



Architectural rendering of the Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr. International Terminal, scheduled to open in 2008.

the World is at our DOORSTEP

The GICC's location at the entrance to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is not just a convenience, but a critical advantage to meeting and trade show planners.

YOU WOULD EXPECT BIG NUMBERS from the world's busiest passenger airport, but the statistics associated with Hartsfield-Jackson International are beyond impressive — they're staggering. This year the Atlanta airport will accommodate about 84 million passengers traveling on just short of a million flights to 193 destinations, including 46 international cities.

And the future promises to make those figures look small. According to Hartsfield-Jackson's Robert Kennedy, Director of Marketing, Public Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs, airport traffic will increase another 50 percent to more than 120 million passengers over the next 10 years.

To accommodate the continued growth, the airport lives in a state of continuous expansion. It is currently in the midst of a \$5.4 billion project to include a new "South" terminal and a fifth runway that is scheduled to open in May 2006.

For meeting and event planners, the numbers amount to unparalleled access to Atlanta — more flights from more cities providing their attendees the flexibility they need to meet the tightest schedules. And in addition to broad access, attendees can expect a quality experience. This year, for the second consecutive year, the Air Transport Society named Hartsfield-Jackson the most efficiently operated airport in America.

"Our mission is to be the world's best airport by exceeding customer expectations," Kennedy pointed out. So the airport's expansion program has included adding facilities, enhancing its information-technology capabilities and even building in a human touch. Travelers have access to more than 200 retail outlets — from niche shops to white-tablecloth restaurants. The airport website has been expanded to include a host of timesaving




The terminal atrium is a pleasant resting spot for travelers on their way to and from flights.

information, including flight status and security-line waiting times. And a staff of employees and volunteers is available 24 hours a day to help customers with unique needs and special requests.

Hartsfield-Jackson's conveniences come at a price less dear than the offerings of other major airports. Compare Atlanta's \$2.55 cost per enplaned passenger to \$40 at New York's JFK International Airport. The charges are a significant part of the airlines' operating costs, Kennedy noted, "But you know who pays. It's in the price of your airline ticket."

To make air travel truly passenger-friendly, airport officials have to address security issues. In addition to posting security waiting times on the airport website, Hartsfield-Jackson's security planners use advanced booking information from the airlines to help airport security project traffic and personnel needs. Traffic flow is being addressed with additional checkpoint lanes and a \$215 million project to create an automated luggage-screening security system in the airport

basement to free up space in the lobby.

For businesspeople today, when productivity and time conservation are inextricably linked, meetings and trade shows must be designed to accommodate tight schedules. Convenience isn't a value-add; it's an absolute necessity — just as the GICC's location at the entrance to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is not just a convenience, but a critical advantage to meeting and trade show planners. 



Aerial view of the expansive facilities and network of runways currently serving Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.



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Come Early, Stay Late, Bring the Family

fOR THE REST OF THE WORLD, the 1996 Olympic Games signaled the coming of age of the city of Atlanta. In reality, the Olympics were another event in a series of developments that has seen the city evolve into one of the nation's most popular business as well as leisure destinations. Today, Atlanta enjoys stature as one of the largest meeting and convention cities with a business hub boasting the presence of many Fortune 500 companies, an international convention center to which few can compare, and a reputation of being "the best convention city in America," according to the person charged with marketing the city, Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) President and CEO Spurgeon Richardson.

"Atlanta is a great convention city because of our infrastructure," Richardson offered. Atlanta is reachable by 80 percent of the U.S. population in less than two hours, he noted, and provides non-stop service to over 40 international destinations. The city offers 90,000 hotel rooms in all price ranges, and the mass transit system moves people efficiently throughout the city, from the airport to the major centers of activity in Atlanta, including Downtown, Midtown and Buckhead.

"Of great importance to visitors, Atlanta is an excellent value," he added.

The list of attractions in Atlanta is impressive and continues to grow. Testimony to Atlanta's commitment to the future is an astounding \$10 billion in construction projects currently underway. By the fall of 2005, visitors will have access to a most impressive aquarium, a \$200 million project, the funds for which are being donated by Home Depot founder Bernard Marcus. In 2006 — and right beside the aquarium — a new World of Coke will open, the



Popular attractions draw thousands of visitors to Atlanta each year. BELOW, CLOCKWISE: The World of Coke, the High Museum of Art and Turner Field — former Olympic stadium and current home of the Atlanta Braves.

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"We advise people coming for a meeting to come a day early or plan to stay a couple of days after, and to bring their families," says Richardson.

Atlanta has been a favorite convention city for many years, and Richardson sees that trend continuing. Mayor Shirley Franklin has demonstrated commitment to the convention business. "She understands the importance of our industry," Richardson said. And indeed, convention and meeting attendees contribute \$4 billion annually to the local economy.

Richardson and the ACVB work with meeting and trade show organizers to provide information about the city and facilitate access to facilities like the GICC, hotels, event venues, destination management companies and other entities of importance to planners.

"We're a one-stop shop for meeting planners, which saves them a lot of time," he offered. "We provide, at no cost, the information and help they need to do business in the city."

For more information on meetings in Atlanta, visit www.atlanta.net. 

RIGHT: Atlanta's tree-fringed skyline is reflected in Lake Clara Meer at Piedmont Park.



Courtesy of Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau © World of Coca-Cola | Kevin Rose, photographer



Courtesy of ACVB © Turner Field | Kevin Rose, photographer



Courtesy of ACVB © High Museum of Art

culinary arts

THE NO-STRESS Dinner Party

THIS ISSUE WE FEATURE HINTS FROM THE EXPERTS TO HELP YOU LOOK LIKE A PRO WHEN HOSTING YOUR OWN DINNER PARTY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

IF YOU'VE ATTENDED A MEETING AT THE GICC RECENTLY, we're sure you enjoyed the food. Unlike many facilities that use institutional food services, the GICC delights its guests with the preparations and presentations of the caterer consistently ranked as Atlanta's best, Proof of the Pudding. But even beyond the delicious entrées and scrumptious desserts, you might have also noticed the ease and calm with which Proof serves a party of hundreds, even thousands, of guests.

As the holiday season approaches, many of us are planning our own dinner parties. But experience has taught us that serving meals to our friends, be it four or 40, is anything but stress-free. Here are a few hints from the Proof of the Pudding chefs of the GICC Culinary Arts Center that will help you pull off a dinner as enjoyable for you as for your guests:

- Spend your money on the tasks you don't want to do. If you enjoy cooking, then hire out the house cleaning and landscaping. If you have an entrée that

Atlanta's best caterer serves GICC guests



Courtesy of Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau. © Eric Ross Photography

Convention Bureaus Seek Improved Status with Travelers



Spurgeon Richardson, Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau President and CEO

INDUSTRY LEADERS EMERGED from the recent annual session of the International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (IACVB) with an aggressive agenda to improve their image and impact. The initiative is designed to respond to market studies revealing that more than 70 percent of consumers have never interacted with a convention and visitors bureau, but instead contact chambers of commerce for local information.

The Association has agreed on a two-year strategic plan to address a wide range of bureau issues.

"The plan extends to four broad areas," explained Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau President and CEO Spurgeon Richardson, who is the outgoing 2004 IACVB chairman. "We must be more accountable to our local constituents, so we want to standardize performance measurements for our bureaus. We will pursue a branding

initiative to clarify our role, so people have a better understanding of what we do. We must also educate people on the economic impact the hospitality industry has on our communities. And we must become more innovative in terms of product development by being more proactive in helping our cities develop the types of amenities that visitors want."

In Atlanta, the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau has developed a tool box of services to help it clarify its role and offerings to the meeting industry.

"We can work with groups to tailor to their needs and customize a plan specific to them to help market the city to their attendees," Richardson said. "We can connect them with local leaders in their industries, help with public relations and publicity, arrange venues for their events, provide information for their websites and offer materials on what will be happening in Atlanta during their events. There are many ways we can help them ensure their meetings in Atlanta will be productive and successful." **A+**

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has gained you fame, then deal with that and purchase the side dishes and desserts. Or if cooking is not your strength, contract the entire meal and presentation. You might be surprised to find that even the most heralded caterers are affordable for a party of as few as 15 or 20 guests.

- Make a comprehensive list of everything you will need for the party. Then divide your list into two: one for items you can purchase — and things you can do — in advance; the other for last-minute items and tasks. You can shop in advance not only for linens and decorative items, but also for consumables like beverages, snacks and any frozen foods you will use.
- Even if you don't use a caterer, hire someone to help you with your guests. That person can serve as bartender or, if you're serving an open buffet, gather discarded plates and glasses and keep the food items fresh and appealing. For parties with 20 or fewer guests, one person should be able to handle both tasks.
- Do the decorating first — a couple of days in advance if possible. Unless you're a professional decorator, you're

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focus



By Hugh Austin
GICC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From the GICC's executive director

Security Remains Top Issue

AMONG FACILITY MANAGERS

SAFETY AND SECURITY ARE FAR FROM NEW INITIATIVES for the convention industry. Most facilities, including the GICC, employ dedicated security management and staff and ensure that they have ongoing training to remain current on the latest security issues and approaches. The association for convention center and exhibit hall managers, the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM), sponsors the Academy for Venue Safety & Security, an intensive program of emergency planning and life safety management training. Of course "Nine-Eleven" has heightened security awareness, and again this year, at the 79th Annual IAAM Conference and Trade Show, it was our major topic of discussion and the focal issue of our educational sessions.

IAAM's heightened concerns took shape in a Safety and Security Task Force formed immediately following the Nine-Eleven attacks. The Task Force was charged with developing a series of protocols for convention centers and exhibit halls, not only to address terrorism threats but to respond to the full range of dangerous situations, including weather- and crowd-related problems. The resulting Best Practices Planning Guide addresses three major areas:

- Assessing risk factors
- Determining measures to address various threat levels or risks to security
- Developing and implementing a safety/security plan

The Guide includes recommended action plans for various security risk levels. For example, if the Governmental Alert System rates a crisis as "severe," its highest threat level, the Best Practices recommendation includes canceling the event, locking down the building and patrolling the perimeter of the building. Short of "severe," the Guide offers a list of security measures for each of the Alert System rankings, "high," "elevated," "guarded" and "low." Measures range from involving the U.S. Secret Service or FBI, to restricting access to a single entrance, to accepting only event-related and properly validated package deliveries.

Designed and built in the months following Nine-Eleven, the GICC includes today's most sophisticated infrastructure and technology for maintaining a secure facility. Still, we adhere strictly to IAAM's building security Best Practices, including the requirement to, on a daily basis, assess security issues and make decisions regarding the level of security and measures to impose in and around the GICC. We understand that the safety and security of our guests is our most important job. **A+**

Public Show Relies on Perfect Venue

GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW OWNER PITCHES GICC TO PROSPECTIVE EXHIBITORS

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MIKE LAND HAS A 20-YEAR HISTORY of failing 75 percent of the time, and he's proud of it. "You're lucky if one of every four public shows you do turns into an annual event," he explained.

Not only must Land rely on "the public's desire to attend," but he competes in some of the busiest of public show events — boat shows and home and garden expos — making it that much more difficult to score a success.

Land is adept at creating awareness for his shows through advertising. Still, turning awareness into attendance presents its own set of challenges. One of the most important factors to attracting a good crowd is a great venue, which is why Land is so high on his newest venture, the Georgia International Boat Show, which made its debut in April at the GICC.

"You have to be in a place where people want to be, and that's what excites me about the GICC. It's going to be Atlanta's favorite facility for a public event."

Land's business plan for his newest venture originated with finding a fresh, new facility. When he discovered the GICC, through a Google search, he immediately made the Center the core of his pitch to Atlanta boat dealers.

"It's the kind of place people want to come to, a beautiful facility, conveniently located right off the Interstate highways and with plenty of close-up, inexpensive parking. There's nothing that ticks a person off more than coming to a show that costs eight dollars to get into, and they have to pay ten dollars to park."

CRAWL, WALK AND RUN

Land knew it would be difficult to attract a large crowd to this first Georgia International Boat Show. A long-running boat show in March, just a few weeks earlier, included virtually every Atlanta boat dealer. Still, Land got about half of Atlanta's nearly 30 dealers to exhibit. Then came the least predictable of factors: the weather. Only it wasn't rain or thunderstorms that kept people away.

"It was the first beautiful weekend of the year, and if you had a boat, you were probably out on a lake," he said.

Land's premier event wound up attracting about 1,000 attendees. "But sales were much greater than you'd expect from such a small audience," he reported. "That made for happy dealers."

And that, he pointed out, bodes well for the future.


"I will have no problem getting the dealers, because the ones who were here loved this facility. They now share my vision of the GICC, that it will become Atlanta's favorite locale for public shows."

Land also overcame concern that a venue south of the city would not draw attendees from the northern suburbs. "We did a promotion that required people to provide their zip code. Of the more than 500 who participated in the promotion, two-thirds were from north of I-20 [a highway that runs east and west through the middle of Atlanta]."

Based on the reception by dealers and attendees, Land predicts the Georgia International Boat Show "will go from crawling to walking next year, and we'll be running at full tilt a year or so after that." So confident is Land that he will change his show dates next year to March to compete directly with the more established show.

And so confident is Land about the pull of the GICC, that he has secured the Center not only for his spring '05 boat show, but for a home improvement show earlier in the year.

"We've reserved the GICC for the Georgia Home Design & Remodeling Show, January 7-9," he said.

"Not only is the GICC the best facility in Atlanta, but in 20 years, I've never dealt with more likable people who worked harder to help me than those at the GICC," he said. "You just can't overstate the importance of a venue to the success of a public show." 

Georgia International
Boat Show



"I will have no problem getting the dealers, because the ones who were here loved this facility.

They now share my vision of the GICC, that it will become Atlanta's favorite locale for public shows."

— Mike Land, Georgia International Boat Show Owner

150,000-SQUARE-FOOT EXHIBIT HALL (863 10'X10' BOOTHS)
40,000-SQUARE-FOOT BALLROOM (3,000 BANQUET GUESTS)
32 MEETING ROOMS WITH CAPACITY FROM 55 TO 3,170
2,000 SURFACE PARKING SPACES




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NO-STRESS

Dinner Party *continued from page 3*

not likely to get everything you need in your first shopping trip. By decorating in advance, you'll have time to add or change out items — even to experiment a little — to get your home looking just the way you imagined it could.

- Schedule your time to gather last minute items and prepare your meal so that you have everything ready one hour in advance of the your guests' arrivals. Even if you wind up needing more time than you planned for, the one-hour grace period should keep the stress level from rising.
- One more "proof point" from a previous issue of A+: Prepare and plate salads a couple of hours in advance. Clear out a section of your refrigerator for the plates. The salads will be fresh, chilled and ready, leaving you more time before dinner to complete the entrée and even mingle with your guests. 



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BOOKING SPACE, CALL THE GICC SALES DEPARTMENT AT 770-997-3566.