

# GEORGIA

## OVERVIEW

The origins of the Georgia Council of the Arts (the Council) stretch back to 1953 when the state created a commission (comprising the governor and five citizens) to assess the role it should play in supporting the arts across the state.<sup>1</sup> Paralleling trends in a number of other Southern states, in 1965 the Council's predecessor, the Georgia Commission on the Arts, was legislatively established by the General Assembly to formally accomplish the role of supporting the arts across the state. Assisted by 20 Council members, an executive director and 12 staff members, the Council currently serves as the state's lead agency in funding and supporting the arts in Georgia.

The Council accomplishes this goal by providing grants and services for non-profit arts and cultural organizations throughout the state so as to make high-quality programs in the arts available to all Georgians. While a majority of the Council's operations are carried out through appropriations from the General Assembly, it also secures additional funds from the federal National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and a number of other public and private institutions.

2002, faced serious issues related to financing arts programs and artists.<sup>2</sup> As a result of these actions, the Council faced a series of cutbacks in its legislative appropriations during the report's review period that required a range of response measures. Table 11 provides details on the legislative appropriations (with line items) provided to the Council between fiscal years 2001 and 2005, as specified by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

As indicated in Table 11, during the review period, legislative appropriations experienced a decline of -16 percent between fiscal years 2001 and 2005, from \$4.8 million to \$4.1 million. (This is after the appropriation had increased to \$5.2 million in fiscal year 2002). After increasing by 7 percent between fiscal years 2001 and 2002, state appropriations declined by -14 percent between fiscal years 2002 and 2003 (the steepest single year drop in the five-year review period), by -5 percent between fiscal years 2003 and 2004, and by -4 percent between fiscal years 2004 and 2005.

Another level of analysis related to legislative appropriations involves per capita arts spending and the national ranking of states that flows from this statistic. As indicated in Table 11, the legislative appropriations secured by the Council during the review period resulted in an average of \$0.54, the 14<sup>th</sup> lowest per capita appropriation among the 16 SLC states. (The SLC state average for the five-year review period was \$0.94). In terms of national ranking, the Council's per capita appropriation level resulted in Georgia placing in the bottom third of the 50 states, hovering between 38 and 41, nationally, during this time period. Notwithstanding this low, per capita funding situation and

## FUNDING FOR THE ARTS

Reflecting the scenario in a number of other states, the contracting economy and state fiscal downturn that swept across the nation also impacted negatively on Georgia. The shrinking state fiscal revenue picture forced the General Assembly and the governor to enact spending cuts affecting a number of programs and departments. Even at the local level, the city of Atlanta, the engine that drives so much of the entire state's economic growth, by early

Table 11

### Georgia Council of the Arts Appropriations Fiscal Years 2001 to 2005

Fiscal Year	State Appropriation	% Change	Per Capita Spending	
			Amount	National Rank
2001	\$4,835,331		\$0.59	40
2002	\$5,179,841	7%	\$0.62	39
2003	\$4,478,490	-14%	\$0.52	41
2004	\$4,238,445	-5%	\$0.49	38
2005	\$4,054,234	-4%	\$0.47	39

Source: National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, April 13, 2005

the high number of counties (159) in the state, the Council noted in its fiscal year 2004 annual report that it managed to award grants to arts programs and artists in all but four of the state's counties, an impressive achievement indeed. In turn, the Council, noted, these grants enabled "over 19 million participants, audience members, and tourists to benefit from these tax dollars."<sup>3</sup>

In responding to these appropriation reductions, the Council noted that before January 2004, reductions in state appropriations in the prior five years had been handled by reducing the state arts grant line in the budget. It is funds from this line item that are distributed to the Council's primary constituents—artists and arts organizations across the state. However, since January 2004, the Council reported the reductions in legislative appropriations (reputed to be nearly 25 percent over a six year period) were handled by slashing administrative overhead in the areas of salaries, printing, and publishing.

The Council reported that it would seek to diversify its revenue flows by proposing the creation of the Georgia Arts Trust, a 501(c)(3) entity, during the next legislative session of the General Assembly. While funds donated to the Trust will be earmarked to arts education and public art, it also will include the conservation of Georgia's State Art Collection. In addition, the Council noted that project-specific funds have been raised since January 2004 for marketing (\$2,500), traditional arts grants (\$10,000), and digitizing the State Art Collection for its Website (in-kind contribution estimated at \$5,000). Then, a memorial fund was established in memory of an arts patron with proceeds to be provided to the Council; funds raised by this mechanism will be earmarked for grants. Finally, during fiscal year 2006, the Council will initiate partnerships with two other state agencies to broaden the marketing of its programs statewide while combining grant funds to facilitate more effective arts programming.

The Council indicated that an innovate program it recently had implemented to promote the arts state-



A Georgia quilter. Photo courtesy David Batley, Southern Arts Federation.

wide during these fiscally lean times involved, *State of the Arts (SOTA)*, a partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting, another state agency. This two-part initiative first involves a quarterly, one-hour television series dedicated to the arts in Georgia. Each television show visits between six and nine Georgia artists or non-profit arts organizations, presenting not only the individual and inspiring stories, but also reinforcing the value of the arts to economic growth, community development, and educational attainment. The second part of the initiative is an online calendar, also called *State of the Arts*, to which the Council's arts organizations may post their slate of upcoming events, activities and offerings. The Website is a searchable database by art form, date, and geographic location, including zip code. This effort remains a very effective and efficient way for the Council to publicize artists and arts organizations across the state in order that both Georgia residents and out-of-state visitors might participate in these events and activities.

Along with the cutbacks in legislative appropriations during the economic downturn of the early years of the decade, a number of arts organizations in Atlanta suffered drooping box office sales and declining corporate and individual donations too.<sup>4</sup> For instance, a

number of Atlanta's arts organizations, including several high-profile ones, faced fiscal year 2002 saddled with deficits including the Alliance Theater, the Southeast's biggest non-profit theater (\$1.75 million); Rialto Center for the Performing Arts (\$1.9 million); Atlanta Ballet (\$1.2 million); Atlanta Opera (\$823,000); Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center (nearly \$150,000); and the Atlanta Coalition for the Performing Arts (\$7,500).

Based on these gloomy trends, a collection of 30 top government, business and arts leaders from the five largest counties (Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett) adjacent to metropolitan Atlanta—with assistance from the Metropolitan Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (MACOC)—formed the Atlanta Regional Arts Task Force to spearhead a fundraising effort from foundations and other private sources along with pursuing creative ways to finance Atlanta's arts scene. The leadership decided to adopt an "ecosystem model" that would raise funds for a variety of arts-related needs that would positively impact the entire five-county region. Some of the 'quick-hit initiatives' included an integrated database for arts groups, collaborative marketing and a public-awareness campaign to raise the arts' profile while the more long-term projects would focus on

educational programs, advocacy and new venues. Officials likened their Task Force to the Georgia Research Alliance, a consortium that links six major research universities in the state in an effort to attract state funding for projects that could turn Georgia into a high-tech haven.

An alternate funding mechanism for the arts emerged from the General Assembly during the 2006 legislative session.<sup>5</sup> A bill (HB 1086), sponsored by a bipartisan group of five legislators led by House of Representative Speaker Pro Tem Mark Burkhalter, seeks to raise an estimated \$8 million annually for the state arts programs, more than tripling the current budget of the Council. The legislation calls for the creation of the Georgia Arts Trust that will function not as an entity or agency of government, but as a private trust operating under and in accordance with the laws of the state. The Trust would offer tax credits on gifts of up to \$10,000 from businesses and \$5,000 from individuals. In order to receive the tax credit, the individual or corporate taxpayer must make a contribution to one or more Georgia arts organizations and make a contribution to the Georgia Arts Trust that exceeds the aggregate total of the contributions to Georgia arts organizations. The state would provide \$1 million in seed money to initiate the Georgia Arts Trust.

Arts officials, while hailing the proposed legislation as a major victory for the arts, expressed concern over whether funding received by the Trust would dilute the funding stream already in place from the state to the Council. These concerns were allayed by Council officials who confirmed that funds secured by the Trust would be separate from the current state appropriations provided to the Council.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

According to the Council, while an economic impact study for the entire state has not been completed, there have been studies during the report's review period that evaluated segments of the state. For instance, the Metropolitan Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (MACOC), through

its Arts and Business unit, completed two, comprehensive studies since 1989. Results from the most recent one, released in November 2001, are presented along with a September 2005 economic impact study of the Symphony Center (the new home of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, scheduled to open in 2011).

### Evaluating the Link Between Arts & Business (November 2001)<sup>6</sup>

This study originated when MACOC sought to determine if there was a significant link between the arts and economic development in Atlanta and, if so, the precise role MACOC and its members should play in expanding the arts in Atlanta. The report indicated that the arts clearly contributed—both directly and indirectly—to enhancing local economies and that it actually contributed far more to local economies than other forms of entertainment and recreation. In terms of the direct and indirect impact of the arts on the metropolitan Atlanta area, the report noted that it was \$700 million with more than 24,000 jobs. In fact, in metro Atlanta, the arts industry is the seventh largest non-governmental employer, an impressive statistic indeed. However, the report noted that what the city needed was focused leadership and vision to further promote arts development across the metropolitan area. The cooperation among four key groups—arts organizations, private philanthropists, government and business—remained crucial if the arts were to flourish and remain a powerful catalyst for economic growth for the region and the entire state.

### Economic Impact of the Future Atlanta Symphony Center (September 2005)<sup>7</sup>

In anticipation of moving to its new location and as an opportunity to drum up support for this \$300 million project, the Atlanta Symphony Center released an economic impact analysis study, conducted by the international consulting firm Deloitte Consulting, that forecasted a remarkable \$2 billion economic impact for the state during the construction phase and through

the first 10 years of operation. According to the analysis, the state of Georgia, Fulton County and city of Atlanta all will experience significant economic and tax benefits as a result of the construction and ongoing operations of the Center. Alongside the \$2 billion in total economic impact estimated through 2020 (the Center is expected to open in 2010), the list below presents a breakdown of the component economic impacts:

- » \$1.45 billion during the first 10 years of operation (2011 to 2020);
- » \$537 million during the construction phase;
- » 2,100 new jobs (annual average, after construction, between 2011 and 2020); and
- » \$116 million in tax revenues through 2020, comprising \$67 million in state taxes, \$20 million in city taxes and \$29 million in county taxes.

Even though there has been no formal analysis and calculation of economic impact figures, a number of additional projects in Atlanta related to the arts recently have surfaced. All these projects contain a range of positive economic flows that are worthy of mentioning in this section. These projects include the following:

### Castleberry Hill Arts District<sup>8</sup>

Until recently, the contemporary arts scene in Atlanta was largely restricted to locations in the Buckhead and Midtown sections of the city. Then, a few years ago, an area southwest of downtown began to sprout a number of galleries and exhibitions spaces in the Castleberry Hill area of the city that may be visited on foot. Within a three-block area, about a dozen galleries, exhibition spaces and artists' studios have emerged in which art sells from hundreds to tens of thousands of dollars. The area's art roots trace back to the late 1980s when inexpensive space in rundown and deserted warehouses and commercial buildings attracted artists. The conversion of some of these buildings to

loft residences also has helped enhance the attraction of the area to artists and others. Undoubtedly, the emergence of this burgeoning arts scene in this area of Atlanta has helped stimulate economic activity while creating an appropriate environment for artists.

### **The Aurora Theater in Lawrenceville<sup>9</sup>**

Residents and officials in Lawrenceville recently were engaged in a debate that takes place in so many of America's towns and cities: can a thriving arts scene help lead to a healthy town center? Specifically, Lawrenceville, the county seat of Gwinnett County, the large county neighboring metro Atlanta, was embroiled in a bidding war with the city of Duluth, also in Gwinnett County, to lure the Aurora Theater to relocate to Lawrenceville. Working with a major developer that lives and works in the city, Lawrenceville was able to convince the Aurora Theater to relocate to a vacant church just off the city's courthouse, with the expectation that the presence of this cultural center will lead to revitalizing the city's downtown area. By December 2006, the theater is expected to hold a variety of performances and cultural events. Already, a number of restaurants and small retail shops have filled up the city's street-level storefronts bringing about much-needed improvements to the downtown. In addition to the economic benefits spilling over from this arts-led renaissance here, residents are convinced that focusing on the arts will lead to "a sense of community" for the residents of Lawrenceville.

### **The Georgia Aquarium<sup>10</sup>**

Even though it is not an arts-related, non-profit organization, the Georgia Aquarium has proven to be a major boost to Atlanta's downtown atmosphere (it is located on just under 10 acres of land adjacent to Centennial Olympic Park), alongside generating significant economic gains to the city and the state. The Aquarium, which opened in November 2005, is the world's largest and contains more than 100,000 animals from 500 species in 8 million gallons of fresh and marine

water. The \$200 million construction costs were borne entirely by The Home Depot co-founder Bernie Marcus, and since its opening the Aquarium has easily exceeded every visitor forecast prepared before its opening. (One million visitors are expected to have poured through the Aquarium a scant three months after the opening). After it opened in November, numerous businesses and attractions in the downtown area have indicated a sharp increase in their bottom lines in ensuing months. The presence of the Aquarium, along with the many arts-related initiatives, is another piece in the effort to diversify Atlanta's economy. Experts already are predicting substantial economic gains, and an economic impact report produced in 2005 noted that the Aquarium, with the new World of Coca-Cola to be constructed in the vicinity, would boost the state's economy by a striking \$200 million annually.<sup>11</sup>

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM**

An earlier section of this report noted the importance placed by Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue on promoting cultural heritage tourism as a means of stimulating economic growth in both urban and rural parts of the state. In fact, as confirmed by the Council's response to the SLC survey, this effort was one of Governor Perdue's key legislative initiatives during the 2005 legislative session. The earlier section also noted that one of the notable features associated with cultural heritage tourists was that they generally were more affluent, visited for longer and were likely to spend more dollars while touring, all trends with the potential to generate significant economic flows.

The governor's efforts on this front resulted in the creation of the Georgia Tourism Foundation—as a 501(c)(3)—to accommodate a partnership between state funds and private contributions from for-profit and non-profit heritage and tourism sites for marketing Georgia to the nation and the world. The efforts of the Foundation continue to be directed to-

ward consolidating Georgia's tourism marketing efforts, attracting a greater number of visitors and increasing the industry's economic impact throughout the state. While the Foundation pools the state's tourism marketing resources, it also leverages the private sector to support the growth of the tourism industry across the state. Some of the tasks undertaken by the Foundation include developing public-private advertising campaigns; soliciting private donations for tourism; offering strategic planning and support for Georgia's state facilities through tourism product development; aligning the state's five halls of fame for promotion and better coordination of marketing, advertising, and customer service; and telling the story of Georgia's tourism heritage.<sup>12</sup>

A related venture promoted by the governor and the newly created Foundation is the promotion of agri-tourism activities as a means for Georgia farmers to generate additional income.<sup>13</sup> The governor's promotion of agri-tourism, a combination of the state's two largest industries, i.e., agriculture and tourism, is influenced by his desire to create non-traditional economic opportunities for both these industries. A venture that combines both these aspects involves the Meinhardt Vineyards and Winery (established in 2004) in Statesboro, in the southeast quadrant of the state. Although the production of wine in Georgia is not new. (The state's founder, James Edward Oglethorpe, introduced European viticulture as a component of his economic plan for the state even though a variety of New World diseases and indigenous insects stymied these efforts.) Currently there a number of vintners scattered across the state that produce exceptional wine. Consequently, wine tasting tours and related events have become hugely popular at locations across the state, and this form of agri-tourism is drawing visitors to Georgia's many vineyards in droves.

The Council's response also noted that tourism is Georgia's second-largest industry and that an estimated 30.2 million people (in some 17.6 million households) traveled specifically

to Georgia in 2002, the most recent year for which information was provided. While 63 percent of these visitors arrived in the state for leisure; for overnight visitors, shopping was the most popular activity in Georgia (32 percent), followed by visiting historical places and museums (15 percent), and participating in outdoor activities (9 percent). This impressive visitor turnout resulted in Georgia ranking among the top 10 destinations for tourists in America in 2002, according to Travel Industry of America. Moreover, in calendar year 2003, visitors to Georgia spent approximately \$25 billion; these expenditures supported 209,500 tourism-related jobs with an accompanying \$6 billion in wages for Georgia residents. State and local tax revenues generated from these visitors in 2003 was a significant \$1.14 billion, according to the Council. The number of visitors in 2003 also enabled Georgia to ascent from the eighth to the seventh most visited state in the nation. Now, even though all these tourists to Georgia were not necessarily motivated by cultural heritage sites, the proportion of visitors whodid visit the state for this purpose generated a range of positive economic effects.

Several Georgia cities have focused on historic preservation and heritage to revitalize and renovate their downtowns and commercial business districts. Two such cities that spring to the forefront are Rome in the northwestern quadrant, and Savannah in the southeastern quadrant of the state. Interestingly, these historic cities were rejuvenated with the assistance of two organizations, the Main Street Approach of the National Historic Trust in Rome and the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Savannah.

### Rome

Rome in Floyd County was established in 1834 as a trading center for textiles and metals.<sup>14</sup> The relocation of two major retailers in the 1970s eventually led to the decline of the city's commercial district, which was quickly overrun with derelict and deteriorating buildings and a 25 percent vacancy rate. The downtown's moribund

appearance rapidly eroded its economic base in a vicious cycle that threatened the financial viability of the city.

Following the tenets of the Main Street Approach, concerned residents, property owners and business owners formed the Rome Downtown Development Authority to preserve the downtown and enhance the town's economic vitality. Working within the Main Street Approach's four key areas — design, economic restructuring, promotion, and organization — the Authority was able to propel

Rome forward and, within five years, had stimulated more than \$8 million in reinvestment; made business loans totaling \$3 million; and completed 92 renovated and new construction projects. By 1990, public and private investments reached \$22.7 million, a figure that was almost double the national average. By the early years of this decade, Rome's commercial district had 98 percent occupancy, 15 restaurants, major public facilities, 2,700 employees, 120 building rehabilitations, tremendous upper story residential and commercial development (90 units), numerous social opportunities, and an active nightlife. This impressive transformation in the period of about two decades resulted in the National Trust Main Street Center awarding



An old building on the Factors' Walk in Savannah, Georgia.

Rome a Great American Main Street Award in 2003.

### Savannah

Georgia's first capitol and the last British colony established in America remains a jewel in the state's crown of cities with its beautiful squares and spectacular architecture.<sup>15</sup> The area encompassing the original 21 wards has been designated a historic landmark district—the largest historic district in the United States. Yet, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, wide swaths of the city's downtown and commercial business districts fell into disrepair and a number of historic buildings were in derelict condition. In addition, beginning some 50 years before, several architecturally significant buildings were demolished, and there were dis-

cussions to open the squares to vehicular traffic. Despite these threats, urban planners have renovated and restored the city, reviving its history and glory. A critical player in the restoration effort has been the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD).

When SCAD was established in the city in the late 1970s, the college decided to make the historic district its campus, not by tearing down buildings to build a sprawling campus, but by purchasing and restoring numerous older buildings. As a result, SCAD now owns 2 million square feet of space in 50 buildings downtown, including a 1960s motel now used as a residence hall, a department store that serves as a library, and a movie theater that serves as the school auditorium. An allied benefit of this restoration and preservation effort has been that the college has effectively integrated its campus with the surrounding community, restored and reused buildings that would have been hard to resell and injected a community of nearly 10,000 students, faculty and staff, adding to the vitality of the city's downtown. Based on the positive economic effects of SCAD's preservation efforts, abandoned warehouse space along the riverfront in the city houses various businesses, shops, and restaurants. Savannah now remains among the most vibrant of cities in the southeastern United States, attracting tourists and conventioners from all parts of the state, country and globe. Downtown Savannah also is home to more than 150,000 residents.

## BLOCKBUSTER EXHIBITIONS

According to the Georgia Council for the Arts, there have been no blockbuster exhibitions directly funded through the state of Georgia. However, in the past five years, there have been a number of notable exhibitions held at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta—the leading art museum in the southeastern United States—that undoubtedly created substantial economic flows to the city and the state.

A vast majority of the funds associated with sponsoring these exhibitions at the High were raised from corporate and private sources. Nevertheless, the Council noted that the High has, and continues to pursue, loan agreements with other national and international museums for exhibits that utilize General Operating Support grants from the Council. While the Council's survey response did not include attendance figures or economic impact information for the specific exhibitions, a sampling of the exhibitions held in the last few years include the following:<sup>16</sup>

- » *Andrew Wyeth: Memory & Magic* (2005)
- » *The Art of Romare Bearden* (2005)
- » *Van Gogh to Mondrian: Modern Art from the Kröller-Müller Museum* (2004)
- » *Paris in the Age of Impressionism: Masterworks from the Musée d'Orsay* (2002)
- » *Monet: A View from the River* (2001)
- » *Michelangelo: Drawings and Other Treasures from the Casa Buonarroti, Florence* (2001)
- » *Degas and America: The Early Collectors* (2001)
- » *Van Gogh's Starry Night: Three Masterpieces from The Museum of Modern Art* (2000)
- » *Monet and Bazille: A Collaboration* (1999); and
- » *Toulouse-Lautrec: Posters and Prints from the Collection of Irene and Howard Stein* (1998).

In 2005, the High also announced that it had entered into an unprecedented partnership with the Musée du Louvre in Paris that will lead to hundreds of works of art from the Louvre's collections being exhibited in Atlanta.<sup>17</sup> Not only will this exclusive, multiyear, multimillion dollar partnership sustain the High's strategy of collaborating with international institutions to bring great art to Atlanta, it also will include the exchange of cultural expertise and operational strategies, as well as educational programs and the development of joint bilingual publications, conferences, films, and seminars exploring exhibitions and related themes. The

exhibits from the Louvre, scheduled to be on display periodically between 2006 and 2009, will revolve around specific themes and periods.

Another property in Georgia that continues to feature a stunning collection of artwork, antiquities and blockbuster exhibitions on a regular basis is the Telfair Museum of Art in historic Savannah. The Telfair Museum traces its history to 1886 when the Telfair family home was opened to the public as an art museum and school. In the recent past, the Telfair has featured the following impressive collection of exhibitions that attracted an array of tourists and visitors, a development that resulted in significant economic benefits.

- » *Durer to Whistler: The Art of the Print* (2005/2006)
- » *Maxfield Parrish: Master of Make-Believe* (2005)
- » *Coming Home: American Paintings 1930-1950 from the Schoen Collection* (2005)
- » *To Discover Beauty: The Art of Khalil Gibran* (2005)
- » *Passion for Paris: Photos by Robert Doisneau* (2005)
- » *Strokes of Genius: Masterworks from the New Britain Museum of American Art* (2005)
- » *Continuing Traditions: Native American Art of the Southwest from the Hanson Collection* (2004/2005)
- » *From Apache to Zuni: Native American Objects from the Lowe Art Museum* (2004/2005)

## BUILDING BOOM

Reflecting a trend evident in a number of Southern states, a spate of arts and tourism facilities have either been announced, broken ground or been opened in the last few years across Georgia. While the primary source of funding for the facilities has been corporate and private donations, a few locations have received funds from the state through Georgia Historic Preservation Grants. In addition, at least two facilities have secured OneGeorgia Grants, i.e., grants secured from the OneGeorgia Authority, the entity created by utilizing one-third of the state's



The new main entrance of the High Museum of Art is through the lobby of the new Susan and John Wieland Pavilion designed by Renzo Piano, which is accessible from the central piazza. High Museum of Art© Jonathan Hillyer 2005.

tobacco settlement to assist the state's most economically challenged areas. However, the Council indicated that it did not provide any funds for bricks-and-mortar to assist any of the expansion efforts at the arts and tourism facilities. All these building projects, either new, renovation or expansion, contain significant direct, indirect and induced economic impacts as they involve hundreds of millions of dollars in an assortment of costs.

Following are details on some of the major building projects related to arts and tourism facilities in Georgia

in the last few years. One of the most striking features of this building boom in the arts is the involvement of a number of the world's most renowned architects in these Georgia (primarily Atlanta) projects. Securing the services of such architectural luminaries as Richard Meier, Renzo Piano, Cesar Pelli, Santiago Calatrava and Moshe Safdie in these various projects is, in itself, a major accomplishment and a crucial factor in positioning the state as an attraction to a whole new range of tourists and visitors. As demonstrated in the example of Frank Gehry's critically acclaimed Guggenheim Museum

branch that opened in Bilbao, Spain, in 1997, a concept now increasingly recognized as 'destination architecture tourism' has gathered momentum as an entirely new area of cultural tourism. Experts following the number of stellar architects affiliated with these Georgia projects are optimistic that a similar tourism boom will erupt in the state too.

### High Museum of Art Expansion<sup>18</sup>

Some two and a half decades ago, when Atlanta's cultural cognoscenti were rallying support to build an impressive art museum, the theme for that campaign was "*Build a Museum Big Enough for Atlanta.*" Richard Meier's 1983 landmark High Museum of Art was a building that lived up to the expectations of the campaign theme and the building soon secured plaudits from every corner. In the more than two decades that lapsed after this ground-breaking building was opened, Atlanta's arts community was driven to significantly expand its exhibition space and its educational and outreach activities.

Lining up an architect to implement the expansion to the High Museum was a formidable task and the selection of Pritzker Prize-winning (architecture's most prestigious award) architect from Italy, Renzo Piano, was greeted with acclamation in every circle. Piano's expansion project officially opened in November 2005 and was a \$124 million, 177,000-square foot effort that more than doubled the High's size. The Piano addition features three new buildings, the expansion's crown jewel, the Wieland Pavilion (the largest of the three buildings); the Anne Cox Chambers Wing, which will house temporary exhibition galleries; and an administrative center. The Piano expansion project includes a 15,000-square foot outdoor piazza that bridges the Museum's main entrance and Table 1280, an elegant new restaurant, focused on fostering "the kind of informal, serendipitous meetings, pedestrian traffic and intermingling of life and art that injects an urban European model into Atlanta's car-defined sprawl."

While the expansion effort, which totals \$170 million when the additional work to the Woodruff Arts Center (that includes the Atlanta College of Art, Alliance Theater and several other facilities) is factored in, the number of visitors that may be accommodated by the High Museum on an hourly basis is expected to rise significantly. Prior to the expansion, approximately 450 visitors could tour special exhibitions every hour; post-expansion, this capacity is expected to more than double to about 1,000 visitors every hour. Given that Atlanta's High Museum has a larger presence in the museum world than its collection would suggest, mainly due to the invigorating leadership of its chief curator, Michael Shapiro, the expansion effort is estimated to be a major draw for an even greater number of tourists and visitors experiencing both the special exhibitions and permanent collection.

### **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra New Concert Hall<sup>19</sup>**

For some years now, there has been a great deal of interest among members in Atlanta's arts community to construct a new symphony hall for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO), the largest orchestra in the southeastern United States. In its more than six decades of performing (250 concerts every year currently, including a 72-concert classical season and related series at Atlanta Symphony Hall, and a full schedule of educational, neighborhood and Free Parks concerts around Georgia), the ASO has a fine reputation both nationally and internationally. In the late 1990s, momentum to construct the new facility surged ahead and evolved into the Symphony Center project, a three building complex—the symphony hall and two adjacent residential and mixed-use development tower—in the immediate vicinity of its current 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Peachtree Street location.

Undoubtedly, one of the more exciting projects in progress in Midtown currently is the new symphony hall, a 3.8-acre, \$300 million complex designed by the award-winning architect, artist and engineer from Spain,

Santiago Calatrava. The 2,200-seat performance hall, featuring an acoustical design by Kirkegaard Associates, will include an adjustable ceiling that ranges between 48 and 104 feet high. A studio hall, rehearsal hall, learning center and 41,800 square feet of lobby space complete the interior elements. With a goal of \$300 million, the Atlanta Symphony Center Campaign is the most ambitious fundraising effort in the ASO's history and the largest capital campaign ever undertaken by an arts organization in the southeast. Fundraising for the symphony hall portion of the project is proceeding well and, by January 2006, stood at \$108 million, including \$60 million in board and campaign leadership support; \$28 million in corporate support; \$8.1 million in public support; and additional foundation and individual giving. At this stage, ASO officials said they are ahead of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which took 15 years to raise \$274 million for the Walt Disney Concert Hall, which opened in 2003.

As noted earlier, a study of the future Atlanta Symphony Center, conducted by Deloitte Consulting, forecasted an eye-catching \$2 billion economic impact during construction and through the first 10 years of operation for the state. In addition, public and private officials are convinced that the Center will be a vibrant civic and economic resource and architectural icon for Atlanta and the state of Georgia that will be recognizable around the world.

### **Symphony Center Residential Project<sup>20</sup>**

A major companion to the High Museum expansion project and the new Atlanta Symphony Orchestra hall project is the Symphony Center Residential Project. Once again, designed by a world-class, renowned architect, Cesar Pelli, this mixed-use project will feature three buildings with an internal boulevard, sidewalks and a 1.5-acre garden and park area in Midtown Atlanta. The entire Symphony Center Project includes the new symphony hall (designed by architect Santiago Calatrava) and two residential condo-

minium towers. The presence of this landmark, Cesar Pelli complex and its proximity to the hub of burgeoning Atlanta's cultural and art scene is expected to be a major boost to the local and state economies. The unit price range for the condominiums is expected to be between \$300,000 and \$3 million, another indication of the expected economic boost to the area.

### **Cobb Energy Performing Arts Center<sup>21</sup>**

In 2007, the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Center is scheduled to open at a location just outside Atlanta's city limits and will feature a 2,750-seat theater offering a blend of Broadway shows, pop concerts, dance and opera; rehearsal space; state-of-the-art lighting and acoustics; a dozen box seats, and a 1,500-space parking deck.

The \$140 million complex spread out over 16 acres is forecasted to be a dynamic economic driver for this area northwest of the city, along with generating significant local and state economic impacts. The project has benefited from the major funding windfalls including the \$20 million disbursement made by an affiliate of Cobb EMC, the utility company, and \$10 million provided by Post Properties founder John Williams. The first new performing arts center built in the immediate vicinity of metropolitan Atlanta in 40 years, the Cobb Energy Center is being funded in part by \$57 million in bonds, to be repaid from Cobb County's hotel-motel tax, another \$11 million coming from budget surpluses from the Cobb Galleria Center that opened in 1994, and private and corporate donations.

### **Hills & Dales Estate (LaGrange)<sup>22</sup>**

This historic 35-acre estate was the home of textile magnate Fuller E. Callaway, Sr., and his family and currently is the property of the Fuller E. Callaway Foundation. The central point of the estate is a Georgian Italian villa, designed by the noted Atlanta architectural firm of Hentz & Reid in 1914. While the classically inspired architecture and remarkable craftsmanship make the house one of the most

photographed and admired houses in the South, the formal boxwood garden (“Ferrell Garden”), created by Sarah Coleman Ferrell, remains among the best preserved 19<sup>th</sup> century gardens in the South. The striking beauty of the property attracts tourists from across the state and the region every year, with the new welcome center making the experience even more educational and enjoyable.

### **FDR’s Little White House Museum** (Warm Springs)<sup>23</sup>

Searching for relief from polio, Franklin D. Roosevelt initially came to Warm Springs, Georgia, in 1924 to swim in the springs’ naturally heated water. Since he developed a great fondness for the area, he built a vacation cottage on the side of Pine Mountain while running for president in 1932. President Roosevelt continued to spend a great deal of time in Warm Springs in the next several decades, including during his presidency; in fact, the president suffered a cerebral hemorrhage on his 41<sup>st</sup> visit to Warm Springs and died there on April 12, 1945.

In order to preserve his memory and his links to Georgia, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues to operate this historic site and with more than 110,000 visitors annually, the Little White House has the highest visitation of any Georgia state historic site. This interest surged ahead even further after a March 2005 Home Box Office (HBO) movie entitled, *Warm Springs*, brought unprecedented attention to the Georgia town. In fact, calls requesting information about visiting the town and presidential site increased by 30 percent, and the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation experienced a 200 percent increase in walk-up, self-guided tours.<sup>24</sup>

Also, for 40 years DNR had operated a small museum in a former home adjacent to the Little White House. Since the latter site was not an ideal museum space, a few years ago DNR initiated a public-private partnership to build a new museum and visitor center for the presidential retreat. Along with

the new 12,000-square foot museum constructed on one level, directly behind the historic entry building, the Little White House upgraded its facilities for researchers and archivists too.

In order to make the new museum a reality, the DNR projected capital requirements of \$6 million. The state committed \$2.5 million to this project, and lead gifts from foundations and corporations have led the campaign to the \$5 million mark. The infusion of capital for this project and the construction of the new museum will further enhance the numbers flowing to visit the Little White House in Georgia, a development that has valuable economic results.

### **Archaeological Museum at Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site** (Cartersville)<sup>25</sup>

This is another Georgia State Parks’ site that contains a fortified ceremonial center that was the home to several thousand Native Americans between 1000 A.D. to 1550 A.D. A recent addition to this historic site is a museum which might be toured by visitors. The Museum’s exhibits contain artifacts and exhibits providing insights about daily life in this once self-sufficient community. The 54-acre site contains six earthen mounds (the largest of which stands 63 feet tall and spread out over three acres), plaza, village area, borrow pits and defensive ditch. The site is considered the most intact Mississippian culture site in the southeastern United States and attracts a great number of tourists interested in Native American history and culture.

### **Historic St. Marys Railway** (St. Marys)<sup>26</sup>

One of Georgia’s oldest cities dating back to the mid-1500s, St. Marys (Camden County), in the southeastern part of the state, was established as a town by the English in 1787. St. Marys remains the gateway to the Cumberland Island National Seashore and the home of U.S. Navy’s Kings Bay Submarine Base and had a railroad charter that extends back to 1865. The mainstay of the railroad was the paper mill in St. Marys and, when the

mill closed a few years ago, the future of the St. Marys railroad was in very serious doubt. With the assistance of public and private officials, the railroad was reborn as a tourist train known as Historical St. Marys Railway. Once again, tourists from other parts of the state and country visit St. Marys to experience the railroad.

### **Flint RiverQuarium** (Albany)<sup>27</sup>

Constructed at a cost of \$30 million as the cornerstone of Albany’s downtown revitalization program, the Flint RiverQuarium tells the fascinating story of the Flint River and the mysterious blue hole springs that help create it. Opened in August 2004, the RiverQuarium’s unique architecture has attracted people ever since the start of construction. Anticipating 155,000 visitors a year (the RiverQuarium had 100,000 visitors by May 2005, a scant nine months after opening), the RiverQuarium provides visitors with 15,000 square feet of discovery and adventure through high-tech, interactive exhibits; crawl-through caverns; and fresh and saltwater exhibits highlighting natural habitats of the 350-mile Flint River and rivers around the world. The highlight of the property is the 175,000-gallon, 22-foot deep, open-air blue hole that is filled with the fish, reptiles and plants found in the Flint River. A few months after its opening, the RiverQuarium’s Imagination Theater, with the largest screen (three stories tall and four stories wide) and only large format theater featuring 3D capability in South Georgia, was inaugurated, guaranteeing further interest and tourists to this property. The RiverQuarium’s annual operating costs amount to about \$1.9 million.

### **International Civil Rights Walk of Fame** (Atlanta)<sup>28</sup>

In September 2004, the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame was inaugurated with the footprints of noted civil rights leaders, including President Jimmy Carter, Congressman John Lewis, Justice Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, Ivan Allen, Jr., embedded in cement at the at the promenade to the Martin Luther King, Jr. National

Historic Site. The Walk of Fame “was created to pay homage to the brave warriors of justice who sacrificed and struggled to make equality a reality for all and is expected to enhance the historic value of the area, enrich cultural heritage, and augment tourist attractions.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Jepson Center for the Arts**

(Savannah)<sup>30</sup>

The Telfair Museum of Art, located in the fastest growing city in Georgia, Savannah, is the “oldest public art museum in the South.” In March 2006, a new era for this historic facility will be ushered in when the first expansion in the Telfair’s 119-year history, a new 64,000-square foot, state-of-the-art building, opens to the public. This expansion effort, involving the largest private fundraising effort ever undertaken in Savannah, resulted in the Telfair’s Landmark Campaign raising nearly \$25 million to build the new Jepson Center for the Arts. The new building, designed by acclaimed architect Moshe Safdie, adds 66 percent more exhibition and educational studio space than currently available in the Museum’s two National Historic Landmark (circa 1819) buildings in Savannah’s historic district, the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Owens-Thomas House. The Jepson Center for the Arts will feature two large galleries for major traveling exhibitions; galleries for African-American art, Southern art, photography and works-on-paper; a community gallery; a 3,500-square foot hands-on gallery for young people; two outdoor sculpture terraces; education studios; a 200-seat auditorium; café, and store. Once again, an increase in the tourist traffic is expected with this impressive expansion facility bringing along the accompanying positive economic benefits.

### **Mansion on Forsyth Park**

(Savannah)<sup>31</sup>

Rated as Savannah’s most eclectic and luxurious hotel, the Mansion on Forsyth Park opened in April 2005. The hotel is housed in a mansion originally built in 1888 and has 14-foot high ceilings and features original oak

millwork, mahogany and teak paneling and moldings. Another interesting aspect of the hotel is the more than 400 pieces of art (most often for sale) scattered throughout the 126-room hotel. The hotel’s highly commended kitchen includes a culinary school. Since its opening, the hotel has attracted a great deal of attention from travelers across the country.

### **Restoration of the 1797 Ezekiel Harris House (Augusta)<sup>32</sup>**

Ezekiel Harris came to Georgia (from South Carolina) to establish his own tobacco inspection station and warehouse in the aftermath of the Revolutionary War. By September 1797, he announced that his warehouse was “in order to receive tobacco” and he also offered accommodations for the planters. He laid out a town named Harrisburg and hoped that his new town would rival Augusta in the tobacco trade. The Ezekiel Harris House, circa 1797, (one he titled “a good frame house with a brick chimney”) is a reminder of the days when tobacco was the primary cash crop in Georgia.

The Smithsonian Guide to Historic America notes that the Ezekiel Harris House is an outstanding example of early Federal style architecture and touts it as “the finest eighteenth-century house surviving in Georgia.” Visitors are greeted by an intricate front doorway and an impressive vaulted hallway before observing what life was like during the Federal period in Georgia.

While the Ezekiel Harris House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was fully restored in 1964, by the early years of this decade, it had fallen into disrepair. Consequently, in November 2002, Augusta city officials approved a special allocation of \$200,000 (from a 1 percent special purpose local option sales tax) to restore the house by replacing its rotting wood and chipped paint. Improvements included replacing the house’s front steps and other rotting wood and painting the exterior for the first time in 10 years. The interior was repainted for the first time since

1964—the year the house was originally restored by the state—and the heating and air-conditioning unit, also installed in 1964, was replaced. Officials at the Historic Augusta Preservation Society indicated that they had sought city funding for the Harris House since 1995; however, funding difficulties that surfaced after the city/county consolidation prevented monies from being allocated earlier.

### **Restoration of the Old Governor’s Mansion (Milledgeville)<sup>33</sup>**

The Old Governor’s Mansion in Milledgeville was the home to eight of Georgia’s governors from 1839 to 1868. While the mansion has been a part of Georgia College & State University since 1889, it was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1973. A series of events were held in April 2005 to commemorate the completion of the \$9 million restoration of one of the most significant historic structures in Georgia. Funds for this extensive three-year restoration project were secured through the General Assembly and a grant from the Woodruff Foundation and included restoring the original layout, colorations, lighting, and appearance of the building; new mechanical and electrical systems; and a new roof. While the original picket fence around the perimeter of the property was reproduced, the restoration carried out on the Mansion’s façade, as well as the intricate gilding on the interior dome, remains impressive. Finally, the restoration project included the construction of a new education building to host tour orientations, exhibits, and lectures.

### **David H. Averitt Center for the Arts (Statesboro)<sup>34</sup>**

Two buildings comprise the David H. Averitt Center for the Arts, the former Bank of Statesboro building and the Georgia Theater, a unique combination of two downtown Statesboro historic landmarks. The Bank of Statesboro, chartered initially in 1891, closed its doors in 1932, a few years after the Great Stock Market crash. Even though the bank never reopened for business, the building was used in

various capacities until 1997, when the city of Statesboro bought it to house the David H. Averitt Center for the Arts. The Georgia Theater was built as a 'motion picture theater' and opened for business in 1936. After entertaining movie goers for 50 years, it closed in the 1980s. In an effort to create an arts center in downtown Statesboro, the city and prominent business officials worked on restoring these two historic facilities to feature a range of arts-related events and activities. Another valuable function carried out by the Center (the Averitt Center for the Arts doing business as the Statesboro Arts Council) is administering the Grassroots Arts Program, the decentralized funding program for arts programs and artists in Bulloch and neighboring counties from funds secured annually through the General Assembly.

## OTHER

In a trend that is sweeping across the country, Georgia, like so many other states, is making a concerted effort to lure the film industry back to Geor-

gia. According to the Georgia Council for the Arts, legislation has been passed that provides income tax credits to companies engaged in the motion picture industry to locate their operations in venues across the state. The state's marketing budget for fiscal year 2005, July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005, was \$8.9 million, and included all outreach efforts. Given that the Georgia Department of Economic Development's budget has been slashed in recent years due to the deteriorating fiscal situation, the agency requested and secured a substantial budgetary increase for the next fiscal year. In particular, the state Tourism Division of the Department of Economic Development budget increase will be channeled toward an active campaign to attract interactive gaming and multimedia productions to Georgia.

According to the governor's office, the state's film, video and music office has fielded almost 300 leads and requests from July to mid-November 2005, a 65 percent increase over the previous six-month period. While five productions were filmed in the state

compared to just two feature films in 2004, the governor's office attributed this success to the *Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Act*, which awards tax credits for productions filmed in Georgia. The six major Emmy awards picked up by the HBO movie *Warm Springs*, filmed in the state in 2004, also helped focus attention on the state.<sup>35</sup>

In another move that has a great deal of potential regarding fundraising for the arts, Atlanta's Woodruff Arts Center fared very promisingly on its first-ever credit rating issued by two of the nation's major credit rating agencies, Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investor Services.<sup>36</sup> Woodruff was rated lower than the Smithsonian Institute but, very impressively, higher than New York's Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago and elevates the Center to among an elite few American cultural institutions that can claim such a rating. The favorable credit rating secured by the Center will be a significant boon as it will reduce the cost of borrowing as it continues its various projects.