

# DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Visit Savannah | Savannah, GA







# Who We Are

Savannah, Georgia, is a charming Southern escape where art, period architecture, trendy boutiques and ghost stories are all set under a veil of Spanish moss. Savannah is a place where cuisine comes straight from the coast and cocktails are served at every meal. Consistently named one of the “world’s friendliest cities” by Condé Nast Traveler readers, this coastal town has a world-class reputation for hospitality and grace.

Whether your ideal pace is strolling around the famous Forsyth fountain or a wild night of cabaret and karaoke, Savannah provides the perfect playground. History buffs swarm Savannah, taking in the rich, significant sites like [Old Fort Jackson](#), [Fort Pulaski National Monument](#), and [Bonaventure Cemetery](#). Fashionistas comb Broughton Street for high-end designs, and foodies crave specialties in gourmet [shops](#). Art lovers enjoy the renowned [Telfair Academy](#) and the [SCAD Museum of Art](#), as well as an eclectic variety of art galleries and home decor shops.

[Arts and Culture](#) [Entertainment](#) [Events](#) [Food and Drink](#) [Outdoor Activities](#) [Shopping](#) [Tours and Excursions](#)

## Meetings and Conventions

With ample [meeting venues of all sizes](#) in a city steeped in history with amazing food culture and charming places to stay, any convention crowd will be pleased by making Savannah the spot for meetings. Visit Savannah offers incomparable assistance in planning any meeting. They have put together comprehensive [resources](#) and offer dedicated [services](#) to make meetings come off without a hitch.

The [Savannah Convention Center](#) announced funding has been approved for a major expansion. The expanded building is scheduled to open in 2023. The Savannah Convention Center will include a 200,000 square feet of exhibit hall space, a 57-foot-wide hangar door, and a new 40,000-square-foot ballroom. 32 customizable break-out rooms, additional outdoor space, 900 total parking spaces, and a new facility entrance with an all-glass facade





## About Visit Savannah

Visit Savannah, the largest business unit of the [Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce](#), is the official destination marketing organization for the Greater Savannah area. We work to provide the resources, platforms, and opportunities for individual local businesses to market their services and products to a variety of travel audiences, including leisure tourists, convention planners, and meeting/trade show attendees.

Visit Savannah works closely with Chamber member businesses to ensure the continued growth and success of our economy. Many of these businesses take an active role in the development of the city through our cooperative sales and marketing projects, councils, task forces, and committees.

Through our collaborative efforts, in 2022, Savannah played host to an estimated 17.3 million visitors, including 9.7 million overnight person trips and more than \$4.4 billion in total visitor spending. Savannah has also enjoyed increased air service (27.5% increase in air arrivals versus 2021) and expanded tourism offerings in the last several years. 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). Savannah's hospitality-related jobs grew 9.6% and added approximately 2,300 jobs in 2022\*, 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 year\*\*. These statistics show that Savannah's tourism economy benefits residents and visitors alike.

*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, \*The Bureau of Labor Statistics – Current Employment Statistics, \*\*Tourism Economics. (2017). A cost/benefit analysis of Savannah's tourism sector. City of Savannah: Savannah, GA*





### About Our Members

Visit Savannah represents over 800 individual local businesses within the greater Savannah area. Our tourism members include attractions and museums, restaurants and food services, lodging, tours, entertainment, recreation, and retail. Our services and hospitality members include businesses in banking, advertising, printing, utility and food and beverage wholesale companies, airlines, car rental, florists, and more.

### Our Mission Statement

Visit Savannah serves as the official destination marketing organization for the Savannah/Chatham County area and is committed to supporting the more than 27,000 area hospitality jobs by increasing visitor spending, economic vitality, and quality of life for the region, all while continually building upon Savannah's image as a world-class destination.

### Our Vision Statement

Visit Savannah aspires to be the leading tourism marketing organization and voice in the Southeast.

### Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

Visit Savannah, to fulfill its core mission of driving economic prosperity in our community through visitor spending, is committed to representing the destination's diversity both organizationally and outward-facing via our sales and marketing efforts. To accomplish this, our company culture – including our staff and Board of Directors and through our external messaging – is designed to be inclusive and welcoming to all and is supported throughout the strategies and tactics that we employ to reach our goals. Click [here](#) for more information.

### About Tybee Island

Located just 20 minutes from downtown Savannah. Facing due east, this Georgia barrier island has been a popular vacation spot since the late 1800s. Home to wide, clean beaches with warm and gentle waves, Tybee Island is the perfect escape for those who need a healthy dose of sand, sun, and seaside bliss.

This three-square-mile enclave is jam-packed with hyper-local shopping, dining, and lodging opportunities, bike trails, white sand beaches and sunset-crowned saltwater marshes. From breakfast at the classic diner-style [Sunrise Restaurant](#) to shopping for souvenirs at the [Shoppes of 1207](#), sunbathing at [North Beach](#) to paddleboarding on the [Back River](#), and toasting a day well spent at [The Deck Beach Bar](#). Click [here](#) for more information.

### The Savannah Sports Council

The [Savannah Sports Council](#) (SSC) was established in 1993. The SSC's mission is to develop sports-related events that impact our community. By working with local, regional, national, and international organizations the Savannah Sports Council supports a wide range of events that offer a diverse opportunity to athletes of all ages and all sports. The Savannah Sports Council works in conjunction with Visit Savannah and [Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce](#) to enrich the city of Savannah and Chatham County.



## POSITION SUMMARY

Visit Savannah is seeking an experienced Public Relations leader to oversee tourism-focused strategic public relations plans, generating positive exposure for our destination developing and maintaining strong relationships with industry writers and editors, partners, and stakeholders. This role has a major focus on supporting Savannah and Visit Tybee Island but also will support the Savannah Sports Council and the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce.

### ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **Strategic Communication Planning**

- Author and execute annual strategic communication plans for Visit Savannah and Visit Tybee Island ensuring alignment with organizational goals.
- Serve as a critical leader in the development of our growing sustainability messaging for both the Chamber and Visit Savannah, and conduct strategic pitches that garner positive coverage.
- Collaborate with other marketing team members to ensure alignment of earned media plans with advertising, marketing, and promotional strategies, creating a cohesive, integrated marketing approach.

#### **Media Relations**

- Maintain a strong non-local media relations contact list, growing those national and international relationships through compelling pitches that land positive stories.
- Develop a strong in-person visit plan (e.g., desksides) as well as other creative ways to connect with media contacts to build stronger relationships for our organization.
- Lead the meetings and conventions media relations strategy, developing contacts in that industry and partnering with the Savannah Convention Center on coverage opportunities.
- Support the Director of Communications and DEI Strategy in key Chamber of Commerce PR initiatives, including finding creative ways to support through non-local media contacts.
- Author and lead distribution of any Visit Savannah and Visit Tybee Island press releases.
- Lead tourism-focused media hosting, including FAMs and in-market visits.
- Serve as a spokesperson for the organization in interviews and press conferences as needed.

#### **Media Monitoring and Reporting**

- Evaluate ongoing media coverage, evaluate campaign success, and communicate key wins to internal stakeholders and partners.
- Present plans and results to stakeholders at board meetings as needed.

#### **Community Engagement**

- Participate in community events and establish strong relationships with partners and community groups to maintain a positive reputation for Visit Savannah, Visit Tybee Island, the Savannah Sports Council, and the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce.

#### **Management**

- Manage the public relations budgets for Visit Savannah and Visit Tybee Island effectively, ensuring resources are allocated efficiently.
- Supervise and mentor a Public Relations Manager to ensure their work is effective and that they have opportunities to grow in their role.

#### **Supervisory Responsibility**

- One Public Relations Manager.

Other responsibilities as assigned by the organization to support its evolving needs and goals.



## QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree in Public Relations, Communications, Marketing, or a related field.
- Extensive experience (7+ years) in public relations, media relations, and corporate communications, preferably in the travel and tourism industry.
- A strong network of media contacts and relationships with key industry influencers.
- Demonstrates commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles and a track record of fostering an inclusive work environment, promoting diversity, and implementing initiatives that support DEI goals.
- Proven ability to craft clear, concise, and compelling press releases, articles, and other communication materials that adhere to AP style guidelines.
- Crisis communication experience and the ability to handle sensitive situations.
- Leadership skills to manage budgets, supervise teams, and drive results.
- Crisis communications experience.
- Budget management experience.
- Flexible working hours to include some nights and weekends.
- Passion for promoting travel and tourism.
- Proficiency in multiple languages a plus, especially Spanish, German, and/or Korean, is a highly desirable qualification.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Excellent relationship-building skills.
- Proven ability to activate a proactive, outbound pitch strategy to engage audiences and drive results to the destination.
- AP style writing skills and ability to craft and execute press releases, articles, and other communications.
- Proactive, proven ability to advance projects forward, meeting deadlines, and achieving results.
- Take ownership and pride in work.
- The ability to work autonomously.
- Supportive/collaborative/team-oriented.
- Engaged with innovation and creativity; bold at trying new things.
- Highly accountable.
- Excellent presentation skills.
- Comfortable and confident in public speaking.
- Committed to DEI and fostering an inclusive environment.

## TOP PRIORITIES

- Understand organization and market.
- Dive in and get to know the destination.
- Media monitoring and reporting. Get familiar with tools such as Cision. Analyze and measure results.
- Activate a proactive, outbound pitch strategy.



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**If interested in learning more about this great opportunity, please send your resume to our SearchWide Global Executive, Andrea Christopherson.**

**SearchWide Global is a full-service executive search firm primarily for companies in the travel, tourism and convention, and hotel and lodging industries. We specialize in C-Level, Director and Management level executive searches for companies ranging in size from Fortune 500 corporations to mid-sized public and private companies.**