

Jay Markwalter

Executive Director – Georgia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus

Jay Markwalter, a native of Savannah, and his wife, Sumner, live in Augusta. They have two sons, Joe and Hart.

Markwalter serves as Executive Director the Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (GACVB), the advocacy, education, and leadership development resource for our state's destination marketing organizations and tourism industry professionals. He works with travel and hospitality industry partners to elevate Georgia's tourism-driven economic development.

Prior to becoming the statewide organization's director in 2018, Markwalter served as GACVB President while representing the Augusta CVB team. He served as Director of Marketing Communications and Director of Sales with the Augusta CVB from 2014 – 2018.

From 2004 – 2014, Markwalter led the tourism-based economic development efforts in Atlanta-metro and the north Georgia mountains as the Tourism Director for Lawrenceville (2004-2011) and Dahlonega-Lumpkin County (2011-2014). In his career in downtown development and tourism, he has served on the Georgia Downtown Association and 13-State Southeast Tourism Society Board of Directors as well as several state and regional hospitality, arts, and economic development organizations. He is also a member of the Georgia Economic Developers Association, Georgia Chamber of Commerce, Southeast Tourism Society (STS), Destinations International, and the U.S. Travel Association. Currently, he serves as State Chair for Georgia for the STS Congressional Summit on Travel & Tourism.

Markwalter is a graduate of the Leadership Lumpkin County Class of 2012, Leadership Georgia Class of 2013, and Leadership Augusta Class of 2017. In 2018, he was selected to serve as a Leadership Georgia Program Chair. Markwalter also achieved a Leadership Excellence Certification (LEC) from Columbus State University – a program offered to tourism industry leaders through GACVB.

Markwalter was appointed by Governor Nathan Deal to the Georgia Tourism Foundation in 2018 and reappointed to the Foundation by Governor Brian Kemp in 2021. In 2022, he was named to *Georgia Trend Magazine's* 100 Most Influential Georgians for the third consecutive year and their inaugural Georgia 500 – Most Influential Leaders in the category of Hospitality & Tourism. Markwalter was also named in 2022, for a second consecutive year, as one of *James Magazine's* Most Influential Georgians.

Markwalter is a University of Georgia Terry College of Business Alum with a BBA in Marketing. He holds his Travel Marketing Professional (TMP) designation as well as Festival and Event Professional (FEP) certification from the Southeast Tourism Society. He is proud to have served as a professor at the STS Marketing College. Markwalter has also achieved downtown development and development authority training certifications from UGA's J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Representing GACVB, Markwalter serves as a tourism, hospitality and arts industry advocate and guest speaker supporting and assisting regional and local ally partners. His speaking engagements span economic development organizations, trade associations, educational institutions, civic groups, and governmental training.