



**A Year in
Numbers**

**Hotel room sales
up 19.5%
to \$36.7 million**

**Lodging taxes
retained in
Bartow County
\$2.7 million**

**Visitors spent
\$167 million in
the local
economy—an
increase of 6.7%**

**Tourism supports
1,570 jobs in
Bartow County
and nets more
than \$5 million in
local taxes**

2015 Tops in Tourism Growth

Doubtlessly, this year has been the best year for tourism growth in Bartow County that I have experienced in my 25-year career with the CVB. We have seen growth in tourism products, continued expansion with hotel and restaurant openings at LakePoint Sporting Community, and have been blessed as the location for Avatron, the nation's first smart theme park with licensing to bring Hollywood blockbusters to life.

Growth comes with challenges that the CVB is preparing to meet and manage in order to foster a memorable visitor experience worthy of repeating. As we look ahead to 2016 and 2020, the CVB expects the number of multi-day visitors to double. We are assessing our tourism infrastructure and transportation needs, targeting the right mix of hotel and restaurant partners, and making preparations to expand the Clarence Brown Conference Center. There's much to be done, and done well.

Ellen Archer, Executive Director

Cartersville-Bartow County Convention & Visitors Bureau



2015 Annual Review

Indicators

The CVB tracks hotel room sales as its primary pulse of industry health. According to the latest Smith Travel Report (STR Report), the globally-recognized authority on hotel performance, local hotel room sales were approximately \$36.7 million for the 12 months ending OCT 2015, an increase of 19.5% year to date. Room sales have the highest percent of local taxation of any goods or services in the county. Of the 13% tax on hotel rooms, 8% is retained in Bartow County in the form of local sales tax, SPLOST and hotel motel tax resulting in more than \$2.7 million in local taxes on hotel rooms.

Economic Impact

In the most recent tourism study commissioned by the Georgia Department of Economic Development, we learned that in 2014 overall expenditures by visitors came to \$167 million (a 6.7% increase over 2013), supported 1,570 jobs in Bartow County, and paid more than \$5 million in local taxes. With an almost 20% increase in hotel room rentals thus far in 2015, it is safe to say we will see a similar dramatic increase in overall expenditures in 2015.

Growth Factors

The growth seen in 2015 is contributable to a variety of factors. First is economic recovery nationwide. Beyond that, we're experiencing basic market maturity with increased recognition of Cartersville's fabulous museums, outdoor activities, events and "creature comforts," such as hotels, restaurants and shops. Naturally, the second year of activity at LakePoint Sporting Community is a major factor as well, which will go year-round with the opening of the indoor sports facility.

Visitor Demographics

When asked to identify the typical visitor to Bartow County, the CVB approaches this by further segmenting the market by day vs. overnight, and weekday vs. weekend. The fact is, the face of our visitor changes with the season and the day of the week. Spring and summer draws couples with kids throughout the week. In fall and winter, weekdays bring business travelers, and couples fill weekend hotel rooms. Overall, it's still true that most of our visitors are Georgians.

— continued



Visit us at the Clarence Brown Conference Center

CVB Board of Directors

Chairman
Karl Lutjens

Vice Chairman
Tommy Strickland

Secretary
Jennifer Matthews

Treasurer
Butch Emerson

Executive Director
Ellen Archer

Jane Drew
Marshal Eagle
Michael Gordon
Adena Harper
Kathy Lyles
Rita Pritchard
Fran Twelkeheimer
Jeff Watkins

The Cartersville-Bartow County Convention & Visitors Bureau was founded in 1991 for the purpose of economic development through destination marketing. The CVB is supported by a portion of lodging tax collected in Bartow County, and the cities of Cartersville, Adairsville and Emerson. The CVB operates both the Clarence Brown Conference Center and the Georgia Local Welcome Center in Cartersville.

2015 Annual Review continued...

Marketing

The CVB's dominant marketing effort in 2015 was to attract the one million or so LakePoint visitors into Cartersville and other points in Bartow County. This was achieved through a marketing partnership with LakePoint allowing for scoreboard advertising, website links and print advertisements in tournament schedules. The CVB will expand that effort in 2016 to literally bringing those LakePoint patrons into Cartersville, if plans for a shuttle service are successful.

The new "Only in Cartersville" campaign will increase awareness among Georgians of those "Real Georgia Gems" that can only be experienced here and will connect the CVB's previous marketing theme. Expect to see advertisements touting *Cowboys & Indians in Georgia—Only in Cartersville*, *See the World's First Coca-Cola Wall Sign—Only in Cartersville*, and *Ride the Largest Camel Herd in Georgia—Only in Cartersville*, to name a few.

Goals

Preparation for doubling the number of visitors to Bartow County by 2020 is a significant CVB focus. This means fostering a shuttle system, improving signage—both gateway signs at interstate exits and directional signs throughout the county; attracting the right hotels and restaurants, and preparing to expand Clarence Brown Conference Center.

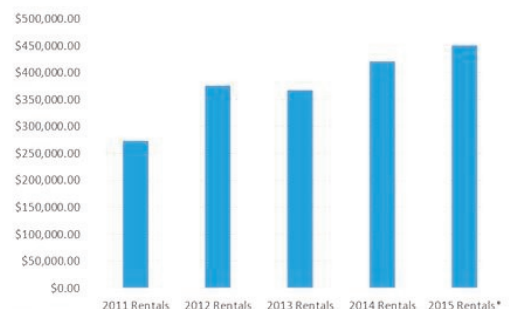
By 2020, annual visitation is projected to be 12 million people. That's an average of 32,876 visitors per day for a full day or longer. When combined with resident growth, on average, an additional 43,000 people will be in Bartow County on a daily basis in 2020.

Conference Center Five Year Review

The Clarence Brown Conference Center opened in 2010 and is operated by the CVB under an intergovernmental agreement between Bartow County and the City of Cartersville. Both municipalities share the responsibility for any financial shortfall incurred, but this has not been an issue as the CBCC has seen great success in its first five years. Rentals revenue increased 65% over the five-year period; however, booking denials also increased by 20% due to CBCC space demand, lack of hotel rooms, and lodging unsuitable to client need. With corporate bookings and tradeshows accounting for more than 50%

of CBCC rentals, the CVB hopes to expand the center in two phases to meet market demands with a new 5,000 sq. ft. flex-meeting space and a second ballroom.

Clarence Brown Conference Center Five-Year Review Rental Reviews



*Rentals booked as of November 15, 2015. Additional bookings expected prior to end year.

Cartersville-Bartow County Convention & Visitors Bureau
PO Box 200397
Cartersville GA 30120
www.VisitCartersvilleGA.org
800-733-2280 or 770-387-1357