



SAVANNAH
CONVENTION CENTER



BEYOND ALL LIMITS

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority
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Chatham County Commission

Pritpal Singh

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Live Oak Restaurants

Ruth Quattlebaum-Edwards

Retired

Benjamin Polote

The Polote Corporation

Martin Miller

Alcove Properties, LLC

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 2021. Thank you for your invaluable contributions and years of service!



SAVANNAH

CONVENTION CENTER

THE VISION

To be the premiere event destination, delivering exceptional service and creating memorable experiences.

THE MISSION

To be the event venue of choice, driving economic growth, and showcasing the uniqueness of Savannah, Chatham County, and the state of Georgia.

LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Rep. Carl Gilliard
House District 162

Rep. Bill Hitchens
House District, 161

Rep. Jesse Petrea
District 166

Sen. Ben Watson
District 1

Rep. Derek Mallow
House District 163

Sen. Lester Jackson
District 2

Rep. Ron Stephens
District 164

Rep. Edna Jackson
District 165



A Message From The **GOVERNOR**

The tourism industry is key to Georgia's status as the best state for business for the eighth year in a row. 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 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.

As the Peach State continues its rapid economic recovery from the challenges of the past year, the Savannah Convention Center will continue to play an important role. Conferences, summits, and large gatherings focused on business, recreation, and more are looking to return to in-person events, and the Savannah Convention Center and the surrounding community are ready to welcome them.

I am excited by the progress of the ongoing expansion project after seeing firsthand its launch this

year. This investment will ensure Savannah is ready to meet the changing needs of local, national, and international communities, and remain a premier location for visitors from all over to experience what makes Georgia the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

***In Coastal Georgia,
the Savannah
Convention Center
is a magnet for
tourism, investment,
and economic
development.***



A Message From Mark Smith

CHAIRMAN

It is with great pleasure that I write this year's annual letter.

In February we received a "Notice to Proceed" from Governor Kemp's Office. This notice was the culmination of 5 years of focused effort by our Authority, Staff, Local Delegation, County and City Leadership, Municipalities, Tourism Leadership Council, and Chamber of Commerce. It was a true team effort. It is amazing what we can do as a community when we all work together.

Of course, we could not have achieved our bold expansion plans without the support of Governor Deal, Lt. Governor Cagle, Speaker Ralston, Governor Kemp, Lt Governor Duncan, and the entire legislature for appropriating design money from 2016-2019.

A special thanks is owed to Governor Kemp, Speaker Ralston, Lt. Governor Duncan and the legislature for supporting the funding of the actual construction in the 2020 and 2021 bond packages.

We look forward to securing the final construction appropriation in the 2022 legislative session. This will complete the financing of our expansion at \$276 million. This brings the total investment in the Savannah Georgia Convention Center to \$498 million.

This is a remarkable community achievement. This is an extraordinary investment by the State of Georgia and Chatham County. This is an incredible validation of the strength of our convention and meetings business in Savannah, Chatham County. It is truly a growth industry. It is a success story.

We are now focused on bringing the project in on budget and on schedule. We broke ground in March. We have encountered some unexpected underground conditions but remain on schedule to open in Fall 2023.

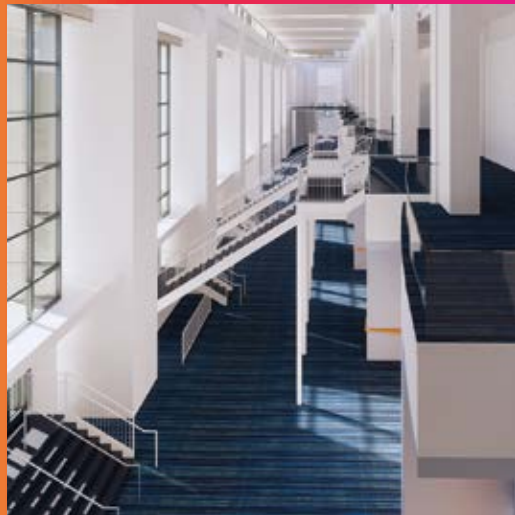
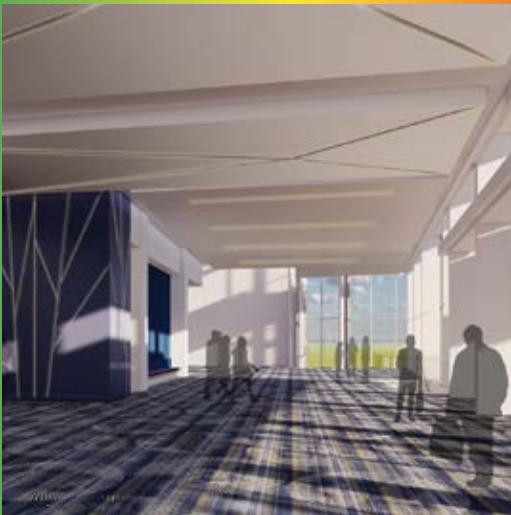
We would like to thank our contractor Clark Construction, Pat Mathis Construction and our design team of Hansen and Associates and TV5 Design for providing leadership and expertise for this most complicated

project. We would also like to thank the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission for their professional oversight.

Our vision of an expanded facility is being validated by the commitment of 20 events to date that will utilize the expansion. Many of these conventions would not have chosen Savannah if our Convention Center had not been expanded. The others are existing customers who will now keep their meetings in Savannah and host much larger conferences. It is so rewarding to see these bookings materialize. They will generate jobs and opportunity for all of the citizens of Chatham County and Southeast Georgia.

The Authority continues to engage with our designated hotel developers as we explore options for bringing more rooms to Hutchinson Island. We hope to formalize a deal next year.

We thank everyone for your loyal support to this institution. We look forward to the future with confident excitement!





EXPANSION UPDATE

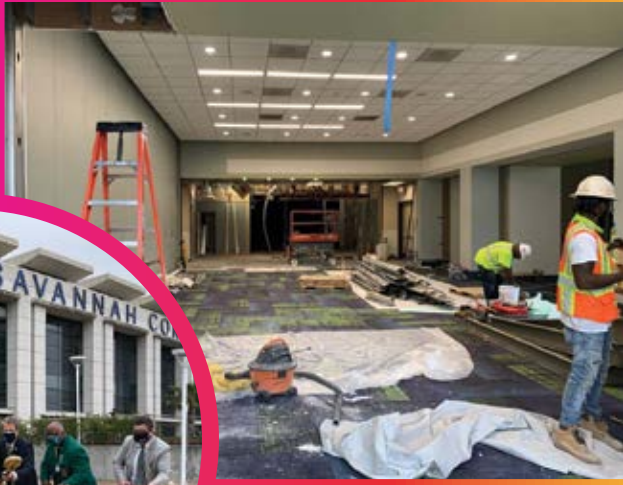
Since opening our doors in 2000, the Savannah Convention Center has been privileged to host a diverse collection of conferences and shows. However, in 2016, the need for more space to accommodate our customers' requests took front and center. In 2017, we received \$3 million dollars in funding from the Georgia General Assembly to begin design planning for an expansion. In 2018, an added award of \$6.3 million dollars continued the work of the design process and preconstruction tasks. In 2019, the legislature provided an added \$13.7 million dollars to continue the project and Governor Brian Kemp appointed the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Board to oversee the SCC and its expansion. In 2020, an added funding of \$70 million dollars was approved to begin the first construction phase. In 2021, an added \$90 million dollars was allocated to the expansion. And on March 17th, 2021, a groundbreaking ceremony was held with Governor Brian Kemp, Chatham County Chairman Chester Ellis, Mayor Van Johnson, Chairman Mark Smith, General Manager Sherrie Spinks, and the Savannah Convention Center Board in attendance.



NEW EXCITING PHASE

We have now entered an exciting phase in the expansion project. Every day progress can be seen on site. In August, the new route of egress and temporary stairs in the existing East Concourse were completed. This milestone allowed Clark Construction to begin the full demolition of the northeast corner of the existing building. Work is also currently underway relocating existing water, sanitary and utility lines to make way for the installation of underground plumbing for the new building. And Morris-Shea has to date installed more than half of the roughly 1500 pilings needed for the expansion.

Over the past twenty years, the Savannah Convention Center has an economic impact in Georgia of \$1.4 billion dollars. The expansion project alone is projected to add \$490 million dollars in economic impact, creating 600 direct construction jobs, hiring more than 30 Georgia based companies, supporting more than 3,200 jobs in Georgia and spurring the growth of new business locally and statewide. The expansion project will double the current size and capacity of the Savannah Convention Center enabling us to draw business from around the world. The local impact also cannot be overlooked. Expanding the Savannah Convention Center opens Savannah to more events, which means more visitors, more diners, more customers, more jobs, and more tax revenue.



CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

EXPANSION SPACES

In 2017, when the expansion plan was taking shape, we looked forward with anticipation to when this idea would become a reality. Now the expansion is on track to open in late 2023.

What an exciting time in the history of Savannah!

58-foot-wide Hanger Door

100,000 square foot exhibit hall

40,000 square foot ballroom

14 meeting rooms

900 space parking garage

Eateries

Pre-function spaces





A Message From Frank Poe

GWCCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Georgia World Congress Center and the Savannah Convention Center have enjoyed a highly productive relationship for seven years. Establishing a link between the two most popular tourist destinations in Georgia has proved to be an asset to the state's tourism industry. Together we are making



a significant economic impact on the state.

Once again, the Savannah Convention Center staff's dedication to exceptional client experiences allowed them to host conventions, meetings, and events with the assurance of safety and the remarkable hospitality for which they are known.

This fiscal year we have also seen the long-planned goal of expansion brought

to realization with a groundbreaking ceremony. Progress is being made daily and we are already feeling the economic impact through the creation of more than 500 direct construction site jobs. The expansion will create opportunities for SCC to attract new and larger shows and events that were previously out of reach.

During the pandemic we looked forward to the future when we could gather again, and we are happy to say that the future is now.



A Message From Sherrie Spinks

GENERAL MANAGER

I am excited to share with you the positive and hopeful year the Savannah Convention Center has experienced in FY 2021. In response to the pandemic, we quickly became GBAC (Global Bio risk Advisory Council) STAR accredited. This allowed us to safely accommodate our guests and protect our staff. But it also played a key role in giving our customers the peace of mind needed to book with us.

Our careful and deliberate actions instilled confidence in our customers, and we finished the year having hosted 87 events with 60,644 attendees. One of these was The NAAA (National Agricultural Aviation

Association) whose successful event in December of 2020 resulted in a rebooking in 2021, as well as the Wings of Strength Savannah Bodybuilding show that has already been rebooked for 2022.

This report outlines the activities and financial impacts of the fiscal year, but it is not possible to convey the effects of a cohesive team that worked incredibly hard to manage and adapt to this new standard. Weathering the challenges of this past year called on all of us to be flexible and work together. And the staff rose to this challenge by stepping outside of their prescribed roles to complete any and every task that was set before them. Holding true to our core values, we never stopped working toward creating exceptional customer experiences.

This year we also saw tangible progress being made on the expansion project, in the completion of the new route of egress and temporary stairs in the existing East Concourse stairway. And on March 17th, we celebrated the groundbreaking of the long-awaited expansion. The economic impact of the expansion is sizable, with a projected \$490 million dollars entering the economy.

Our theme this year is, "The Future is Now." We feel it every day as we watch the construction of the new building and as we book events well into 2022. Our team is ready for what the future holds, and we look forward to the completion of the expansion in 2023. Processes may have changed but our vision and mission remain the same. The future is now!



SERVING SAFE

The Savannah Convention Center proudly achieved the GBAC Star facility accreditation in August 2020.

This accreditation was awarded for compliance in twenty elements related to cleaning and disinfecting our facility. Another way we are striving to provide a safe venue for our staff and guests now and in the future!

EVENTS

YEAR IN REVIEW

Even through the year of "no events," we still hosted:



**2 TRADE
CONVENTIONS**



**9 PUBLIC
CONVENTIONS**



**4 EVENTS
ENTERTAINMENT**



**17 SPORTING
EVENTS**



37 MEETINGS



14 BANQUETS



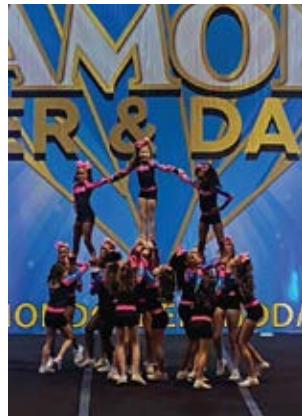
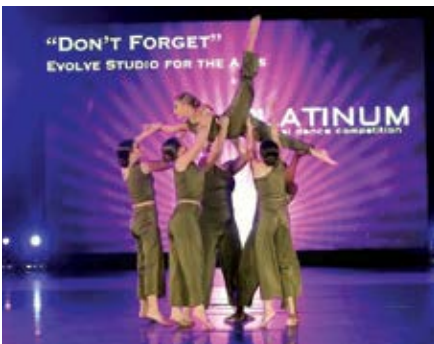
4 GRADUATIONS



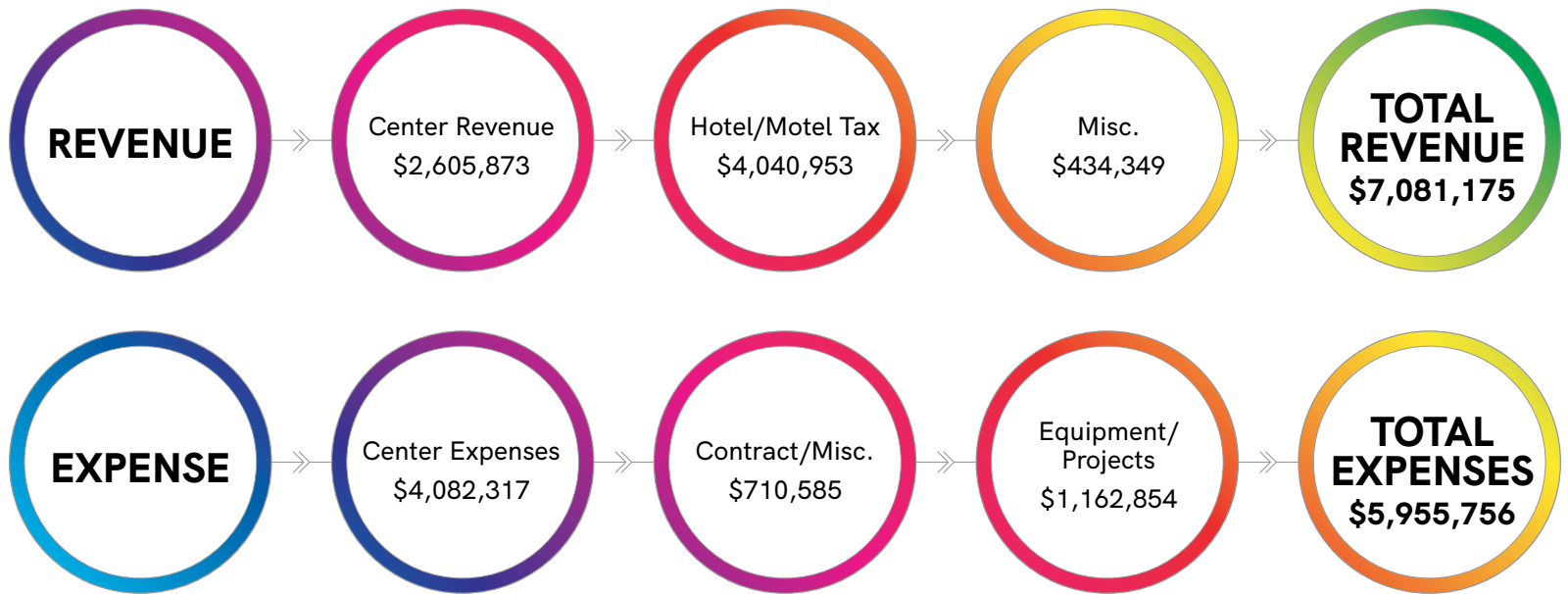
**87 TOTAL
EVENTS**



**60,644
TOTAL ATTENDEES**



SAVANNAH GEORGIA CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY FY 2021



Net Income (loss) before Depreciation and Capital	\$1,125,419
Depreciation	\$577,051
Capital Projects	\$380,033
Reserve for roof replacement	\$300,000
Net Income (loss) after Depreciation and Capital	(\$131,665)

OUTSTANDING STAFF

The Savannah Convention Center staff has always been committed to providing exceptional customer service to every client. The past year has called on all of them to work outside of their prescribed roles, to learn new methods of facility management, and to be creative in their strategies for exceptional customer experiences. They answered the call, and we thank them.



SHERRIE SPINKS



STEPHEN HALL



HOLLY JENKINS



GAIL TERRELL



RONNIE HICKMAN



ROBERT DIAZ



JIM TAYLORSON



MARCUS SMITH



ANGELA DANIELS



KIM HUNSINGER



CURRY EPLEY



PAUL GOMEZ



LINDSEY LEE



CAMERON SMITH



CLINT JENKINS



JAMIE PARKS



JASON TOUCHBERRY



KASEY THEXTON



NAOMI DELOACH

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

SAVANNAH
savannahga.gov



TYBEE ISLAND
GEORGIA



SAVANNAH
CONVENTION CENTER

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