



GACVB ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Gas South Convention Center
6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth GA 30097

Sunday, February 2

Join us for a fun, **optional event** for early arrivals! Atlanta's professional ECHL ice hockey team, the Atlanta Gladiators, proudly affiliated with the NHL's Nashville Predators and AHL's Milwaukee Admirals, will face off against the Bloomington Bison at Gas South Arena. A special section will be reserved for GACVB attendees! Purchase your tickets [here!](#)

Monday, February 3

9:00 – 1:00 pm

[GA Sports, Inc. Annual Meeting](#) (Concurrent GACVB Pre-Conf Event)

We are excited to welcome industry partners from GA Sports as they host their annual meeting in conjunction with GACVB Annual Conference. Georgia Sports is a membership-based marketing and tourism initiative comprised of Georgia's CVBs, sports councils and alliances representing sports-friendly destinations, each offering a full menu of management services to the event owner.

Gas South Convention Center | Juniper

8:30 – 10 am

Pre-Conference Leadership Development Session (LEC Course)

Foundations of Leadership

Sponsored by: Pick Ellijay (Gilmer Chamber & Welcome Center)

Presented by: The Leadership Institute at Columbus State University

Gas South Convention Center | Conference Room

9 am – 5 pm

Conference Registration Open

Gas South Convention Center | Lake Gallery

9 am – 1 pm

Sponsor & Exhibitor Setup

Gas South Convention Center | Lake Gallery

9:00 – 10:30 am

GACVB Board of Directors Meeting

Gas South Convention Center | Sycamore

10 – 10:30 am

Leadership Sessions Break

10:30 – 11:45

Pre-Conference Leadership Development Session (LEC Course)

Disc Model of Communication

Sponsored by: Pick Ellijay (Gilmer Chamber & Welcome Center)

Presented by: The Leadership Institute at Columbus State University

Gas South Convention Center | Conference Room

Noon

Lunch on your own | [Enjoy unique dining in Gwinnett](#)

12:30 pm

Welcome Orientation for new members and attendees
Gas South Convention Center | Lake Gallery

1:00 – 1:45 pm

Welcome & Opening General Session
Secret Superpower for Destinations!

In this session, we'll unlock the secret superpower of how destinations can maximize their budget to create significant impact and drive value. Join **Matt Stiker, Destination Marketing Expert and Senior Vice President of Strategy with Madden and Senior Creative Director, Kwaku Amuti**, to learn how to strategically allocate resources to amplify your destination's visibility, boost local economies, and enhance visitor experiences without breaking the bank.

Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB

2:45

Afternoon Break

Sponsored by: Carrollton CVB

Gas South Convention Center | Lake Gallery

Auction Opens

Gas South Convention Center | Lake Gallery

3:15 – 4:30 pm

GA Sports, Inc. Annual Meeting Continued

3:15 – 4:30 pm

Afternoon Breakout Sessions – Choose one of the following:

Breakout I –Enhancing Your Leadership Effectiveness

Leaders for the 21st Century must understand that leadership requires enhancing relationships and creativity among team members. Caring, showing interest, fairness, demonstrating trustworthiness, and understanding while at the same time managing ambiguity, diversity, and system complexity are directly related to the success of the 21st century leader. Participants will learn that failure and success are primarily tied to developing constructive relationships among members of the team; having effective communication between leader and team members; and demonstrating the value of human differences.

Session Partner: Leadership Institute at Columbus State University

Gas South Convention Center | Salon 4

Breakout II – Beyond the Screen: Connecting with Potential Visitors Through Experiential Marketing

Angela Westerfield, Chief Marketing Officer with Visit Savannah explores how experiential marketing can elevate your brand and create lasting connections with audiences. This presentation will showcase Visit Savannah's innovative journey, from piloting pop-up experiences in key markets to executing an eleven-city mobile tour. We'll break down how the campaign leveraged paid media, earned media, and influencer partnerships to create a fully integrated marketing approach.

Session Partner: Visit Savannah

Gas South Convention Center | Salon 5

Breakout III-Working with You is Killing Me

The toughest part of any job is dealing with the people around you. Using Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument participants will understand the process of conflict and its resolution. Conflict is not fun for most of us but avoiding it can cause irreparable damage to you and your team. Clarifying the facts, the players and the positions in the conflict are key to the start of a REAL discussion on the most workable options to move to the most positive outcome and answer what are the legitimate needs and concerns of the people involved.

Session Partner: Leadership Institute at Columbus State University

Gas South Convention Center | Salon 6/7

- 6:00 pm **Evening Transportation Departure from Westin Atlanta Gwinnett**
Dine Around on your own.
 Enjoy one of Downtown Duluth's delicious dining options, from cozy cafes and upscale eateries to international cuisines. Whether you're in the mood for Southern comfort food, Asian fusion, or fresh seafood, the area has something to satisfy every palate.
- Bus transportation on a 30-minute rotating loop returning to Westin Atlanta Gwinnett. The Downtown Duluth pick-up location is **outside Good Word Brewing & Public House**.
- 8:30-10:00 pm **After Party at Good Word Brewing & Public House**
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.
- 🎵 *Come for the Fun, Stay for the Great Music!*
 🎁 *Merchandise Available for Purchase! All proceeds go toward GACVB scholarship fund!*
Sponsored by: Accent Creative Group

Tuesday, February 4

- 7 – 8:15 am **Networking Breakfast**
 Gas South Convention Center | Lake Gallery
- 8:00 am **Registration Open**
- 8:30 - 9:30 am **Keynote Address**
 Get ready for an exciting session with **Bob Somers, Senior Vice President- Global Sales, Delta Air Lines** as he shares the latest industry trends and insights that will shape the future of travel and events! This session will provide a forward-looking update on what's ahead for 2025 and beyond, offering valuable strategies on how to stay ahead of the curve and prepare your business for success.
Session Partners: Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau
 Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB
- 9:45 – 12:45 pm **Immersion Excursions**
Snacks and Water will be provided.
- 1:00 – 2:30 pm **Leadership Luncheon**
 - LEC Graduation Presentation & Ceremony
 - Special Membership Presentation
 - *Travelblazers* Recognition**Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB**
- 2:00 – 3:15 pm **General Session - 3 Essentials Every Transformational Leader Knows.**
Mike Robertson, VP Brand partnership and Director of Culture with MediaONE knows that certain leaders change the way people think, live, and ultimately work. From Steve Jobs launching the iPhone to Henry Ford with the Model T, these Transformative leaders left a legacy that changed the world around them. In this session, you'll learn the three essentials from their lives and others like them that can and will improve our leadership today.
Session Partners: MediaONE
 Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB
- 3:15 – 3:45 pm **Afternoon Break**
Sponsored by: Advance Travel & Tourism
 Gas South Convention Center | Lake Gallery

3:45 – 4:30 pm **General Session – Advocacy and GACVB Legislative Priorities for 2025**
Join industry leaders as they dive into the key advocacy issues shaping the future of the hospitality and tourism sectors. This session will cover the GACVB’s legislative priorities for 2025 and offer valuable insights on how to effectively engage with your legislators. Learn how your voice can make a difference and discover strategies for building meaningful relationships with policymakers to advocate for policies that support the growth and success of your business and the broader industry.
Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB

7:00 – 9:30 pm **Evening Reception & Georgia Tourism Awards**
Attire: Business Elegance
Reception: Convention Center Courtyard 6:00 – 6:45 pm
Georgia Tourism Awards Program: Westin Atlanta Gwinnett 7:00 pm
Awards Dinner Sponsor: AJC/Access Atlanta
Westin | Amethyst I & II

Wednesday, February 5

7 – 8:15 am **Breakfast / Networking**

8:00 - 8:45 am **GACVB General Membership Report & Annual Business Meeting**
Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB

8:45 - 9:30 am **An Explore Georgia Update: GDEcD Tourism Division**
Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB

9:30 – 10:00 am **Morning Break**
Sponsored by: Georgia Entertainment
Gas South Convention Center | Lake Gallery

10:00- 10:45 am **General Session - CID vs TID: Understanding the Key Differences**
Join **Tiffany Gallagher, Vice President of Operations at Civitas Advisors**, as she explores the key differences between Community Improvement Districts (CID) and Tourism Improvement Districts (TID). Learn how these districts drive economic growth and improve infrastructure, marketing, and tourism services. Walk away with actionable strategies to leverage these models for your own community, including how to engage local stakeholders and maximize resources for lasting impact.
Session Partner: Laurie Rowe & Co.
Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB

10:45 am **Auction Closes**

10:45 – 11:30 am **Morning Breakout Sessions – Choose one of the following:**
Breakout I -Leveraging the FIFA World Cup to Boost Destination Tourism.
FIFA World Cup is a global spectacle that captivates millions, and this session will explore how destinations in Georgia can harness its energy to attract international visitors and elevate local tourism. Join **Sports Council President, Dan Corso and CEO and President of Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau, William Pate**, and learn actionable strategies on how to engage with the World Cup's audience, from hosting fan zones and viewing parties to creating unique travel packages that tie into the excitement of the event. Don't miss out on discovering how your destination can score big by tapping into one of the world's most-watched events!
Breakout Sponsor: Atlanta Sports Council
Gas South Convention Center | Salon 4

Breakout II - Get the Whole Story

Join **Jim Harenchar, President & CEO of Response Marketing Group** for an insightful session on how to empower your ad agency to do more with data. Learn how their innovative strategies and cutting-edge tools can help you harness the power of data to drive smarter decisions, optimize campaigns, and maximize ROI. Discover how data-driven insights can elevate your agency's performance, streamline workflows, and unlock new growth opportunities. Don't miss out on this chance to take your agency's capabilities to the next level!

Session Partner: RMG

Gas South Convention Center | Salon 5

Breakout III – Creative Strategies for Fund Allocation & Improvement Districts.

Join **Tiffany Gallagher, Vice President of Operations at Civitas Advisors**, for a hands-on seminar designed to help destinations and organizations get the most out of their funding and improvement districts. In this interactive session, Tiffany will walk you through innovative and creative strategies to effectively allocate resources and drive meaningful change within your community. You'll gain insights on how to utilize improvement districts to fund local initiatives, enhance public spaces, and support economic growth. With real-world examples and actionable takeaways, this session is perfect for anyone looking to maximize their budget and create lasting impact in their destination. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a leader in the field and walk away with the tools to transform your projects into successes!

Breakout Sponsor: Civitas Advisors

Gas South Convention Center | Salon 6/7

11:30 – 12:30 pm

Closing Session - Careers & Coffee (or Cocktails!)

An engaging and inspiring ride with our CEO Panel. This annual series as they share their personal journeys, from triumphs to challenges, and dive into the hot topics shaping Georgia's tourism industry today. It's a fun, insightful session you won't want to miss, packed with real stories and the latest industry buzz!

Moderator: Shana Young, Executive Director of Leadership Institute at Columbus State University

Panelist:

Lisa Anders, President & CEO, **Explore Gwinnett**

Mercedes Miller, President & CEO, **ATL District**

Steven Schumacher, President & CEO, **Only in Cartersville Bartow County**

Session Partners: Atlanta Magazine Custom Media

Gas South Convention Center | Salon 1/2/3/FAB

12:30 pm

Closing Remarks & Adjournment

(Auction check out)

Travel safely!

