



Atlanta Marriott Gateway
2020 Convention Center Concourse, Atlanta, GA 30337

Monday, March 30, 2026

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|----------------------------|---|
| 8:00 am-9:30 am | <p>Pre-Conference Leadership Development Session-LEC Course
 <u>Supervising and Empowering</u>
 <i>Sponsored by: Pick Ellijay (Gilmer Chamber & Welcome Center)</i>
 Presented by: The Leadership Institute at Columbus State University
 Atlanta Marriott Gateway Cessna</p> |
| 9:00 am – 5:00 pm | <p>Conference Registration Open
 Atlanta Marriott Gateway Pre-Function</p> |
| 9:00 am – 1:00 pm | <p>Sponsor & Exhibitor Setup
 Atlanta Marriott Gateway Pre-Function</p> |
| 8:30 am– 10:30 am | <p>GACVB Board of Directors Meeting
 Atlanta Marriott Gateway Piper</p> |
| 10:00 am – 10:30 am | <p>Leadership Sessions Break</p> |
| 10:00 am –11:30 pm | <p>Pre-Conference Leadership Development Session-LEC Course
 <u>Setting Priorities from the Inside Out</u>
 <i>Sponsored by: Pick Ellijay (Gilmer Chamber & Welcome Center)</i>
 Presented by: The Leadership Institute at Columbus State University
 Atlanta Marriott Gateway Cessna</p> |
| 11 am – 12:30 pm | <p>Executive Exchange: C-Suite Lunch & Leadership Roundtable</p> <p>This Executive Exchange is designed to create a confidential, peer-to-peer conversation among senior tourism leaders. The goal is to provide a space for executives to share challenges, exchange ideas, and identify strategies that strengthen their organizations and Georgia’s tourism industry. <i>Pre-registration required.</i></p> |

Monday, March 30, 2026

12:30 pm **Welcome Orientation for new GACVB members and attendees**
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Piper

1:00 pm **Welcome & Keynote Address**
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salons A-D

The opportunity in front of us is bigger than the challenges behind us.

Al Hutchinson, CEO & Founder of AVH Enterprise LLC, will host a dynamic and thought-provoking leadership session designed exclusively for destination executives. Through candid insights, real-world examples, and interactive discussion, Al will explore how tourism leaders can leverage authenticity, culture, and community to drive growth. Attendees will gain fresh perspective, practical strategies, and renewed confidence to lead their destinations forward—because the opportunity in front of us is bigger than the challenges behind us.

2:00 pm **General Session**
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salons A-D

Leveraging Music Heritage to Inspire Travel and Preserve Legacy
Join Michell Davis of the Million Memory Project, alongside Kevin Reese and Donna Ray Norton, for an interactive and engaging panel moderated by Lisa Love. Discover innovative ways communities across Georgia can preserve, document, and promote their music heritage to drive tourism.

2:45 pm **Afternoon Break**
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Pre-Function
Sponsored by: Carrollton CVB

3:15 pm **Afternoon Breakout Sessions – Choose one of the following:**

Breakout I
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon E
Session Partner: Georgia Entertainment

You've Got Filming... Now What?
Film tourism is growing across Georgia – but how do destinations truly capitalize? Explore how to leverage on-screen exposure and turn production into visitation! A tactical workshop for communities ready to maximize opportunity.

3:15 pm **Breakout II**
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon F
Session Partner: Response Media Group

The Data Advantage: Turning Numbers into Action
Data isn't optional! It's your secret weapon. Join us for an honest, real-world conversation about how Georgia destinations are using data to prove ROI to boards and elected officials, defend and protect crucial funding, make smarter marketing and investment decisions, identify high-value visitors, and drive strategic planning across the organization. You'll walk away with practical, actionable takeaways you can bring back to your team immediately. This isn't theory, it's how Georgia DMOs turn numbers into results.

3:15 pm

Breakout III
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon G
Session Partner: Rebel Fox

Leading Destinations Forward: Aligning Purpose, People, and Progress

Join Doug Bacon, President, and CEO of Throwing Words, for a high-energy, interactive session designed to help DMOs rethink how they communicate, position, and lead their destinations. Attendees will leave with practical tools, new perspectives, and actionable strategies to help their destination thrive in an increasingly competitive and experience-driven travel landscape.

5:30 pm

Dine Around | Town Trilith
Shuttles depart from the Marriott Gateway Lobby
Loop from 5:30 to 8:30 pm

8:00 pm

After Party at Renaissance Gateway
Sponsored by: Accent Creative Group

C.A.R.D.S. Band: Exclusive GACVB House Band!
Get ready for an unforgettable night with the **C.A.R.D.S. Band** featuring **Jonathan Dorsey** (Carrollton), **Jay Markwalter** (Augusta), **Andy Williams** (Roswell), **Sam McDuffie** (Dahlonega), and **Justin Samples** (Statesboro)! This one-night-only performance will bring you incredible music, a lively atmosphere, and an unforgettable experience.

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

8:00 -9:00 am

Networking Breakfast
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Pre-Function
Sponsored by: Dart Staffing

8:00 am

Registration Open
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Pre-Function

9:00 am

General Session
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salons A-D
Sponsored by: Advance Travel and Tourism

AI & Destination Organizations: Not Your Typical AI Talk
Everyone's tired of generic AI presentations... this one is different. This session cuts through the hype and focuses on what DMOs need to know. Learn how to set clear internal guardrails so your team can innovate safely, protect your brand in a rapidly changing digital landscape, empower staff to use AI responsibly without losing creativity, and strategically plan for what's next in AI for tourism.

9:45 am

General Session
Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salons A-D
Session Partner: Atlanta Magazine Custom Media

CEO Roundtable: Georgia Leadership in Action
The most anticipated conversation of the GACVB Annual Meeting. No scripts, no slide decks. No polished talking points. Just real Georgia

destination leaders having an honest, behind-the-scenes conversation about what's happening in our industry. Think of it as the "corner office group chat" live

10:30 am

Mid-Morning Break

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Pre-Function

Sponsored by: Wheel The World

11:00 am

Morning Breakout Sessions – Choose one of the following:

11:00 am

Breakout I

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon E

Session Partner: Explore Gwinnett

Marketing Ideas You Can Steal! Secret Weapons Edition

A lively, insider conversation moderated by Georgia Tourism marketing pros, sharing their cleverest campaigns, social strategies, and can't-miss initiatives.

11:00 am

Breakout II

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon F

Session Partner: Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau

CRM Technology Workshop

Bring your laptop, roll up your sleeves, and dive in! Learn how to harness the latest CRM tools to manage contacts, engage visitors, and drive repeat business—hands-on, practical, and designed so you leave with strategies you can implement immediately.

11:00 am

Breakout III

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon G

PR: Turn Your Story into Headlines

Public relations is essential to a destination's success, but getting noticed takes more than press releases. Join us for an insider's look at the tricks of the trade, from pitching to top-tier media to crafting stories that capture attention. Learn practical, real-world strategies to amplify your destination's voice, protect your brand, and generate media coverage that truly moves the needle. Walk away with actionable tips you can use immediately to elevate your PR game and make your destination unforgettable.

12:00 pm

Leadership Luncheon

LEC Presentation, Special Membership Presentation, *Travelblazers* Recognition

Luncheon Sponsors: Cartersville Museum City and

Destination Augusta

Travelblazer Parter: Georgia Trend

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon A-D

1:45 pm

General Session

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salons A-D

Session Partner: Total 360 Marketing

Explore Georgia Update!

Big things are happening in Georgia tourism! Join us for an energetic update with the one and only Jay Markwalter and the regional representatives as they share

the latest wins, trends, and insider scoop from across the state. Expect fun stories, surprising insights, and takeaways you can use back at your destination!

2:30 pm

Afternoon Breakout Sessions – Choose one of the following:

2:30 pm

Breakout I

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon E

Big Soccer Game: How Destinations Score

Major events bring major opportunities. See exactly how Georgia destinations are turning big games into big wins! Walk away with actionable ideas you can adapt and implement immediately in your own community.

2:30 pm

Breakout II

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon F

Improvement Districts Panel: Making Places Shine

Wondering what a CID, TID, or BID really is? Learn how these districts can transform your destination! Join our panel of experts as they break down how Community Improvement Districts are shaping tourism, enhancing visitor experiences, and driving economic impact. Learn step-by-step how to determine if a CID or similar model is right for your community and what actions to take next to get started.

2:30 pm

Breakout III

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon G

Session Partner: Zartico

The Georgia Advantage: Data That Defines Your Competitive Edge

See how Georgia tourism truly stacks up. This fast-paced session dives into powerful geolocation and spend data to reveal our competitive position, key audiences, seasonal trends, international impact, and regional opportunities. Walk away with actionable insights you can immediately use to strengthen marketing, advocacy, and strategic planning across your destination.

3:15 pm

Mid-Afternoon Break

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Pre-Function

3:45 pm

Afternoon Breakout Sessions – Choose one of the following:

3:45 pm

Breakout I

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon E

(repeat) Big Soccer Game: How Destinations Score

Major events bring major opportunities. See exactly how Georgia destinations are turning big games into big wins! Walk away with actionable ideas you can adapt and implement immediately in your own community.

3:45 pm

Breakout II

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon F

Session Partner: Peachtree City CVB

Visitor Services: The Front Line of Experience

The visitor experience starts long before arrival and lasts well after departure.

Discover how a strong visitor services strategy drives reputation, repeat visitation, and community pride.

3:45 pm

Breakout III

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salon G

Session Partner: Georgia Grown

Uncovering New & Unexpected Ag Tourism Opportunities

This isn't your typical farm-to-table session. Explore how Georgia's agricultural assets, from vineyards and peach orchards to small-batch craft producers, can be transformed into *new, unforgettable visitor experiences*. Using innovative storytelling, partnership strategies, and emerging trends, you'll learn how to highlight unique products, seasonal experiences, and behind-the-scenes access that few tourists know exist.

6:00 pm

Evening Reception & Georgia Tourism Awards

Attire: Business Elegance

7:00 pm

Georgia Tourism Awards Program

Awards Dinner Sponsor: AJC/Access Atlanta

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

8:30-9:30 am

Networking Breakfast

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Pre-Function

Sponsored by: Pineapple PR

9:30 am

GACVB General Membership Report & Annual Business Meeting

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salons A-D

10:00 am

General Session

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salons A-D

Session Partner: ATL Airport District

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: General Session

Get ready for a high-energy general session that will explore the power of collaboration, innovation, and collective impact! Walk away motivated, energized, and ready to turn teamwork into real results for your destination

10:45 am

Mid-Morning Break

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Pre-Function

11:15 am

General Session

Atlanta Marriott Gateway | Salons A-D

Advocacy: Under the Gold Dome

Investing in Georgia tourism is big business, and it takes action at the statehouse! Over the summer, four Senate Study Committee meetings explored ways to make tourism #1 in Georgia. Join us for an insider look at what's happening under the Gold Dome, where things stand now, and what's next for Georgia's tourism industry. Don't miss this chance to see how advocacy drives real impact for your destination!

12:00 pm

Closing Remarks & Adjournment

