

TIMELINE

OF SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER PROPERTY

1912

Hutchinson Island is the heart of the Port of Savannah.

1993

Governor Zell Miller announced a commitment from the State of Georgia for the project. Voters by a 2-to-1 margin approve \$37 million in SPLOST funding for a new Trade Center.

1995

The Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center Authority is formed by act of the Georgia Assembly; and elects Arthur Gignilliat, head of Savannah Electric, as its first Chairman. The County approves a joint agreement with CSX for development of the Trade Center and resort hotel; and to extend roads and other services to the development site. A new county-wide 1% Hotel Motel tax provides stable funding for Trade Center operations and capital improvements.

1997

County voters handily approve \$15 million in additional Trade Center funding in a special SPLOST election, and Philadelphia-based SMG is hired to ensure pre-opening facility design, programming and marketing.

1999

Trade Center and resort construction proceed rapidly. Trade Center and Visit Savannah sales teams collaborate to build a robust book of convention business in anticipation of the Trade Center's opening. Next door, the new Westin Savannah Harbor Resort and it's Troon Golf course and Spa opens in November.

2001

In 2001, The State gave the County \$3 million for the purchase of parcel 7 and slip 1, adjacent to the convention center. The county leased the parcel to the convention center for 50 years. This track has great potential to aid the convention center's mission by providing a site for another hotel and related development. The center hosts 173 events and 129,915 attendees in its first full year, generating 39,404 overnight hotel stays.

2003

New water ferry boats arrive in the harbor and the Trade Center is chosen as the International Delegations and Media Center for the coming 2004 G-8 Summit. In February, the new Savannah River International Boat Show hits the water with 10,000 friends, and the Ecological Society of America brings 3,000 guests to town in July, occupying 6,400 hotel rooms.

2005

The Trade Center Authority forms the Parcel 7 Steering Group; and solicits proposals from local architects and land planners to assist in master planning activity for the adjacent 20-acre tract which included maritime slip. The Trade Center hosts 12 city-wide conventions, generating 64,000 hotel stays.

2007

The Authority solicits proposals from hotel transaction consultants and engages a full market study for a potential new hotel. Nissan, Volvo and Toyota Industries all bring dealer-product launches to the Trade Center. The Army's famed Ranger Regiment throws a birthday party and the thundering Champboast Racing Series roils the Savannah riverfront.

2009

Work begins on the Ferry Maintenance Facility in Slip 3 with new docks and storage. Amid market uncertainties, the Authority solicits proposals for an Economic Impact Study for the proposed new hotel. The effects of the Great Recession begin to settle in with many event cancellations. This year proved to be the Center's worst financial performance by far, but cost efficiencies and steadfast customers such as Georgia Municipal Association with 3,000 delegates limit extreme losses. Chatham County and the State of Georgia each commit \$4 million to help fund the Slip 3 River Walk extension.

1864

This sight greets General Sherman at the conclusion of his march from Atlanta. His diary does not mention the possibilities for convention facilities on Hutchinson Island.

1992

The Trade Center Task Force (City, County and Chamber), funded by a short-term increase in the Hotel-Motel Tax, begins meeting to develop plans for a Convention Center and Aquarium. A development study by KPMG Peat Marwick looks at three potential sites, including two at either end of Savannah's famed River Street and on Hutchinson Island.

1994

The County Commission awards the Trade Center design contract to Thompson Ventulett Stainback & Associates (TVSA), an Atlanta firm with 18 convention centers (including the Georgia World Congress Center) to its credit. The Commission also awards a "Construction Manager at Risk" contract to Maritime Trade Center Builders (MTCB) a consortium headed by Beers Construction. The Hutchinson Island site is chosen for the Trade Center for factors including expansion potential, visibility from downtown and the concurrent development of Savannah Harbor and the adjacent resort hotel. Planning proceeds with a \$550,000 grant from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

1996

The County approves an \$82 million development budget for the Trade Center, and decides to begin work despite funding delays with the adjacent hotel.

1998

Construction begins for the Convention/Trade Center occurs in July 1998 while construction continues at the adjacent resort.

2000

Pursuant to studies by the Trade Center Authority, the Trade Center becomes the first and only convention center in the nation to operate its own passenger ferry service. In February, the Trade Center's first event, the National Asphalt Pavers Association, kicks off without a hitch, while construction of the roof over the River Concourse continues with the project finally complete. The Grand Opening follows in May. In August, the Executive Director of the Georgia Society of Association Executives says "you must go to Savannah's new Trade Center to experience the best of the best!" And in October, the Trade Center hosts the International Convention Center Conference, proudly showing off to hundreds of its peers.

2002

The 9/11 tragedy is remembered in a solemn memorial at the Trade Center featuring commemorative art from around the region. In November, a new Christmas Made in the South show brings 20,000 guests through the doors.

2004

Savannah and the Trade Center hosted the Press Core for the G8 Summit, which was held at Sea Island. The convention center hosted 2000 journalists for six days: The event included eight heads of state from Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, Canada and the President of the United States. President George W. Bush conducted a press conference at the Trade Center. Japan's Prime Minister Kwaizumi asks for an extra trip on the water ferry to look at Savannah's skyline. Russia's President Putin compliments the donuts prepared hot and fresh in Krispy Kreme's mobile store in Tomochichi Square. Center attendance figures rise to 129,117 with 83,000 hotel room nights, and the Southern Women's Show says "Savannah has set the bar—best staff, best first show in a new city, ever!"

2006

The Trade Center Authority engages Savannah urban planners Sottile & Sottile in March to create the Parcel 7 Civic Master Plan; and Thomas and Hutton Engineers to design an extension of the Hutchinson Island River Walk into Slip No. 3, as well as a new Water Ferry Maintenance Facility. Following 13 the annual Inc. Magazine Conference of the 500 Fastest Growing Companies in America, planners call the Trade Center "amazing, and the best-yet venue and service!" The Authority accepts the Civic Master Plan in October, which includes industry consultant PKF's favorable prospectus for a new waterfront hotel on Parcel 7.

2008

The International Oil Spill Conference says in May, "all agreed-our best conference yet...the service is superior!" In June, the National Guard Association adds, "best event, best service, best food, best event management in the history of this conference." The Center is honored with its fifth-straight National Prime Site Award.



2010

Savannah comes roaring back and the Trade Center marks its best year ever with the Lt. Governor Casey Cagle headlining its 10th Anniversary Gala in May. The Authority is busy soliciting proposals for hotel developers, hotel operating companies and bond 14 underwriters. The Economic Impact Study and updated hotel Full Market Study are accepted. The hotel project's Steering and Technical Review Groups select a developer finalist for negotiations, and conduct a public Hotel Program Charrette in November. Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers, Savannah Homebuilders and Gulfstream's Worldwide Operators Conference all report their best-ever attendance.

2012

The River Walk extension is completed. The Authority's hotel developer selectee and County remain in discussions, and a towering forest of masts and sails signals the Savannah Tall Ships Festival in May. In December, the National Agricultural Aviation Association moves their crop-dusters into the exhibit hall through a brandnew aircraft hangar door. The Authority's Fine Arts Foundation's "Savannah: Gateway to the World" exhibit opens. The Center reports hosting 159 events, whose 164,000 attendees filled 68,000 hotel rooms-- including Georgia Municipal Association's record-breaking 6,300 roomnight total. In September, the Authority asks original Trade Center architects TVS to look at preliminary expansion ideas and the Center also receives its eighth National Prime Site Award.

2014

The intermodal facility is complete, and connecting roads are in. The Georgia World Congress Center Authority assumes management of the Trade Center in April. The Authority commissions industry consultant PKF to assess the future of Savannah's convention sector, and opens discussions with the adjacent Westin ownership group concerning a possible expansion to serve growing convention demand. The National Ski Areas Association likes April in Savannah, so they're back; likewise the Association County Commissioners of Georgia, whose first event at the Trade Center is also its 100th Anniversary. In October, the National Nephrology Nurses rub elbows with the National Mustang Club. In all, 164,000 guests attend 163 events, and occupy 86,000 hotel rooms in the city.

2016

The Authority solicits proposals to develop a minimum 300-room hotel next to the Trade Center. The IBM Conference returns, as does the American Mosquito Control Association. The Trade Center hosts two craft beer festivals and one tattoo festival. Our goals are high and rising. Our success still comes one customer at a time, so it makes us proud when a major international corporation says that wherever they have met around the world their standard of excellence has always been the Trade Center in their hometown of Savannah.

2018

The Georgia General Assembly approved an additional \$6.3 million to continue the design and engineering process. We accepted the schematic and development designs. In addition, a construction manager - Clark Construction was hired by GSFIC (Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission). We look forward to engaging our community and the State of Georgia as we continue with the expansion of our building. The state changed the name from Savannah International Trade Convention Center (SITCC) to Savannah Georgia Convention Center Authority (SGCCA). The new logo was created.

2022

Subcontracts are awarded to more than thirty Georgia based companies. Generally, the foundations, the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in are completed. The building envelope begins. In the East Concourse, demolition, pile installation, foundations and structural concrete are completed. In the Convention Center, pile installation, structural steel and decking, and the slab on the metal deck are completed. In the Exhibit Hall, concrete slab on grade and the curtain wall structure are completed. In the Parking Garage the foundations, structural concrete, precast installation, and the west wall rough-in are completed. And in the West Concourse under slab utilities are installed and in the Main Concourse 80% of the steel has been erected.

2026

2026 and beyond- Expansion space contracts:
- American Orthopedic Foot & Ankle Society
- National Agricultural Aviation Association
- Celebrate Savannah Pink Gymnastics Invitational
- Savannah Girls Volleyball Tournament

2024

First Event will be Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable January 2024. The following contracts are already in place for use of the expansion space:
- Tennessee Valley Public Power Association
- National Beta Club
- American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine
- Savannah Sports Production Girls Volleyball Tournament

2020

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed FY 2021 budget which included \$70 million in funding for the Savannah Convention Center Expansion

2017

The Georgia General Assembly approves \$3M for planning an extension to the Savannah Convention Center.

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.

2021

Additional \$90M in funding allocated, the official groundbreaking takes place on March 17th. Work begins with soil and sediment controls, the installation of construction trailers, and site utility work. Earthwork and foundations are completed, and the above grade structure begins.

2023

Looking forward, 2023 will see the completion of the above grade structure, the structure made temperature and watertight, permanent power initiated, and installation of finishes. Late in the year, safety inspections will begin.

2025

Expansion space contracts: National Rural Water

2011

Work begins on the Slip 3 River Walk and a pile driving is hastily worked out. The Authority sponsors a vital new international initiative, the Savannah Ocean Exchange, and the Porsche Club of America brings 1,000 cars and 3,700 room-nights to town. In November, 23,000 runners attend the first Savannah Rock 'n' Roll Marathon and Expo. Savannah's race is called the second-largest inaugural marathon event in the US, ever. It is certainly the busiest water ferry day, ever. In June, 5,000 South University graduation caps are tossed in the air.

2013

The Authority commissions Chatham Area Transit to construct a Passenger Intermodal Transit facility at Slip 3 to serve future land and water transportation connections with Parcel 7. County and hotel developers announce in March they're unable to reach definitive agreement on the hotel project, prompting the Authority to suspend the project. In September, the World Molecular Imaging Conference brings 2,800 international visitors to Savannah. Big new gymnastics tournaments help bounce Trade Center attendance up to 198,000, consuming almost 85,000 hotel stays.

2015

The Authority receives the PKF assessment, prompting renewed calls for another hotel on the Island, and to look at options for potential Center expansion. The Trade Center hosts 157 events and 144,000 guests, bringing approximately \$45,785,896 in economic impact to the area. The Southern Legislative Conference, Asian American Hotel Owners and National Airport Executives all say it's their best yet, but more than two dozen top-tier customers say they are out of room at the Trade Center.

