

GENERAL MANAGER

Savannah Convention Center

Managed by the Georgia World Congress Center | Savannah, GA





Who We Are

Located on Hutchinson Island across the Savannah River from the Historic District, the Savannah Convention Center features prime meeting space for successful meetings, trade shows, and special events. After the completion of a successful expansion and opening by March/April 2024, the Savannah Convention Center will boast 660,000 sq. ft. of space, including 200,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space. This magnificent venue helps drive economic growth and showcases the uniqueness of Savannah, Chatham County, and the State of Georgia.

The Savannah Convention Center is a Georgia World Congress Center Authority (GWCC) managed facility and this position and the team within the Savannah Convention Center are GWCC employees.

About Georgia World Congress Center Authority (GWCCA)

Georgia World Congress Center Authority was established in 1971 to oversee the development of an international trade and exhibition center in Atlanta that today is known as Georgia World Congress Center. Along with the convention center, GWCCA's ever-evolving campus spans 220-plus acres and includes Centennial Olympic Park, the lasting legacy of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, Mercedes-Benz Stadium, home of the Atlanta Falcons and Atlanta United and, opening in January 2024, GWCCA's headquarter hotel Signia by Hilton Atlanta.

On February 12, 2014, the Georgia International Maritime and Trade Center Authority (GIMTCA) approved the selection of the Georgia World Congress Center Authority (GWCCA) to manage the Savannah Convention Center. Under the agreement, the GWCCA became responsible for the management and operation of the convention center on April 1, 2014, as well as working collaboratively with the Visit Savannah team. This business deal links the state's two most popular tourist destinations into a marketing powerhouse, driving new business and tax revenues into the economy.

Savannah Convention Center

With spectacular views of Savannah and its ever-changing riverscape, the Savannah Convention Center, like the proud and elegant city it represents, blends the best of the old South with the new to offer a unique and memorable venue for any meeting, tradeshow, or special event.

Overlooking Savannah's world-renowned Riverfront and landmark Historic District, the Savannah Convention Center is adjacent to the Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa. And just a two-minute water ferry ride away from other large hotels, eclectic and unique lodging options, charming inns, and complimentary medium-sized hotel chains within the Historic Meetings District.

Food Service: With the largest kitchen in Chatham County, Georgia, and an award-winning culinary team led by Executive Chef Kasey Thexton, the Savannah Convention Center catering department can accommodate any event, from small business meetings to large, formal galas and everything in between. We're proud to be a member of Georgia Grown, a statewide network of farmers and suppliers, which has allowed us to increase our ability to offer local, sustainable options to all of our guests.

Current Business Mix: The current business mix stands at 10% local, 20% state association, 30% consumer, and 40% convention.

Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority

The Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority is a partnership between the State of Georgia (State) and Chatham County (County) whose mission is to attract, develop and produce events of significant economic benefit to Savannah, the County and State, such as conventions, trade shows, public shows, expositions, meetings, banquets and conferences; and secondly, to facilitate local events promoting civic and community pride and quality of life. Revenue for the Authority is primarily generated from a combination of event services and lodging taxes. Lodging tax receipts are derived from a percentage of the hotel/motel taxes collected and distributed by six local governments. These revenues are utilized to support the Savannah Convention Center (SCC) operations, capital improvements and other initiatives undertaken by the Authority. Additionally, the Authority maintains adequate reserves to meet anticipated future requirements.

The Authority's primary mission is the oversight of the Savannah Convention Center (SCC).

EXPANSION PLANS

Since opening in 2000, the Savannah Convention Center has served a wide variety of clients and hosted a diverse array of events; however, the need to expand has become obvious. Demand for more space from our customers prompted a feasibility study which confirmed the need for expansion.

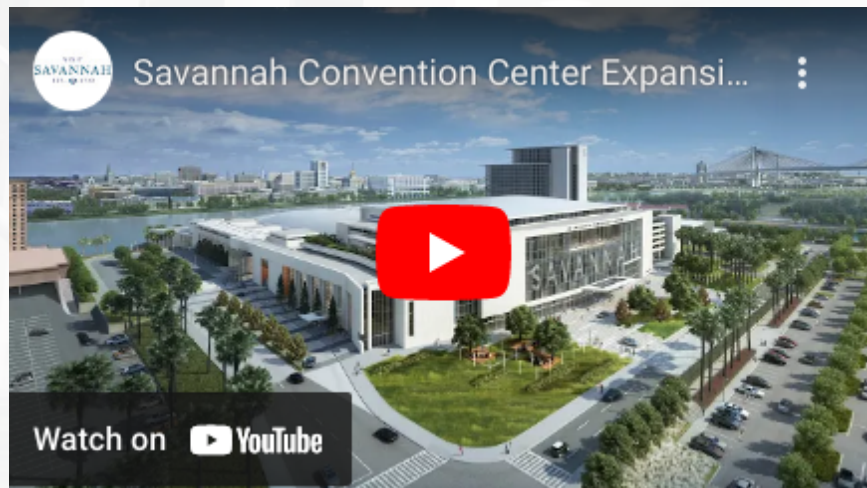
Clark Construction was hired by the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) in 2018 and an additional 100,000 square foot exhibit hall, 40,000 square foot ballroom, 15 meeting rooms, and 900+ parking spaces have been planned for the Savannah Convention Center.

[Expansion Sales Sheet](#) - Upon completion, the venue will offer a total of 660,000 square feet of space, including 200,000 square feet of exhibit space, two ballrooms (40,000 sq. ft. and 25,000 sq. ft.), and 32 breakout rooms.

Learn more about us here: [Savannah Convention Center](#)

Upon completion, the Savannah Convention Center will feature the following:

- 660,000 total sq. ft. of space.
- 200,000 total sq. ft. of exhibit hall space.
- Two ballrooms, 25,000 sq. ft. and 40,000 sq. ft.
- 32 customizable breakout rooms.
- A new 58 ft. wide hangar door.
- A new 900-space parking garage.
- Additional outdoor space to enjoy Savannah's beautiful weather.
- New facility entrance with an all-glass facade.
- 403 adjacent hotel rooms (Westin), and coming soon, a new HQ hotel to be announced (Developer: Brookfield Properties).





POSITION SUMMARY

The General Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management and successful performance of the Savannah Convention Center. This leader will recommend, develop, and implement short and long-range goals to enhance the customer experience and implement policies and procedures necessary for the operation and maintenance of the facility. Additionally responsible for developing and implementing approved budget and cost controls and developing a high-performing and high-quality culture where individuals and teams can thrive. The General Manager shall oversee the remaining portion of the 2024 expansion and future hotel development on Hutchinson Island.

In addition, represent the facility and the GWCCA in their working relationships with other governmental agencies, industry organizations, and other functions, duties, and responsibilities required by the GWCCA Executive Director.

The position reports directly to the Executive Director, GWCCA, and indirectly/directly to the [Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority](#).

FY 2024 projected facility operating expenses at nearly \$12M with a projected net income loss of roughly \$1M.

Successful employees at the Georgia World Congress Center Authority embody our three core values - to be accountable, to be authentic, and to be one.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Drive the strategic direction of the Savannah Convention Center (SCC) while providing general administrative leadership and supervision to all departments of SCC in collaboration and coordination with the Georgia World Congress Center and associated venues.
- Direct development and implementation of effective customer service programs in every functional area/department of the facility. Communicate directly with primary customers and implement effective customer survey/ critique programs.
- Contribute to the development of a long-term strategic plan for the GWCCA. Direct implementation of facility plans to support the GWCCA's strategic plan and measure success.
- Implement approved facility budget and mechanisms for cost control. Develop and submit recommended facility operations and capital outlay budgets and adjustments.
- Review and approve facility license agreements and related documents. Coordinate legal review as necessary and serve as management representative for the GWCCA regarding facility license agreements and other GWCCA contracts.
- Research, review and recommend and direct implementation of contractual and vendor services for the facility.
- Analyze opportunities for improved efficiencies through outsourcing, consolidation or other operational techniques.
- Review, inspect and observe all areas of facility operation for compliance with applicable policies, laws, codes, regulations, ordinances, and directives.
- Direct the implementation of effective facility marketing, public relations, and promotional programs. Represent and promote facility in industry associations and organizations and maintain liaison with competitive convention facilities.
- Develop and recommend appropriate modifications and additions to personnel policies, programs, and procedure to advance professional development and proficiency of the workforce.
- Develop and implement effective employee recruiting, selection, retention, and training programs for the facility according to established guidelines.
- Encourage professional development and promotional qualification of subordinate staff for future GWCCA positions.
- Develop and implement programs to establish and maintain the GWCCA as a leader in the industry.
- Support the Executive Director in representing the GWCCA to Georgians.
- General Assembly, Visit Savannah, and other agencies/organizations in the convention, trade show, sports, entertainment industry, local community, and the general public.
- Such other duties, functions, special projects, and responsibilities as assigned by the Executive Director.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The General Manager will have five direct reports: Director of Sales, AGM, Director of FB, Director of Operations, and a Senior HR Manager. Responsible for the collective performance and overall coordination of these departments. Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training department directors; planning, assigning, coordinating, directing, and delegating work; appraising performance; rewarding, counseling, and disciplining employees; addressing complaints and grievances and resolving problems.

QUALIFICATIONS (not limited to)

- AGM or GM from a major 1st tier convention center or GM from a 2nd tier destination convention center.
- Experience elevating guest experiences.
- Experience leading convention sales leaders and partnering with DMOs.
- A college degree is preferred.
- Certified Facilities Executive (CFE) or Certified Venue Executive (CVE) designation is desirable.
- The ability to read, analyze, and interpret general business practices or government regulations.
- The ability to compose and produce technical reports and procedures.
- Strong ability to make public presentations.
- The ability to comprehend, interpret, and develop financial statements.
- Knowledge of business software and Outlook.
- Interpret provisions of the Authority's legal documents (contracts, license agreements, procurement documents, and insurance contracts).
- The ability to communicate and negotiate with legal counsel and represent the Authority in court proceedings.
- Strong ability to negotiate and resolve contract terms, conditions, and disputes.
- Possess general knowledge of building life safety codes, occupational safety and health regulations, and employment laws.
- The ability to solve practical problems and deal with a variety of concrete variables in situations where only limited standardization exists.
- The ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.
- The ability to demonstrate management and leadership skills.
- The ability to demonstrate thorough knowledge of management techniques and technical expertise in the areas of engineering, event planning, housekeeping procedures, security, marketing, and other related facility operational areas.
- While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to sit, use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools, or controls; reach with hands and arms; talk and hear.
- The employee is frequently required to stand and walk extensively and must occasionally lift and/or move up to 20 pounds and work extended hours.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Innovative
- Accountable
- Visionary
- Networker
- Strategic
- Adaptable
- Engaged and visible
- Sales Ambassador
- Collaborative
- Inclusive
- Approachable
- Transparent
- Passionate

TOP PRIORITIES

1. Recognize the value of the current governing structure as a Georgia World Congress Center employee and its impact on the management agreement with the City of Savannah.
2. Assess the existing organizational structure, including goals, accountabilities, service levels/scores, financials, and policies.
3. Foster a robust partnership with Visit Savannah and gain insight into their group/convention sales efforts, goals, and strategies. Ensure proactive and accountable convention center sales teams.
4. Cultivate relationships with key stakeholders such as the Savannah Convention Center board, city officials, industry partners, hoteliers, and attractions to influence group/convention business.
5. Begin the process of reshaping the current culture and team atmosphere.
6. Prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, integrating these principles into the organization's fabric and strategic plan.

BENEFITS

Georgia World Congress Center Authority offers a competitive salary and comprehensive benefits package which includes extensive medical, dental, vision, life insurance coverage, paid vacation, paid state holidays, Flexible Spending Account options, a 401(k) plan with 5% match, on-site employee dining featuring below-market value pricing, free on-site parking, plus discounted prices on auto insurance, home insurance, pet insurance, technology, travel, attractions and much more!



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If interested in learning more about this great opportunity, please send your resume to our SearchWide Global Executive, Mark Gnatovic.

SearchWide Global is a full-service executive search firm primarily for companies in the event, tradeshow, convention, tourism, and hospitality industries. We specialize in C-Level, Director, and Management level executive searches for companies ranging in size from Fortune 500 corporations to mid-sized public and private companies.