

FRONT & CENTER

INFORMATION AND EVENTS FROM THE GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER



World's Finest Felines
Cat Fancier's Association International Cat Show



Wax-ing Eloquent
Car wash execs gather to discuss issues, trends



Director's Focus
GICC Gateway complex drives increased bookings



Catering to Conventioneers

The GICC's on-site Marriott hotels are being built and will operate with a focus on serving the needs of event planners and their guests.

WHEN MARRIOTT CORPORATION won the right to operate two new hotels on the site of the GICC, it wasn't the hotelier's first convention rodeo. Marriott is practiced at structuring and operating hotels that cater to conventioneers, and the two properties at the GICC will feature the latest in Marriott innovations for meeting planners and trade show organizers and their clients.



Far beyond its commitment of rooms at both its full-service hotel and the Springhill Suites, Marriott will offer a long

list of inclusions that cater to the convention trade, starting from the ground up, with the very construction of the hotels, and the design of lobby and guest rooms.

"Initially, it is important to point out that both hotels will be LEED-certified," noted Michelle Burkett, director of sales and marketing for the new properties and a 24-year Marriott veteran.

LEED-certified buildings do more than pay lip service to "green." A qualifying building meets a series of stringent standards for environmental sustainability in terms of the kinds of materials used in construction and the resulting efficiencies in energy use and environmental quality.

"Building with sustainable materials is good for our future, resulting in reduction of waste to the landfills and energy conservation," pointed out Burkett, whose 20-

MARRIOTT HAS COMMITTED TO A LONG LIST OF FEATURES THAT CATER TO THE CONVENTION TRADE, FROM THE GROUND UP.

plus years with Marriott in Atlanta have focused primarily on the firm's convention business. "These Green initiatives clearly demonstrate the responsibility of Marriott International in

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A Cost-Conscious GICC

GICC Works with Planners to Keep Events on Course Despite Tight Budgets.

IN DIFFICULT ECONOMIES, RESPONSIBLE BUSINESSES FIND WAYS to work with their clients so their clients can keep working. The GICC has addressed the constraints that event planners work under in today's restrictive economy with several innovative and flexible ideas, including all-inclusive packages and customizing services to accommodate client budgets.

In fact, costs are always an issue. And long before the economy took its downward turn, the GICC was delivering the most bang for the buck among Atlanta-area facilities.

"We structure our rates not only to offer our clients great efficiencies, but to make it easy for them to know what their costs are going to be," explained Denise Cole, GICC director of sales. For example, she noted, exhibit halls are priced at a daily rate, eliminating the guesswork associated with paying by the net square foot. "So last minute changes don't result in added costs."

Daily rate pricing is one reason the GICC ranks top among Atlanta-area facilities in greater value and lower costs. Meeting rooms, the ballroom and services like telecom connections and audiovisual also are priced significantly lower than other area convention facilities.

Organizers and their exhibitors save at move-in and move-out as well. At the crossroads of four major interstate highways, the GICC is easy to access. And with 17 loading docks at the doors of the exhibit halls, set-up and tear-down are easy and fast, reducing freight and labor costs.

COST-EFFICIENT AND COST-FREE TRANSPORTATION

Atlanta itself is a cost-efficient choice for a meeting, trade show or other event. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is served daily by 27 carriers operating more than 230 flights per hour to destinations all across the U.S. and around the world. That level of competition and that kind of access spell real savings for travelers.

As the only U.S. convention center directly connected to a major airport, the GICC helps planners cut more costs from their and their attendees' travel budgets. The initiation of service on the Automated People Mover (APM) guided railway system this fall eliminates transportation costs to and from the airport. Attendees simply

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— DENISE COLE, Director of Sales, GICC



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World's Finest Felines

If you love cats, this is your event: the star-studded competition of the year for cream-of-the-crop kitties from around the world. The Cat Fanciers Association (CFA) International Cat Show pits pedigreed cats of more than 40 breeds against each other, with the trade's top experts judging how well each meets the standard for its breed.

While there are about 400 local competitions around the globe during any show season, the International is the main event — and the largest, with more than 500 breeders and exhibitors and 700+ entries vying for "Best in Show." According to Allene Tartaglia, who co-manages the show, the annual championship has drawn as many as 20,000 spectators.

Beyond the competition, breeders and exhibitors take the opportunity to meet over the latest feline products and services, featured in an appropriately labeled "Meow Mall." Educational programs feature leading experts in the field and their latest discoveries. And related events include a summit of feline focused writers as well as a side competition of feline agility.

A PURR-FECT VENUE

In recent years, the event has most often found itself in the Midwest or West. But the CFA decided on an eastern destination for its winter 2008 event. Given the November dates, organizers wanted a warm climate, hence the choice of Atlanta, where the show had been several years before. And when the CFA board got a look at the facility, the GICC was quickly chosen over the downtown venue which had previously hosted the competition.

"The facility is just so pretty and modern," Tartaglia noted.

With a significant portion of participants coming in from international locations and more than half the attendees coming by air, the Atlanta airport and GICC's location at its doorstep were contributing factors in the decision.

"Easy access via a hub airport was important," she added.

The Cat Fanciers Association (CFA) International Cat Show pits pedigreed cats of more than 40 breeds against each other, with more than 500 breeders and exhibitors and 700+ entries vying for "Best in Show."



As a public show, the CFA looks to stage its events in areas where the demographics indicate plenty of local interest.



The annual show of the Southeastern Carwash Association (SECWA) attracted nearly 800 carwash owners and suppliers from 11 states.



WATER RECOVERY SYSTEMS, new wax and detergent technologies, monthly pass programs, even dog wash and spa operations — there's a lot more going on in the carwash industry than gets caught in the headlights. And virtually all of it was on display in the 125 exhibits this fall at the Southeastern Carwash Association (SECWA) exposition and educational conference at the GICC.

The annual show, one of four such regional expositions, attracted nearly 800 carwash owners and suppliers from 11 states looking to catch up on the industry's newest products and trends. Attendees are primarily members of the SECWA, which for more than 50 years has provided the programs, forums and venues for industry fellows to "discuss issues, share concerns and learn about trends."

SECWA is one of 13 associations currently managed by Organization Management Group, Inc. (OMG), of Chesapeake, Va. The firm, which boasts Charter Accredited status with both the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and the Association Management Company (AMC) Institute, provides full-service management for SECWA, including publishing its award-winning *WASHSTREET* Journal

magazine and directing its annual show.

According to Conferences and Conventions Coordinator Stephaney Foster, who works out of OMG's planning division, Meeting Strategies International, the exposition and conference recently embarked on a three-year city rotation including Orlando, Atlanta and New Orleans. The GICC was chosen as the Atlanta venue at the behest of the SECWA board.

"Our president thought it was an awesome facility," remarked Foster, who gave the GICC high marks in several categories.

"The entire GICC staff from the sales team to the catering team is great to work with; they're real team players. The layout is great, just big enough to be small and small enough to be big. And the food was fresh, reasonably priced and very satisfying."

Like many trade shows currently booking future dates at the GICC, SECWA recognizes the substantial benefits associated with the 2010 openings of the on-site Marriott hotels on the GICC's Gateway complex.

"We stayed at the Renaissance Hotel (in the airport area), and had a continuous shuttle loop, but on-site hotels will be a significant convenience." ■

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— STEPHANEY FOSTER, Conferences and Conventions Coordinator, Organization Management Group, Inc.

Wax-ing Slogane





“ The staff is certainly one of the best I’ve ever worked with.”

— ALENE TARTAGLIA, Co-manager,
CFA International Cat Show



While the world’s coyest cats were captivating the competition audience, the GICC was exceeding the expectations of event management.

“The staff is certainly one of the best I’ve ever worked with,” said Tartaglia, who has planned and managed this and similar events for CFA for 27 years.

So purr-fect the venue and city, in fact, the event will return this year. So cat fanciers, purr-k up and plan to attend the next CFA International Cat Championship, November 21-22, at the GICC. ■



Choosing a Championship Venue

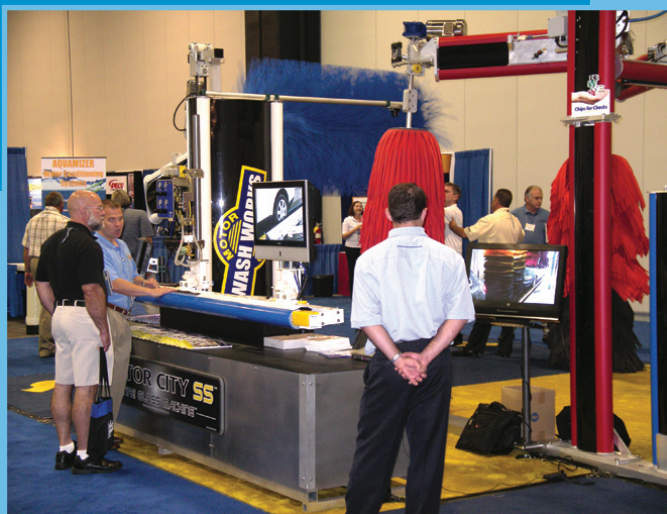
Allene Tartaglia lists the following as the Association’s most critical considerations in choosing a venue for its annual international competition:

1. Affordability
2. Accessibility
3. Competition from other cat shows in the area (won’t infringe on an established show)
4. Demographics relative to cat-owning public (potential attendees)

Choosing a Convention Venue

Stephaney Foster lists the following as the most critical considerations in choosing a venue for the annual SECWA convention:

- Properties located in vibrant areas and/or that provide easy access (within walking distance whenever possible) to various attractions (restaurants, shopping, sightseeing)
- Offer ease of access from major highways for attendee draw
- Have exhibit load-in spaces that have the adequately-sized entrances to accommodate forklifts and large machinery such as car wash equipment
- Venues where the lodging is within walking proximity of the exhibit hall — ease of program flow



Carwash owners from 11 Southeastern states gathered to catch up on new products and trends.

ent: CARWASH EXECS GATHER OVER ISSUES, TRENDS



FOCUS

by Hugh Austin
GICC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As Complex Materializes, So Do Expectations

AT OUR OCTOBER OFFICIAL GROUNDBREAKING for the Marriott and Springhill Suites properties, Jim Stormont of the developer Grove Street Partners predicted the recessionary economy would turn around by the second half of 2010. The hospitality industry, he projected, would see occupancies improve right about the time our new convention headquarters Marriott hotel would be opening. Well, our crystal ball is telling us Jim is right; at least any slowdown in bookings the recession might have created for the GICC has been reversed — and convincingly.



That crystal ball is what we call “booking pace,” which is the tracking of date over date reservations for exhibit hall and meeting space year over year. That is, we look at the number of “definite” and “firm tentative” bookings in our system as compared to the same period in the previous year.

RIGHT NOW THE NUMBERS TELL US THAT CONVENTION BUSINESS WILL BE BRISK IN THE COMING YEARS ... THAT’S GOOD NEWS FOR US, BUT ALSO FOR **OUR GUESTS.**

And right now these numbers tell us that convention business will be brisk in the coming years. For example, comparing bookings for 2010 to 2009, we are pacing at 197 percent or double the 2009 reservations, an increase of 45 bookings. Further, our 2011 pace is already at 171 percent and 2012 at 152 percent of 2009. We are also seeing bookings for four, five and six years out, a pattern we have not enjoyed in the past.

Of course, we attribute this dramatic increase in bookings to the GICC Gateway complex projects coming online. The guided railway system from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to the GICC/ Gateway Station and then on to the new CONRAC rental car facility will start service this November. The

WE ATTRIBUTE THIS DRAMATIC INCREASE IN BOOKINGS TO THE GICC GATEWAY COMPLEX PROJECTS COMING ONLINE.

Springhill Suites will open in late December. And the full-service Marriott will open its doors in the summer of 2010.

As this magnificent new complex is materializing, so are the revenue expectations that accompanied the opening of the GICC six years ago. That’s a good sign for us, of course, but also for our guests who, through these incomparable facilities complemented by our GICC brand of service, will also enjoy exceeded expectations. ■

A Cost-Conscious GICC

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board the train at the airport and arrive two minutes later at the GICC and their on-site hotel — at no cost.

“Those efficiencies increase dramatically when you think about the time attendees will save by not having to hire a cab or rent a car to get into and out of downtown or any of the facilities in the outlying areas,” Cole added.

Attendees will find a great selection of restaurants, from fine dining to country cafes to salad-and-sandwich shops, on site and in the immediate College Park area. GICC guests will have access to shuttle vehicles, powered by Clean Natural Gas, for transportation to and from area restaurants.

For attendees who want to venture into the city or explore more of Atlanta and Georgia, CONRAC, the airport rental car facility, is the next stop along the APM railway, hardly a minute from the GICC. Or for an attraction like the Georgia Aquarium, World of Coke or an Atlanta Braves’ baseball game, simply board the APM to the airport and Atlanta’s mass transit train, MARTA, to locations throughout the city.

Meeting rooms, the ballroom and services like telecom connections and audiovisual are priced significantly lower than other area convention facilities.

COMPETITIVE HOTEL PRICES

GICC’s on-site Marriott properties will not only be the finest, most contemporary hotel facilities anywhere, they will be priced competitively, along with other airport area hotels. Airport area rates average well below like-quality downtown hotels. Including the new GICC on-site Marriott properties, the airport area will boast nearly 5,000 hotel rooms representing all major brands and in all price ranges.

FLEXIBLE BY DESIGN

Since its opening in 2003, the GICC has received rave reviews for its modern appearance and functionality, but planners who use the Center for their meetings, trade shows and other events are most pleased by GICC services and staff. That spirit is reflected today in ways to keep meetings and events going despite tough economic times.

“From space requirements to menus, we’re doing a lot of packaging and customizing to accommodate budgets,” Cole said, “It’s not unusual for us to help planners pull off meetings they thought their budgets wouldn’t allow.” ■



The colorful and contemporary Marriott meeting foyer.

Catering to Conventioneers

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partnership with developers Grove Street Partners to value the environmental impact on the community in which we do business and provide a healthier environment for our guests.”

“We also know that it is important to planners to know that their meeting will create less of a carbon footprint.”

FROM LOBBY TO ROOMS

That these are convention-focused hotels will be evident even as you and your guests step off the Automated People Mover that connects the Gateway Center complex with the airport. The Marriott design is a modern structure, an architectural execution that blends perfectly with the GICC architecture, which has received rave reviews since its completion a few years ago.

Upon entering, the guest will be greeted by an interior that is contemporary but warm, bright and vividly colorful. The Marriott lobby conforms to its “Great Room” concept, divided into areas that encourage various types of activity: quiet places to relax, read and sip a glass of wine, offset by “social zones” for small meetings or entertaining customers. A lobby bar by evening is transformed mornings to offer coffee, newspapers and the like. Wi-fi is available throughout the lobby.

The Marriott will offer two dining establishments, a major brand, which is yet to be announced, and a café-style restaurant.

The Marriott will complement the GICC’s meeting

and ballroom facilities with its own. Seven breakout rooms feature the latest communications technologies. A board room offers an additional 1,000 square feet of meeting space. At 12,000 square feet, the ballroom will be the largest for a hotel in the Atlanta airport market, capable of a accommodating banquets for up to 800.

Even the guest rooms are convention-ready, Burkett noted. They will be luxuriously appointed, with such features as 300-count linens and down comforters, but also designed to accommodate the varied work preferences of guests.

“They will be equipped with ultra-adaptable connectivity panels,” she explained. “Guests can plug a computer, video camera or MP3 player into the connectivity panel that allows the TV screen to be used as a big screen monitor. With split screen capacity you can watch TV while working, all in the comfort of your room.”

COMMITTED TO THE AIRPORT AREA

The two Marriott properties at the GICC extend Marriott’s long-time commitment to the Atlanta airport area to seven hotels, from Courtyards to Residence Inns to full-service Marriotts, and more than 1,700 rooms.

“As a premier meeting venue, the GICC has an incomparable offer for meeting and event planners,” Burkett concluded, “including unmatched access by air or car

to a great convention facility — and now to great on-site accommodations, dining and entertainment.” ■



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FAST FACTS: GRAND OPENINGS

2009

2010

Automated People Mover	CONRAC ("CONsolidated Rent-A-Car")	Gateway Center Class A Office Complex	Springhill Suites Hotel	Marriott Airport Gateway Hotel
Airport to GICC in 2 minutes Service begins Fall 2009	Off-site facility housing all airport rental car operations Opens Fall 2009	130,000 NSF & 526 parking spaces Ready for occupancy September 2009	147 guest rooms Opens February 2010	403 guest rooms Opens September 2010

For information on booking space, please call the GICC Sales Department at 770-997-3566.



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