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Savannah's Visitor Economy Thrives, Generating \$4.4 Billion in 2022

[SAVANNAH, Ga.] Longwoods International, a leading research firm specializing in tourism and travel, recently released its 2022 Travel USA Report. The report provides an in-depth look at the state of the U.S. domestic travel market, including trends in spending and data for Savannah.

The study showed that domestic travel among Americans reached an all-time high, with overnight person-trips surpassing 2.10 billion, marking an 11.7% increase from the previous year of 2021. The report also shows that Savannah played host to 9.7 million overnight person-trips and more than \$4.4 billion in total visitor spending in 2022. Savannah's growth can be attributed to several factors including pent-up travel demand, increased air service (27.5% increase in air arrivals versus 2021), and expanded tourism offerings.

"One of the most significant drivers of Savannah's growing visitor economy is the incredible amount of tourism product development our community has experienced in the last decade," said Joseph Marinelli, president of Visit Savannah. "Projects like the development of several new entertainment districts, including the Enmarket Arena, Plant Riverside, Starland district and the Eastern Wharf area, feature new options for dining, nightlife, shopping, and live music venues, while our sports teams, the Savannah Bananas and the Savannah Ghost Pirates, have been drawing national acclaim."

The city's increased lodging demand (up 9.2% for hotels and 3.3% for short-term rentals over 2021) generated \$44.5 million in bed tax collections in 2022 (up 21.6% over 2021). Marinelli went on to say, "In the end, this tourism story is about jobs." Savannah's hospitality-related jobs grew 9.6% and added approximately 2,300 jobs in 2022¹, employing more than 27,000 people in the Savannah area. In addition to jobs, taxes generated by the visitor economy save each Savannah household at least \$1,600 a year². These statistics show that Savannah's tourism economy benefits residents and visitors alike.

Marinelli emphasizes that the "mission of Visit Savannah is to promote visitation in a way that supports Savannah's economic vitality and the quality of life for our community."

For more information or to schedule an interview with Visit Savannah President Joseph Marinelli, please contact Erica Backus at 912.704.3500 or Ebackus@VisitSavannah.com

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Data Sources

- Savannah Hilton Head International Airport
- Smith Travel Research
- Key Data

- Tybee Island City, Chatham County, City of Savannah
- Center for Business Analytics and Economic Research (CBAER), Georgian Southern University
- ¹The Bureau of Labor Statistics – Current Employment Statistics
- ²Tourism Economics. (2017). *A cost/benefit analysis of Savannah's tourism sector*. City of Savannah: Savannah, GA