



Atlanta Continues to See Boost in Visitors

ATLANTA (September 27, 2004) – Reflecting the ongoing rebound in the tourism and convention industries, as well as the growth of Atlanta’s destination appeal, metro Atlanta saw an increase of more than 200,000 visitors in 2003 over the previous year. According to a study commissioned by the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB), 18.8 million visitors traveled to metro Atlanta in 2003, up from 18.5 million (revised number) in 2002 and 17.8 million in 2001.

The 2003 Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) study reports metro-Atlanta visitors invested \$8.75 billion in the local economy, 1.6 percent more than in 2002. Additionally, the average length of stay increased to 3.3 nights vs. 3.0 nights in 2002.

Thirty-one percent of visitors to metro Atlanta arrived for business purposes in 2003, while almost seven in ten (69 percent) trips to the area were taken for leisure purposes, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. The majority (85 percent) of travel in the metro Atlanta area was by out-of-state visitors.

The 6.9 million domestic travelers in Fulton County, Ga. spent \$4.92 billion during 2003. Total spending in Fulton County in 2003 was up 1.6 percent from 2002. Visitors to this area spent \$2.4 billion on public transportation (up 3.6 percent), \$830.7 million on foodservice (up 3.2 percent) and \$806.6 million on lodging (down 5.6 percent largely due to declining prices).

“Atlanta’s hospitality industry is gaining strength and momentum and continues to be a strong economic engine for the city,” said Spurgeon Richardson, president of the ACVB. “Resident income due to tourism is \$3.07 billion annually and more than 105,400 jobs in the area are supported directly or indirectly by visitor spending. As the number of visitors and the average length of stay continue to increase, so will the financial returns.”

Fulton County’s hospitality industry generates tax revenues that benefit all Atlantans. In 2003 it produced \$234.9 million in state taxes and \$149 million in local government revenue. Without these combined state and local travel-related tax revenues, each Fulton County household would have paid an additional \$1,165 in taxes in 2003.

-more-

Established in 1913, the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau is a private, non-profit organization created exclusively to market metro Atlanta and Georgia as the premier conventions, meetings and leisure destination in the regional, national and international marketplace, and favorably impact the Atlanta economy through conventions and tourism. For more information on Atlanta, visit www.atlanta.net.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Michelle Gryder
Public Relations Assistant
404.521.6398
mgryder@atlanta.net

Brandy Humphries
Director of Communications
and Public Relations
404.521.6645
bhumphries@atlanta.net

Lauren Kenworthy
Public Relations Specialist
404.521.6649
lkenworthy@atlanta.net