

# 2017 Annual Report

*Georgia's*  
*Rome*  
OFFICE OF TOURISM

ROME Georgia  
SPORTS



# Economic Impact

## 2016 Total Impact of Travel & Tourism in Rome & Floyd County:

### Trends

	Tourism Expenditures	Local Tax Generated	Tourism Jobs Supported
2007	\$112,200,000	\$3,280,000	1,250
2008	\$113,920,000	\$3,380,000	1,230
2009	\$107,560,000	\$3,280,000	1,210
2010	\$110,120,000	\$3,270,000	1,150
2011	\$117,220,000	\$3,380,000	1,160
2012	\$125,090,000	\$3,630,000	1,190
2013	\$129,090,000	\$3,800,000	1,210
2014	\$138,760,000	\$4,090,000	1,262
2015	\$143,420,000	\$4,240,000	1,301
2016	\$149,930,000	\$4,380,000	1,349

% Change from 2007 to 2016  
**37% increase**

# \$149,930,000

Travel and tourism generated a **4.5% year over year increase** in total impact. Estimates include travel expenditures, travel generated employment and payroll income, as well as tax revenues for state and local government. In Floyd County, the tourism industry supported **1,349 jobs** throughout the service and hospitality industries. Travelers to Rome & Floyd County generated **\$6.08 million in state tax revenue** and **\$4.38 million in local tax revenue** \*

\* 2016 estimates provided by US Travel Association. 2017 estimates will be available in Fall 2018.

## 2017 Economic Impact of Sports, Groups & Events: **\$17,615,616** a 29% increase

### GRCVB Impact

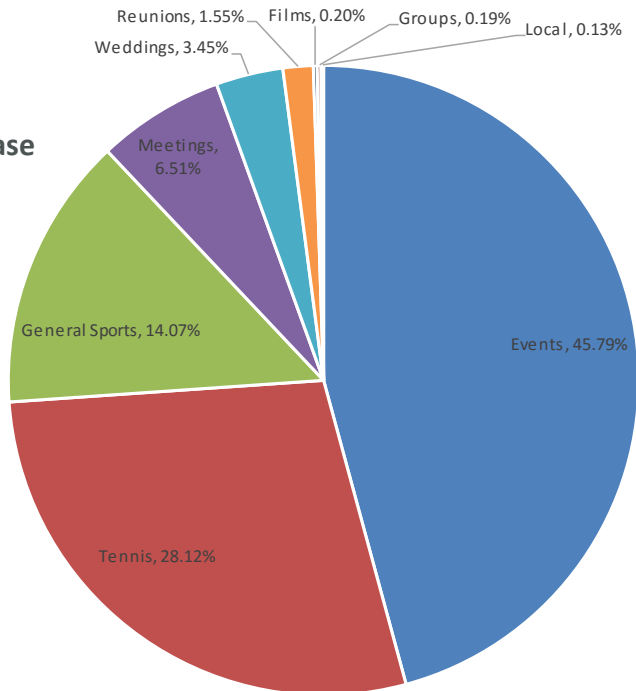
Events:	\$8,065,837
Sports Events (Tennis)	\$4,952,753
Sports Events (General):	\$2,477,871
Meetings & Conventions:	\$1,146,810
Weddings:	\$607,045
Reunions:	\$272,960
Films:	\$34,543
Group Travel (Day):	\$25,113
Local Groups:	\$23,595
Motor Coach:	\$5,960
Site Visits:	\$3,129
Local Tax Generated	\$528,468
State Tax Generated	\$704,625
People Served:	172,389

Impact numbers represent only events, conventions, meetings and other activities the GRCVB was directly involved in planning, coordination, or assistance.

## 2017 Major Sports, Groups & Events

### Event

Wings Over North Georgia Air Show
Jehovah's Witness Conference
USTA Georgia Adult League Championships
ACC Men's & Women's Tennis Championships
USTA Georgia Junior Open
Going Caching! Mega Event
Peach State Marching Festival
GHSA Track & Field State Championships
USTA GIRLS 14 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
Three Rivers Bull Riding
USTA Southern Jr Team Tennis Championships
2017 USAG GA Level 7/8 State Meet
USTA Georgia Bowl
USTA Southern Icy Hot
USTA Georgia Junior Spring Open
USTA Southern "Frozed" 16s
USTA Junior National Level 2



### Date

### Estimated Impact

October	\$6,292,963
August	\$903,600
May	\$603,077
April	\$553,093
July	\$519,493
October	\$496,000
October	\$472,500
May	\$462,069
August	\$356,208
January	\$334,008
August	\$329,496
March	\$291,712
March	\$282,024
February	\$256,320
March	\$249,975
January	\$237,177
July	\$231,862

The events listed above are not a complete listing of all events assisted or planned by the GRCVB and includes only events that the GRCVB actively worked with and generated at least \$200,000 of economic impact or more.

# Marketing & Public Relations Highlights

## Content Highlights

- Increased video content on social media by almost double with 40 published videos
- Top posts by reach: Rome Montage Video - 215,159; Christmas Parade Live FB - 131,724; Welcome to Rome Video - 86,878; Downtown Rome Saturdays Video PSA- 57,969
- Instagram Roman the Elf campaign generated 3,313 interactions and an average of 122 daily likes
- Events, Attractions and Outdoors continue to attract the most visits to the website

## Social Media

- Georgia's Rome Facebook: 26,578 Likes, 14% increase
- Georgia's Rome Twitter: 4,401 Followers, 14% increase
- Georgia's Rome Instagram: 4,951 Followers, 13% increase
- City of Rome Facebook: 6,752 Likes, 11% increase
- City of Rome Twitter: 1,865 Followers, 45% increase
- Last Stop Gift Shop Facebook: 1,596 Likes, 10% increase
- Launched Forum River Center Facebook: 3,900 Likes

## Websites/Mobile

- RomeGeorgia.org: 77% of the total 350,913 visitors to the website are new; compared to 23% returning. 10% of website traffic was generated from new blog content
- Outside of search engines, social media is the largest referrer
- App Download: Myrtle Hill Cemetery downloads: 404; Georgia's Rome accounts: 842

## Advertising

- Georgia Travel Guide ad delivered 749 leads
- Southern Living Spring & Fall Ads delivered 865 Leads
- Spring ad campaign incorporating display, remessaging and geo targeted ads delivered 1,093,893 impressions and 665 direct responses
- Georgia Sports Planner - Inaugural publication with Atlanta Magazine partnership
- Forum River Center - WLAQ, Billboard, RNT, NWGA Living, Good News, Small Market Meetings, Convention South, Georgia Trend, Roam, Travel South USA
- 2017 Share of marketing spend: Leisure: 63%, Meeting/Group: 25%, Sports: 10%, Gift Shop: 2%

# Top Achievements

## Marketing & Public Relations

- Published 50 press releases to local, regional and national outlets
- Monthly email newsletter averages a 26% open rate and a 7.6% click thru rate with 1,493 subscribers
- Partnered with TYBOH to launch the public art/ music project, Keys to Rome, where five pianos were transformed into works of art and placed around Rome for visitors to enjoy
- Awarded the Historic High Country 2016 Award of Association Excellence – Best Event for marketing *Fiddlin' Fest Between the Rivers* including logo design, website design and print collateral
- Hosted 8 travel writers who toured Downtown Rome, Cave Spring and Berry College

## Video

- Produced 152 videos including scripting, shooting and editing for public service announcements, education and promotion
- Major projects include: Rome ECO Center Promotion, Fire Safety, Trail System PSA, SPLOST video series, Renew Our Rivers Clean-up, Summer Reading PSA, Teen Driving PSA, Georgia Forestry Commission

## Product Development

- Completed the first full year of operation for the Roman Chariot, the free downtown transportation accommodated 11,850 passengers
- Increased Hospitality Association Membership by 65% by expanding retail and restaurant categories and added new member benefits including the Active Roman card
- Launched Rome Flavor Tours in March and facilitated 12 tours which highlighted new or unique dishes and drinks in Rome
- Hosted 18 tours including downtown walking tours, cemetery tours and group tours; hired and trained docents to facilitate tours
- *Sulzbacher Roman Holiday* excursion boat completed 9 public tours and hosted 291 people
- Launched online ticketing for all public tour offerings

## Rome Sports

- Hosted ACC Men's & Women's Tennis Championships
- Made ACC History by running 4 consecutive matches
- Received USTA Southern Grant for Wheelchair Tennis

## Religious/Meetings/Group Travel/Sales

- Recruited, booked and/or planned 42 events at the Rome River Forum including GSAE Convention, Rendezvous South Convention, Tractor Dealership Convention, Association for the Deaf Annual Conference, Pam Tebow, Trace Adkins and Corey Smith

- Confirmed 6 new meetings/groups in 2018 including PEDS 3 day convention, BRAG, Home & Garden Show, and Fall Women's Expo
- Created event packages for Latin events, (quinceaneras), Indian weddings, destination weddings, and holiday all-inclusive parties

## Film & Television

- Assisted film inquiries and secured the following productions:
  - Road Trip Masters, Discovery Channel
  - Price of Duty, Oxygen Network
  - The Spires of Berry College (commercial)
- Celebrated the Year of Film with the creation of a Film Tour with printed brochure and interactive map; helped coordinate two locations for the Georgia Film Selfie Spot Tour and hosted a state film fam tour
- Created a location scouting photo database on RomeGeorgia.org

## Last Stop Gift Shop & Rome-Floyd Visitor Centers

- Downtown Rome Visitor Center designated as a Regional Visitor Center in partnership with Georgia Tourism
- Added new public restroom facility to downtown visitor center
- 2,066 visitors welcomed at the main visitor center from 49 states and 19 countries; 1,180 visitors welcomed at the downtown visitor center from 30 states and 10 countries
- Distributed 28,102 brochures
- Hosted 6 book signings, two open houses, and a seasonal farmers market
- 104 local vendors participated in Spring and Winter Art Markets attracting over 2,134 people

## Training/Achievements

- Charlene Mathis and Debbie Law became certified Regional VIC Managers
- Ann Hortman and Kristi Kent completed the first year of Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College, a three-year program recognized nationally for continuing education
- Ann Hortman Achieved Certified Sports Events Executive designation; President, Georgia Sports; NASC Symposium & Professional Development Committees; USTA Georgia Committee Chairman & USTA Southern Committee Member – Wheelchair Tennis
- Kristi Kent completed the Georgia Academy for Economic Development; Awarded the Miles Scholarship for STS Marketing College; President-Elect Historic High Country; Leadership Rome

# 2018 Outlook

## Mission

The Greater Rome Convention & Visitors Bureau (GRCVB) and Rome Sports is the official destination and sports marketing organization of Rome and Floyd County, Georgia. The mission of the organization is to strengthen the economic prosperity of the community through tourism development while delivering unrivaled southern hospitality and providing the visitor a memorable experience.

## GRCVB Full-Time Staff

*Lisa Smith, Executive Director*

*Kathy Mathis, Deputy Director*

*Ann Hortman, Rome Sports Director*

*Kristi Kent, Communications Director*

*Nic Diaz, Marketing Assistant*

*Charlene Mathis, Visitor Center/ Gift Shop Manager*

*Debbie Law, Visitor Center/Gift Shop Assistant Manager*

*Thomas Kislak, Sales Coordinator*

## Part-Time Staff

*Jim Belzer, Customer Service Specialist/  
Roman Chariot Driver*

*Tom Benefield, Roman Chariot Driver*

*Kendra Falcitelli, Customer Service Specialist*

*Zeb Falcitelli, Roman Chariot Driver*

*Mark Law, Roman Chariot Driver*

*Matt McGhee, Roman Chariot Driver*

*Erica Ray, Customer Service Specialist*

*Morgan Reynolds, Customer Service Specialist*

*Morgan Stansell, Customer Service Specialist*

*Bebe Smith, Customer Service Specialist*

*William Spivey, Roman Chariot Driver*

*Selena Tilley, Customer Service Specialist*

*Shani Trotter, Customer Service Specialist*

*Chuck Meeks, Videographer*

## 2018 Board of Directors

*Elaine Snow – Chair, Community Volunteer*

*Chris Kozelle – Vice Chair, Berry College*

*Sammy Rich, City of Rome Manager*

*Milton Slack, Rome City Commission*

*Jamie McCord, Floyd County Manager*

*Allison Watters, Floyd County Commission*

*Harry Brock, Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce*

*Gay Nichols, Hawthorn Suites*

*Penny Miller, Hampton Inn & Suites*

*Anil Patel, Holiday Inn Express*

*Connie Sams, River Dog Paddle Company*

*Larry Arrington, Shorter University*

*Alice Stevens, Oak Hill and the Martha Berry Museum*

*Mandy Maloney, Rome Area Councils for the Arts*

*Leanne Cook, Harbin Clinic*

*Vickie Hill, Synovus Mortgage*

*Lisa Nash, Aerotek*

*Tina Talton, Wings Over North Georgia*

*Sandra Linsley, Cave Spring Downtown Development*

*Mike Burnes, Community Volunteer*

*Elaine Price, Community Volunteer*

*Elaine Abercrombie, Greene's Jewelers*

*Kevin Cowling, Rome/Floyd Parks and Recreation*

## 2018 Program of Work

### Overall

- Grow economic impact dollar amount generated into Rome-Floyd sales tax coffers
- Focus on sales objectives that increase hotel room nights
- Inspire visitation and create a great experience for visitors

### Marketing & Public Relations

- Drive impressions and engagement across all channels
- Optimize posts on social media platforms for content that delivers to audience preferences and generates engagement
- Continue to increase video content including longer videos for facebook
- Build out wedding content on Georgia's Rome website

### Product Development

- Host a state assessment team to identify product development opportunities for Floyd County
- Complete backend build-out for Myrtle Hill app to enable the addition of new content
- Work with Downtown Promotions committee to grow and expand event offerings and cross-promotions

### Meetings, Conventions & Groups

- Promote tours to motorcoach groups targeting seniors, religious groups and annual bookings for associations
- Aggressively market The Forum to new and returning meeting groups for 2018 and

multi-year contracts

- Plan and sell ice skating rink for Nov/Dec months
- Host site visits for group/meeting planners

### Rome Sports

- International Tennis Federation – Level 1 International Wheelchair Tennis Tournament (March)
- Oversee Local Organizing Committee for Bicycle Ride Across Georgia (June)
- Corky Kell Classic
- Partner with USOC and DOD for Clocktower Classic Handcycle Race
- Nurture partnerships with Rome/Floyd Sports Directory, schools & organizations
- Expand partnerships and develop connections within state, regional and national sports organizations
- Increase exposure for Rome/Floyd County Sports facilities
- Increase recognition for sports tourism with GDEC

### Last Stop Gift Shop/Rome-Floyd Visitor Center

- Continue growth of annual events and publish an annual calendar
- Increase awareness of downtown welcome center
- Optimize website to increase online sales and highlight local artists
- Host a monthly spotlight featuring Hospitality Association Members at visitor centers

## 2018 Events

### January

Three Rivers Bull Riding Invitational  
USTA Southern Frozen 16's  
GA Association of Museums & Art Galleries Conference

### February

USTA Southern Icy Hot Tennis Tournament  
Garden Bros Circus

### March

Berry Half Marathon  
ITF Georgia Open Wheelchair Tennis  
Georgia Bowl/USTA National Championships  
USTA GA Junior Spring Open Tennis Championships  
CBF Faith Youth Conference  
PEDS - GA Annual Walks Summit

### April

Spring Art Market  
North Georgia High School Tennis Regionals 7AA & 7AAAAA  
North Atlanta High School Tennis Regionals  
USTA Capitoline Wolf Classic Tennis Tournament  
Southern NTRP Hard Court Championships  
Georgia Steeplechase  
Up The Creek without a Pedal

### May

USTA GA Adult League Tennis 18 & Over Championships  
GHS State Tennis Championships  
Rome River Jam  
Rome Shakespeare Festival  
Myrtle Hill Cemetery Tours  
USTA National Level 2 Tennis Tournament  
GHS Baseball Championships

### June

USTA GA Closed Junior Challenger Tennis Tournament  
U.S. Physicians National Tennis Championships  
USTA National L2 Junior Championships  
BRAG Bike Ride  
Worlds Largest Float

### July

USTA Georgia Junior Open Tennis Tournament  
USTA GA Clocktower Classic Wheelchair Tennis  
GA Association of the Deaf Conference  
Jehovah Witness Conference

### August

USTA Girls 14's National Championship  
USTA Southern Junior Team Tennis Championships  
USTA Southern Icy Hot Doubles Tennis Tournament  
Jehovah Witness Conference  
Corky Kell Classic

### September

ITA NCAA DIII Regional Championships

### October

Berry Mountain Day  
Going Caching! Mega Event  
Myrtle Hill Cemetery Tours  
Chiaha Arts Festival  
Wings Over North Georgia Air Show  
USTA Southern Icy Hot Tennis Tournament

### November

Rome International Film Festival

### December

Winter Art Market  
National One on One Doubles Championships