

FRONT & CENTER

INFORMATION AND EVENTS FROM THE GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER



Food, Glorious Food!
Restaurant renaissance in College Park



**Our Public Facility,
At Your Service**
A world-class facility and premier convention destination



**An Expo, a Competition,
a Career**
Students vie for a place in Georgia's construction industry



Planner Perspectives

Q&A:

Front & Center talks with Debbie Toon, Franchise Administrative Specialist, The Krystal Company



LIKE MANY CORPORATE meeting planners, Debbie Toon grew into her role naturally, planning a meeting as part of her job as administrative specialist, then gradually taking on responsibility for other of The Krystal Company's corporate meetings. Today she oversees planning for all the company's major meetings, including the annual spring conference of franchisee and company operated restaurants for general managers, which this year came to the GICC in order to celebrate the company's 80th year in business in style.

F&C. *What is the nature of Krystal's general managers conference?*

Toon. Once a year, we bring together all the general managers from the franchise and corporate stores for team building and to honor our best performers. With more than 400 GMs attending, it is our largest annual meeting. We give various awards, including a general manager of the year.

The past two years we had regional meetings, going to 11 different markets. But this year, with the 80th anniversary celebration, we decided it would be grander to do it all in one setting.

F&C. *Did you do anything out of the ordinary for this year's meeting?*

Toon. There were several events associated with the anniversary. We also brought in motivational speaker Chip Eichelberger. And our team building

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Krystal general managers celebrated the company's 80th year in business in style at the GICC.

SAFETY & SERVICE:

Norfolk Southern's Annual Expo and Awards Celebration

"Where railroads are not, civilization cannot be." – Anonymous

YOU'D BE HARD-PRESSED TO NAME another enterprise with more impact on the American economy, moreover our way of life, than railroading. You could argue the railroads advanced our nation's development more than anything else. Inarguably, it was the connecting of lines for the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 that linked East to West and established a continental union.

Railroading is also one of the most enduring of American industries, enjoying a brisk and thriving economy in the second decade of the 21st Century. In a world demanding cleaner air, less dependence on oil, and cost efficiency, railroads are garnering a bigger slice of the shipping pie. Throw in safer, less crowded highways, and shipping goods by rail gets even smarter.

Leading the freight transportation industry into the immediate future and beyond — in fact, brandishing the slogan "One Line, Infinite Possibilities" — is Norfolk Southern, which operates more than 21,000 route miles east of the Mississippi. Norfolk Southern traces its roots to 1827, when its earliest predecessor, the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road, was chartered in South Carolina. Today, working replicas of that railroad's earliest steam engine and passenger cars are on display in the lobby of Norfolk

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Southern's office building in Midtown Atlanta.

Today's company, the product of more than 200 railroad mergers over a century and a half, envisions an even more relevant future for rail. Among its initiatives is the Crescent Corridor, 2,500 miles of rail network from New Jersey to Louisiana with the potential to service up to 30 percent of America's manufacturing output. Among its innovations, a battery-powered, zero-emissions locomotive.

Norfolk Southern welcomed 1,200 employees and special guests to the GICC March 13-14 for one of the key company gatherings of the year, its 2012 Safety & Service Expo and Awards Celebration. The event, under the banner "Safety Is Our Heritage ... Service Is Our Future," featured displays by each of the 11 regional operating divisions, from Harrisburg to Alabama, to share insights on their initiatives with their co-workers from other regions. There were booths for internal support groups, such as the Training Center and Human Resources, and some staffed by suppliers, including United Parcel Service whose Corporate Transportation VP Mike Martini delivered one of the keynote addresses.

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Service with a smile — *Jamaica Jamaica Luxe* serves up their popular jerk chicken, flavored with the restaurant's unique blend of authentic Jamaican spices. Below: Dining room, *Jamaica Jamaica Luxe*.



Above: Catch the news or a game at *Champions* (in the Marriott next door to the GICC) while you enjoy American classics such as burgers, salads and a selection of over 50 beers. *Champions'* semi-private dining room (left) offers casual seating for up to 20 people.

A historic College Park landmark, the *Feed Store* (right) is one of the community's favorite restaurants serving a host of Southern-style delicacies.



The Manchester Arms (left): A British-style pub and very popular casual dining spot.

Food, Glorious Food!

EVEN THE RECENT ARRIVAL of Executive Chef Doug Kieley and his farm-fresh delicacies, GICC guests need not venture outside the GICC itself for compelling menu selections. Yet when the conferring is done and you're looking to explore the area, you'll find a neighborhood brimming with great restaurants. Playing to its role as the host to the world's busiest airport as well as to the guests of the GICC and 40-plus nearby hotels, the city of College Park is in the midst of a restaurant renaissance.

The emergence of College Park as dining destination has generated an array of food as diversified as it is delightful: from Jamaican pot roast to Tybee Island crab cakes; from Georgia Royal Red shrimp and grits to basil duck; from tangy Thai to classic Southern home-style.

Nearest the GICC, next door actually, the new Marriott Gateway offers a sports bar setting and classic American menu items in its fresh, new *Champions* restaurant. Just a short stroll away is Main Street, where the restaurant renaissance is in full explosion mode, driven by visitors staying or passing through, coming for business or pleasure, and universally looking for a memorable dining experience. Also close by is a renewed Old National Highway district, with new restaurants and retail. Or perhaps you're more in the mood for bangers and mash backed by a Boddingtons Ale and followed up with a bit of sticky pudding from *The Manchester Arms* on nearby Virginia Avenue. Consider *Jamaica Jamaica Luxe* for other-worldly jerk chicken, where owner Mary Cameron oversees a staff of Jamaican chefs and dishes are prepared with authentic Jamaican spices.

"We realize that when the majority of our customers are from out of state, we have to put on a show for them, and that if they are pleased with our restaurant they will tell others coming to the area about us," offered Tony Morrow, noted chef and owner of Main Street's highly touted *The Pecan* restaurant and recently opened *Tony Morrow's Real Pit B-B-Q*.

It's a show that is getting rave reviews and building College Park a reputation as a destination to savor. ■

A short stroll from the GICC is Main Street, where the restaurant renaissance is in full explosion mode.

What They're Saying about College Park Restaurants

Recent Yahoo! posts on a few of the College Park restaurants near the GICC:

Feed Store

"The prepared menu was wonderful. The staff took great care of us and our evening there was amazing ..."

Tropical Cuisine

"The best jerk chicken in the city ..."

The Pecan

"I'm giving the food a 5 star. We had a delightful meal ..."

Blue Crab 2 Go

"Hey, if you like real home cooked seafood, this is the place to go!"

Jamaica Jamaica Luxe

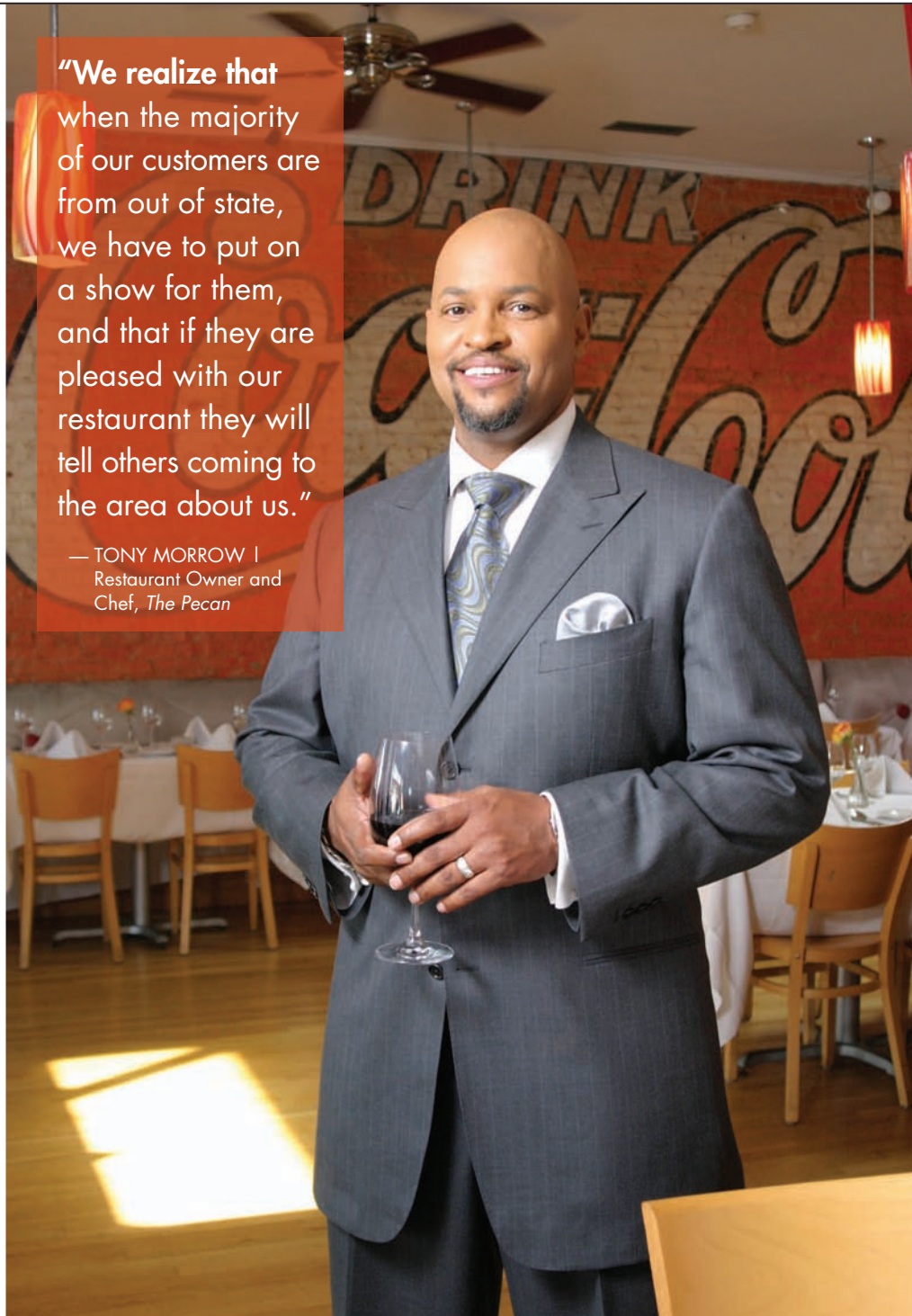
"People are friendly and the food is out of this world. Love it!!!"

Zab-E-Lee

"The Basil Duck is amazing; the fried rice is addictive! And did I mention how affordable it is!" ■

“We realize that when the majority of our customers are from out of state, we have to put on a show for them, and that if they are pleased with our restaurant they will tell others coming to the area about us.”

— TONY MORROW |
Restaurant Owner and
Chef, *The Pecan*



Formally trained at the Art Institute of Atlanta and having achieved tenure with the prestigious Buckhead Life Restaurant Group, Chef Tony Morrow went solo with *The Pecan*, opening on Main Street in College Park on May 11, 2006.

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included a unique twist: the GMs went through the process of learning how to break a board with their bare hands; they were all amazed that they were able to do it.

F&C. *What other meetings do you plan for Krystal?*

Toon. The business partners’ meeting with franchisees and key vendors is typically held in Chattanooga or Atlanta. But this year, because of the anniversary, we’re going to meet on Amelia Island. We’ll have about 225 people attending.

We also do a meeting each year for our district supervisors, which number about 100. And we do two mega co-op meetings per year for owners and operators, about 50 for each meeting, hosted by our marketing department – these are held in Nashville and Atlanta; one in the spring and the other in the fall.

F&C. *How did you decide on the GICC as the venue for your GM meeting?*

Toon. We had done the meetings in the past in an airport hotel, but the Marriott we were going to use was booked. The Marriott recommended the GICC and it worked out really well, especially with the two Marriott properties right there on campus. That made it so convenient for everyone.

The people at the GICC were very easy to work with and the staff was extremely polite and accommodating. If we needed something, they made it happen. The management team was very happy with the GICC and we would consider using it again for a large meeting. ■



FOCUS

by Andria D. Towne
GICC DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Our Public Facility Is At Your Service

OVERSEEING MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS for the GICC involves promoting our facility and our capabilities to those of you who would book our facility for your events. On a broader scale, though, as the GICC is owned and operated by the City of College Park, our job is to ensure we represent our city well, that we provide a great experience to those who plan and participate in events here, and are doing what it takes to fulfill our role as a world-class facility and premier convention destination.

Certainly, the GICC is a beautiful facility. That is evident as soon as you enter the building – in fact, as soon as you enter our Gateway complex of convention center, hotels, office building and parking facilities. But, as we are fond of saying, “The GICC works as well as it looks good.” With everything on one floor, surface parking at the entrance, restaurant-quality food, our convenient location at the doorstep of the world’s busiest airport and the convergence of three interstate highways, and most importantly, a staff that anyone who

“In 2011, the GICC became a member of the **Zero Waste Zones sustainability program**, to divert the maximum amount of recyclable items and organic matter from landfills.”

— ANDRIA TOWNE
Director of Marketing and
Public Relations, GICC

has had a meeting here at the GICC will tell you is uncompromising in our determination to do everything in our power to make your event successful, the GICC functions at the highest level.

So what’s new at the GICC? And what are we doing to continue to live up to our promise of making the GICC the best possible place for your next company meeting, convention or public event?

Most recently we have reinvented our foodservice. You have read about CulinAero in previous issues, new menus of farm-fresh and local selections prepared in the manner of the world’s finest chefs by our new Executive Chef, Doug Kieley.

We are also expanding our “green” initiatives. In 2011, the GICC became a member of the Zero Waste Zones sustainability program. The program’s goal is to divert the maximum amount of recyclable items and organic matter from landfills into the production cycle. The GICC also adopted a Green Commitment statement in 2011 to help guide our efforts toward sustainability. In the coming months, we will continue to pursue additional programs and opportunities to “green” our facility.

Our role as a public facility and good citizen of the city of College Park extends to serving local interests. That means hosting such events as Cityfest, a free festival for the citizens of College Park. But it also means reaching out into the community to support local initiatives, such as the annual College Park Arts Festival, and the Hosea Feed The Hungry Martin Luther King Day dinner that fed and clothed several thousand hungry and homeless area residents.

Thank you for your interest in the GICC, and I invite you to talk to us about your next event. Our job will be, as always, to work with you to make it your best yet. ■

Norfolk Southern's Annual Expo ...

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The annual event had been held near the corporate offices in Virginia, but an expanded agenda and invitation list created the need to move to a larger facility. Who would be better at choosing a logistically correct location than a transportation company? Norfolk Southern chose the GICC not only for additional space, but for its station at the doorstep of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and for its multitude of nearby hotel rooms, including the two Marriott on-site properties.

"The space was perfect and the staff was proactive and had a solution for every issue we encountered," said Casey Upperman, system training coordinator and a member of the meeting planning team.

Upperman saved his most enthusiastic comments for GICC's cuisine, recently re-branded CulinAero. "Amazing," he said of the menus by newly crowned GICC Executive Chef Doug Kieley, which included freshly prepared salads and desserts, and such items as shrimp and grits and she-crab shooters. ■

Education and entertainment played key roles at the Norfolk Southern 2012 Safety & Service Expo.



The Chairman's award, Norfolk Southern's highest employee award, went to employees of Norfolk Terminal (left to right): Conductor Robert Waldie, Senior Piermaster Dan Welch, CEO Wick Moorman, Engineer Mark Luey, and Car Dump Operator Steve Old.

KEY CONTACTS

To book your next meeting or trade show at the GICC, contact the Sales Department:
PHONE: 770.997.3566 EMAIL: dcole@gicc.com

To book hotel reservations directly with the on-site Marriott or SpringHill Suites hotel:

Marriott sales: 404.443.8750

SpringHill Suites sales: 404.461.2125

www.SpringHillSuitesAtlantaAirportGateway.com

For leasing information on the Atlanta Gateway Center Office Building, contact:

Lee Evans, III

Colliers Spectrum Cauble, Inc.

PHONE: 404.877.9203

EMAIL: lee.evans@colliers.com



An Expo, a Competition, a Career

ONE LOOK AT THE BIG YELLOW EQUIPMENT on the nine-acre West Lawn of the GICC and you would have thought a major construction project was about to launch. Instead it was the eighth consecutive annual exposition and skilled trades competition hosted by the Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA).

The purpose of the event is to encourage students to explore and consider careers in architecture, construction and energy. The CareerExpo covers an area the size of six football fields, divided into 12 "Worlds," such as The World of Heavy Equipment and Utility Contracting, where students operate equipment simulators and, under supervision, actual large construction equipment.

The fourth consecutive year of the conference to be held at the GICC, the March 15-16 event was by far the biggest CEFGA CareerExpo and SkillsUSA State Championships yet: nearly 6,000 students and counselors, and a thousand more industry volunteers – in addition to the 16 excavators, front loaders, cranes and such that towered on the West Lawn.

"I think people are starting to recognize that



"[The GICC staff] know the show so well, and can anticipate our needs. This year's event was executed perfectly."

— SCOTT SHELAR | CEFGA Executive Director

The biggest challenge of staging the show, Shelar noted, is the many "moving parts," as the event has doubled in size over just the past three years. He and just two other CEFGA staffers do the planning with the support of a committee of industry volunteers – and the practiced hands of the GICC staff.

"The staff at the GICC is tremendous," Shelar offered. "They know the show so well, and can anticipate our needs. This year's event was executed perfectly. Not a single glitch." ■



Students get the opportunity to operate large construction equipment under supervision as part of the CEFGA Career Expo, designed to encourage them to explore careers in architecture, construction and energy.

by the numbers

6,685
total attendees

▶ **4,806 students** (middle school, high school, technical college and university)

▶ **876 influencers** (teachers, counselors, administrators and parents)

▶ **1,003 industry volunteers, exhibitors and guests**

▶ **People from 225 schools and 335 companies**

▶ **16 pieces of heavy equipment**

▶ **200,000+ square feet** of exhibit and competition space

▶ **6,000+ pounds of hard hats and safety glasses** distributed

