurity, manufacturing, and tourism. Tourism can be greatly enhanced by expanding the Savannah Convention Center. With local, regional, and statewide support and collaboration, we can foster growth, generate opportunity, and ensure prosperity for generations to come.



Expansion Timeline

- 2000 Savannah International Trade and Convention Center opened.
- 2014-2017 Demand for more space leads General Assembly to approve \$3 million to start design.
- 2018 The General Assembly approved an additional \$6.3 million to continue design and engineering design.



2019

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed a bill creating the new Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority to oversee the expansion's operations. \$13.7 million was approved to complete the design and pre-construction.

2020

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed FY2021 budget which included \$70 million in funding for the Savannah Convention Center Expansion.

2023

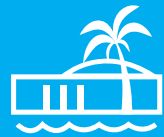
Opening of the expansion of the current facility.



Financials

SAVANNAH-GEORGIA CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY

Revenue



Center
\$6,862,499



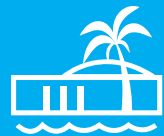
Hotel/Motel Tax
\$3,372,930



Misc.
\$253,322

Total Revenues \$10,488,751

Expense



Center
\$7,830,935



Contract / Misc.
\$741,663



Equipment/Projects
\$748,850

Total Expense \$9,321,448

Net Income (loss) before Depreciation and Capital	\$1,167,303
Depreciation	\$586,543
Capital Projects	\$815,003
Reserve for roof replacement	\$300,000
Net Income (loss) after Depreciation and Capital	\$(534,243)
GO Bond Revenue	\$6,877,292



Community Service/ Employee Recognition

The Savannah Convention Center is dedicated to serving our community, environment and each other. 3000 hours of stewardship were completed by the employees. A list of some of the non-profits supported during fiscal year 2020:

- Gadsden Advisory Council
- Emmaus House Morning Volunteers
- Keep Savannah Beautiful Board
- Savannah Harbor Foundation Board
- Old Savannah City Mission Food Donations
- Overcoming By Faith - Children's Ministry
- Student Leadership Program
- Tourism Leadership Council Board Meeting Labor
- Tourism Leadership Council Executive Committee Board
- Operation Clean Tybee Beach
- Cathedral of St John The Baptist
- Summer 500 Mentorship Program
- Teacher Supply Giveaway
- United Way Payroll Dollars Pledged
- 200 Club Golf Tournament
- Emmaus House - Harvesting For Good Campaign
- Baptist Church of Ebenezer - Treasurer, Women's Ministry Leader
- Savannah Food & Wine Festival
- One Hundred Miles Organization
- Reindeer Run
- Salvation Army Angel Tree
- Valor Awards
- Junior League of Savannah

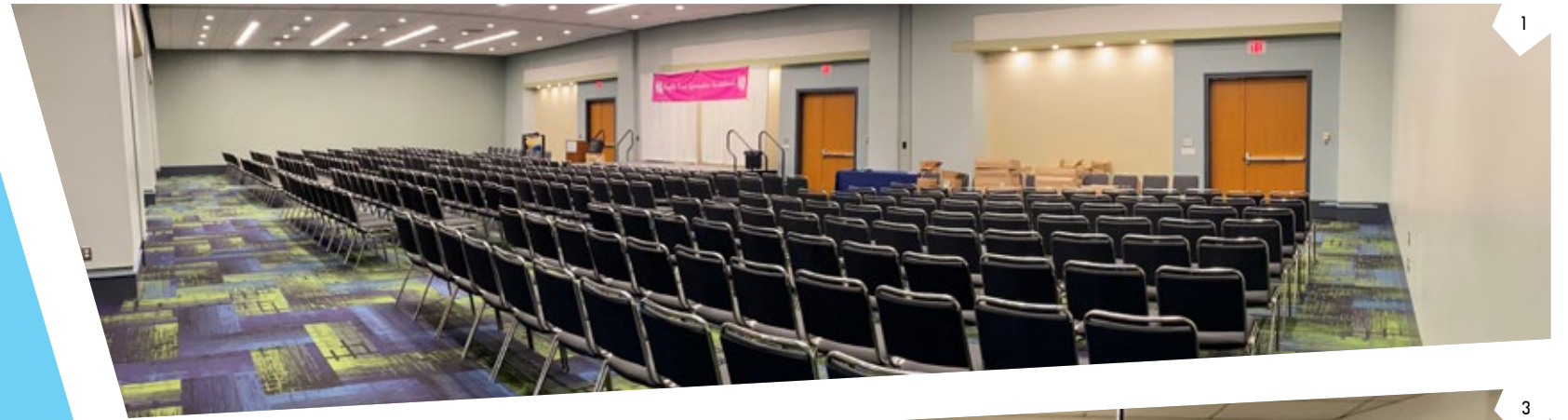


KASEY THEXTON, EXECUTIVE CHEF, AND JAMIE PARKS, DIRECTOR OF FOOD & BEVERAGE FOR THE SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER, ARE RECOGNIZED AS SAVANNAH'S FRONTLINE HEROES. PREPARING FOOD DURING THE PANDEMIC FOR THOSE IN NEED IN OUR AREA.



Savannah Convention Center achieved the GBAC Star facility accreditation from the Global Biorisk Advisory Council Star Program in August 2020. The Global Biorisk Advisory Council helps commercial facilities of all sizes establish and carry out an organized approach to cleaning, disinfection, and infection prevention.

Capital Projects



38
TOTAL NUMBER OF PROJECTS

60%
PERCENTAGE OF COMPLETION

\$4,024,961
BUDGET

\$1,863,853
ACTUAL

- 1 TRIPLE MEETING ROOM WITH CLASSROOM AND STAGE
- 2 SCC FOUNTAIN
- 3 GIFT SHOP BUILDOUT
- 4 BALLROOM CHAIR REPLACEMENT
- 5 JASPER BOARDROOM A/V UPGRADE

Testimonials

“

I was blown away by how beautifully you and your team executed our Rotary meeting Monday, June 29, 2020. Every detail was perfect! As I stood on the podium with my dress billowing in the breeze from the open doors, I was struck how your team ‘pulled it all off’. The social distancing was perfect, the food delicious, and the treat of being personally near each other, delightful. Thank you for all the email support and copying you did for us. It was a real treat for all of us”

Ellen B. Bolch

Immediate Past President / Rotary Club of Savannah

“

The staff at the Savannah Convention Center was amazing! They managed our large event extremely professionally, went above and beyond to be helpful and accommodating, and it was largely due to their attention to detail that our event was such a success”.

Kef Wilson

Head of School / The Savannah Country Day School

“

From my role in executing this event... you and your team made it so easy!! No matter the question or need...your team’s response was... no problem, happy to handle this for you”.

Marsha Bass

Community Relations Manager

“

The Savannah Convention Center has been a key part in making the Richmond Hill High School prom a success for the last several years. With our student body growing each year, the convention center helps accommodate our large group of junior and senior students and provides an amazing dance floor, water stations, and tables and chairs. The friendly staff are always so helpful and willing to go the extra mile to make any event a success”.

Mandi Callaway

Exceptional Student Services / Richmond Hill High School

“

Our organization has been hosting the spring conference and training summit at the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center since April 2011. We are extremely pleased with the hospitable and professional staff who works with us to ensure 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

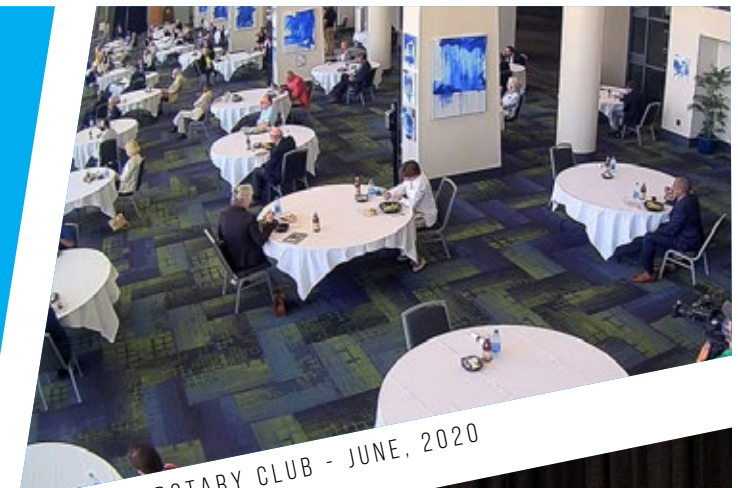
Treasurer / Emergency Management Association of Georgia, Inc.

“

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

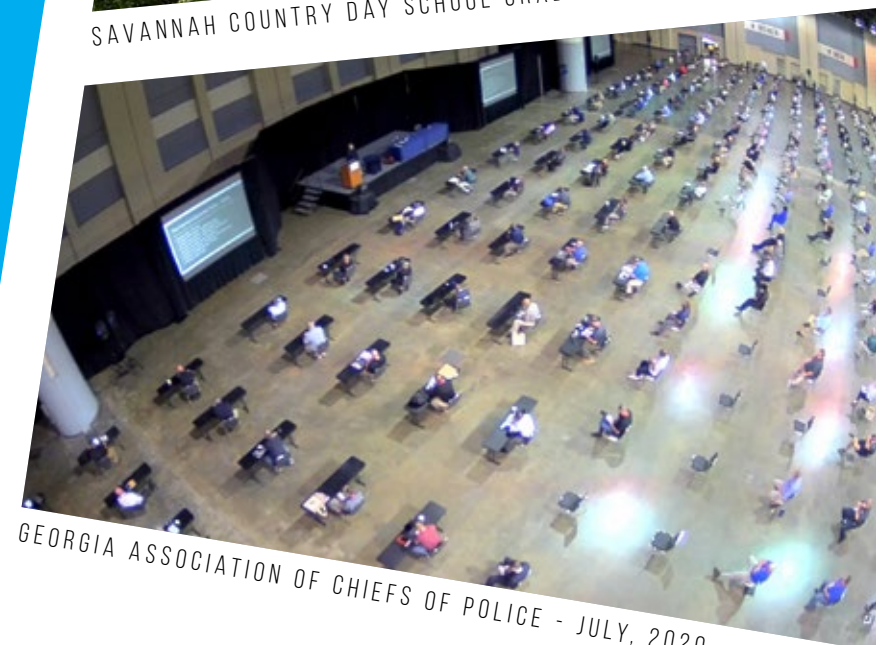
Chatham County



SAVANNAH ROTARY CLUB - JUNE, 2020



SAVANNAH COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL GRADUATION - JUNE, 2020



GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE - JULY, 2020

Happenings in Savannah

SAVANNAH JOINS THE SOUTHWEST FAMILY

Southwest Airlines announced five new nonstop routes from Savannah/Hilton Head International starting in March 2021. Getting to Savannah will be more comfortable than ever! www.Southwest.com

The airline will offer nonstop flights:

- Two daily from Baltimore/Washington
- One daily from Chicago (Midway)
- One daily from Nashville
- One daily from Houston (Hobby)
- One daily from Dallas (Love Field)

NEW JW MARRIOTT OPENS IN PLANT RIVERSIDE DISTRICT

The JW Marriott hotel and all of the Plant Riverside District are the pinnacle of luxury in the Hostess City of the South. As Savannah's iconic entertainment destination, the Plant Riverside District includes numerous walkable attractions and amenities including dynamic restaurants and lounges, upscale retail, and live entertainment. Formerly a huge industrial power plant on the Savannah riverfront, the Plant Riverside District now represents the epitome of historic preservation and the beauty of progress.

Plant Riverside Districts features include:

- 419 stunning guest rooms in five different buildings.
- Excellent retail options including high-end shops, carefully curated artisanal products, and original galleries.
- More than a dozen food and beverage outlets with a wide variety of choices ranging from Neapolitan-style pizza at Graffito's, fresh sushi at Riverside Sushi, and melt-in-your-mouth barbeque from District Smokehouse.
- Live music through the days and evenings in multiple venues.
- Three different-themed rooftop bars.



Area Partners





ONE INTERNATIONAL DRIVE
SAVANNAH, GA 31421

912.447.4000

SAVCONVENTIONCENTER.COM

