

# 2017 Outlook

## Mission

The Greater Rome Convention & Visitors Bureau (GRCVB) and Rome Sports is the official destination and sports marketing organization of Rome and Floyd County, Georgia. The mission of the organization is to strengthen the economic prosperity of the community through tourism development while delivering unrivaled southern hospitality and providing the visitor a memorable experience.

## GRCVB Full-Time Staff

Lisa Smith, Executive Director  
Kathy Mathis, Deputy Director  
Ann Hortman, Rome Sports Director  
Kristi Kent, Communications Director  
Nic Diaz, Marketing Assistant/Roman Chariot Driver  
Charlene Mathis, Visitor Center/ Gift Shop Manager  
Debbie Law, Visitor Center/Gift Shop Assistant Manager  
Thomas Kislat, Sales Coordinator

## Part-Time Staff

Charlotte Ball, Customer Service Specialist  
Jim Belzer, Customer Service Specialist/Roman Chariot Driver  
Tom Benefield, Roman Chariot Driver  
Kendra Falcitelli, Customer Service Specialist  
Zeb Falcitelli, Roman Chariot Driver  
Mark Law, Roman Chariot Driver  
Jody McGiniss, Roman Chariot Driver  
Peggy Moore, Customer Service Specialist  
Morgan Reynolds, Customer Service Specialist  
Bebe Smith, Customer Service Specialist  
Ben Tinney, Roman Chariot Driver  
Shani Trotter, Customer Service Specialist  
Neena Yarbrough, Roman Chariot Driver  
Chuck Meeks, Videographer

## 2017 Board of Directors

Elaine Abercrombie – Chair, *Greene's Jewelers*  
Elaine Snow – Vice Chair, *Community Volunteer*  
Sammy Rich, *City of Rome Manager*  
Sue Lee, *Rome City Commission*  
Jamie McCord, *Floyd County Manager*  
Allison Watters, *Floyd County Commission*  
Harry Brock, *Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce*  
Gay Nichols, *Hawthorn Suites*  
Penny Miller, *Hampton Inn & Suites*  
Anil Patel, *Holiday Inn Express*  
Connie Sams, *River Dog Paddle Company*  
Larry Arrington, *Shorter University*  
Chris Kozelle, *Berry College*  
Alice Stevens, *Oak Hill and the Martha Berry Museum*  
Joyce Smith, *The Fairview & E.S. Brown Heritage Corp.*  
Leann Cook, *Harbin Clinic*  
Vickie Hill, *Synovus Mortgage*  
John Spranza III, *Georgia Highlands College*  
Tina Talton, *Wings Over North Georgia*  
Sandra Linsley, *Cave Spring Downtown Development*  
Mike Burnes, *Community Volunteer*  
Elaine Price, *Community Volunteer*  
Kevin Cowling, *Rome/Floyd Parks and Recreation*

## 2017 Program of Work

### Overall

- Grow economic impact dollar amount generated into Rome-Floyd sales tax coffers
- Focus on sales objectives that increase hotel room nights
- Inspire visitation and create a great experience for visitors

### Marketing & Public Relations

- Drive impressions and engagement across all channels
- Optimize social media platforms and generate content based on audience preferences
- Create new compelling content biweekly that helps motivate visitation
- Target Birmingham to inspire overnight visits through geotargeted and behavioral ads
- Host a travel writers fam tour

### Product Development

- Increase video content including attractions, culinary, shopping and events
- Create a shared government YouTube channel
- Launch and promote the *Keys to Rome Piano* project to promote arts tourism
- Develop a series of new walking tours including a craft beer tour and flavor tours
- Leverage the state's "Year of Film" to promote visitation to Rome
- Build backend to Myrtle Hill app to add content
- Develop additional public Roman Holiday tours

### Meetings, Conventions & Groups

- Launch Explore Georgia's Rome card to promote local HA members to visiting groups

- Aggressively market The Forum to new and returning meeting groups for 2017 and multi-year contracts
- Host site visits for group/meeting planners

### Rome Sports

- Host ACC Men's & Women's Tennis Championship Tournament
- Host USATF TEAM USA/TEAM CANADA International Race Walk Match
- Oversee Local Organizing Committee for ACC Tennis Championships & USATF Race Walk Match
- Nurture partnerships within Rome/Floyd County sports directors, schools and organizations
- Expand partnerships and develop connections within state, regional and national sports organizations
- Increase exposure for Rome/Floyd County Sports Facilities through events
- Develop a NEW, unique adaptive sport tournament with Rome Tennis Center

### Last Stop Gift Shop/Rome-Floyd Visitor Center

- Revamp interior of the caboose and promote gift shop consignors while soliciting for new products to keep inventory fresh
- Continue growth of annual events and publish an annual calendar
- Increase awareness of downtown welcome center
- Establish the downtown welcome center as a regional welcome center

## 2017 Events

### January

Three Rivers Bull Riding Invitational  
USTA Southern Closed 16

### February

State of Georgia Film Fam Tour  
USTA Southern Icy Hot Tennis Tournament

### March

Berry Half Marathon  
State of GA WC regional meeting  
Georgia Bowl/USTA National Tennis Tournament  
USA Gymnastics GA State Meet, Level 7/8  
USTA GA Junior Spring Open Tennis Championships

### April

Spring Art Market  
North Georgia High School Tennis 7AA Regionals  
Ga Board of Workmans Comp  
North Atlanta High School Tennis Regionals  
USTA National Capitoline Wolf Classic Tennis Tournament  
Atlanta Steeplechase  
ACC Men's/Women's Tennis Championships  
Up The Creek without a Pedal

### May

USTA GA Adult League Tennis 18 & Over Championships  
Rome River Jam  
Rome Shakespeare Festival  
Keys to Rome/Art Festival  
USTA National Level 2 Tennis Tournament  
GHSAA Baseball Championships

### June

USTA GA Closed Junior Challenger Tennis Tournament

### July

USTA Georgia Junior Open Tennis Tournament  
Rally North America Car Rally  
USTA GA Clocktower Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament  
GA Association of the Deaf Conference

### August

USTA Girls 14's National Championship  
USTA Southern Junior Team Tennis Championships  
USATF USA/ Canada Juniors RaceWalk International Competition  
USTA Southern Icy Hot Doubles Tennis Tournament  
Jehovah Witness Conference

### September

Jehovah Witness Conference  
Rome International Film Festival

### October

Berry Mountain Day  
Going Caching! Mega Event  
Myrtle Hill Cemetery Sunset Tour  
Chiaha Arts Festival  
**Wings Over North Georgia Air Show**  
USTA Southern Icy Hot Tennis Tournament

### December

Winter Art Market

# 2016 Annual Report & 2017 Outlook

**GreaterRome**  
convention & visitors bureau

**ROME**  
SPORTS  
Greater Rome Convention & Visitors Bureau

Photo Credit: Ashley Phillips

# Economic Impact

## 2015 Total Impact of Travel & Tourism in Rome & Floyd County:

### Trends

	Tourism Expenditures	Local Tax Generated	Tourism Jobs Supported
2006	\$109,180,000	\$3,240,000	1,250
2007	\$112,200,000	\$3,280,000	1,250
2008	\$113,920,000	\$3,380,000	1,230
2009	\$107,560,000	\$3,280,000	1,210
2010	\$110,120,000	\$3,270,000	1,150
2011	\$117,220,000	\$3,380,000	1,160
2012	\$125,090,000	\$3,630,000	1,190
2013	\$129,090,000	\$3,800,000	1,210
2014	\$138,760,000	\$4,090,000	1,262
2015	\$143,420,000	\$4,240,000	1,301

% Change from 2006 to 2015  
**31.36% increase**

# \$143,420,000

Estimates include travel expenditures, travel-generated employment and payroll income, as well as tax revenues for state and local government. In Floyd County, the tourism industry supported **1,302 jobs** throughout the service and hospitality industries. Travelers to Rome & Floyd County generated **\$5.56 million in state tax revenue** and **\$4.24 million in local tax revenue** \*

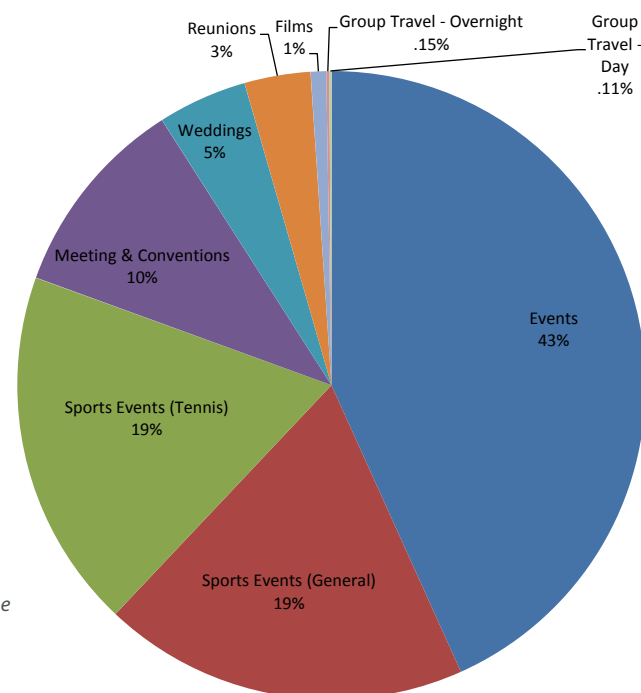
\* 2015 estimates provided by US Travel Association. 2016 estimates will be available in Fall 2017.

## 2016 Economic Impact of Sports, Groups & Events: \$13,668,665

### GRCVB Impact

Events:	\$5,911,146
Sports Events (General)	\$2,567,008
Sports Events (Tennis):	\$2,531,956
Meetings & Conventions:	\$1,421,170
Weddings:	\$628,197
Reunions:	\$464,550
Films:	\$108,635
Group Travel (Overnight):	\$21,168
Group Travel (Day):	\$14,825
Local Tax Generated	\$410,060
State Tax Generated	\$546,747
People Served:	158,027
Groups:	190

Impact numbers represent only events, conventions, meetings and other activities the GRCVB was directly involved in planning, coordination, or assistance.



## 2016 Major Sports, Groups & Events

Event	Date	Estimated Impact
Wings Over North Georgia Air Show	October	\$4,427,245
Jehovah's Witness Conference	June	\$1,162,200
USTA Georgia Adult League Championships	May	\$ 603,077
USTA Georgia Junior Open	July	\$ 466,590
All Star Games	February	\$ 394,552
Chiaha Arts Festival	October	\$ 345,000
Three Rivers Bull Riding	January	\$ 344,008
Mountain Day at Berry	Sep/Oct	\$ 302,200
Peach State Marching Festival	October	\$ 295,000
USTA Southern Junior Team Tennis	August	\$ 253,468
USTA Georgia Junior Challenger	June	\$ 246,623
USTA Southern Closed 16	January	\$ 237,177
USTA Southern Closed Doubles Championships	August	\$ 222,135
USTA Georgia Spring Open	April	\$ 213,954

The events listed above are not a complete listing of all events assisted or planned by the GRCVB and includes only events that the GRCVB actively worked with and generated at least \$200,000 of economic impact or more.

# Marketing & Public Relations Highlights

### Content Highlights

- Video continues to dominate and holds 10 of the top 20 positions of best performing social media content.
- Christmas Parade Live Facebook feed grabbed the top spot with a reach of 208,800 and the Photo Contest Video on Facebook, won the second top spot with a reach of 148,700
- Events, Attractions and Outdoors continue to attract the most visits to the website

### Social Media

- Georgia's Rome Facebook: 23,233 Likes, 21% increase
- Georgia's Rome Twitter: 3,867 Followers, 12% increase
- Georgia's Rome Instagram: 4,394 Followers, 72% increase
- City of Rome Facebook: 6,062 Likes, 3% increase
- City of Rome Twitter: 1,287 Followers, 41% increase
- Last Stop Gift Shop Facebook: 1,448 Likes, 5% increase

### Websites/Mobile

- RomeGeorgia.org: 70.9% of the total 448,260 visitors to the website are new; compared to 29.1% returning. 46,346 visits or 10% of website traffic was generated from new blog content
- Outside of search engines, social media is the largest referrer
- App Download: Myrtle Hill Cemetery: 1,194 downloads; Georgia's Rome: 590

### Advertising

- Georgia Travel Guide ad delivered 953 leads
- Southern Living Spring Ad delivered 762 Leads
- Google Adwords campaign for the Visitor Guide delivered 162,027 impressions with a .94% click-thru rate or 1,518 clicks to the online visitor guide.
- Geo and behaviorally targeted fall ad campaign delivered 312,496 impressions and 282 direct responses
- 2016 Share of marketing spend: Leisure: 42%, Sports: 29%, Meeting/Group: 26%, Gift Shop: 4%

# Top Achievements

### Marketing & Public Relations

- Published 88 press releases in 2016 to local, regional and national outlets
- Launched a new monthly email newsletter that averages a 30% open rate and 10% click thru rate
- Published 10 new brochures and rack cards including two editions of the Visitor Guide
- Established a consistent blog presence on the Georgia's Rome website with an average of 5 blog articles a month

### Product Development

- Developed new Georgia's Rome app that offers fun challenges to engage visitors and showcase Rome's offerings
- Provided marketing support leading up to the Rome Tennis Center grand opening
- Opened the Meditation Garden at Myrtle Hill Cemetery through the Myrtle Hill/Oak Hill Memorial Association
- Facilitated Rome Clocktower fund-raisers which generated over 20,000 in donations and included the sales of all commemorative bricks
- Created the brand design for the DDA event *Fiddlin' Fest Between the Rivers* including logo design, website design and print collateral
- Launched the Roman Chariot to offer free downtown transportation to increase accessibility downtown
- Increased Hospitality Association Membership in retail and restaurant categories

### Rome Sports

- Awarded 2017 ACC Men's & Women's Tennis Championships
- Grand Opening of Rome Tennis Center at Berry College
- Clocktower Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament named USTA Georgia 2016 Wheelchair Tournament of the Year Award for third consecutive year
- Attended National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) Annual Symposium and presented an education session on Integrating Adaptive Sports into Your Community
- Served on Georgia Sports executive committee, NASC Symposium Committee and NASC Professional Development Committee
- Served on USTA Georgia, Southern and National Wheelchair Tennis Committees

### Sulzbacher Roman Holiday

- Sulzbacher Roman Holiday excursion boat completed 64 cruises, and served 3,317 people

### Religious/Meetings/Group Travel/Sales

- Completed over 350 cold calls and sales meetings and facilitated site visits
- Leveraged trade shows, conventions, sales meetings and networking opportunities in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee
- Confirmed 6 new meetings/group bookings in 2016/2017 with 6 more pending

### Film & Television

- Assisted in 19 film inquiries from major studios, television and independent film makers and secured the following productions:
  - If Loving You is Wrong – Tyler Perry Studios
  - Ford Motor Company (commercial)
  - The Originals – Bananza Productions, CW Network
  - Honda – Key Technology Commercial
  - Hap & Leonard - Sundance TV
  - Megan Leavey, Dogs of War - LD Entertainment

### Last Stop Gift Shop & Rome-Floyd Visitor Centers

- Total visitation for 2016: 3,343; 47% were out-of-state, 1,458 visitors from 46 states and 105 international visitors from 19 countries
- Distributed 21,723 brochures
- Managed event ticketing for 10 events
- Hosted 5 book signings, two open houses, seasonal farmers market, 5 trunk shows, 5 public walking tours and one off-site event
- Added 23 new consignment artists to keep product line fresh
- 102 local vendors participated in Spring and Winter Art Markets attracting over 2,740 people

### Hotels

- Comfort Suites converted to all new LED lighting, refreshed all rooms with new furniture, renovated the pool and added a recycling program for plastic bottles
- Quality Inn converted to LED lighting; added new carpeting throughout, and added a recycling program for plastic bottles
- Country Inn & Holiday Inn began offering team uniform washing services
- Hampton Inn & Suites, which opened April 2016, added beer and wine service
- Hawthorn Suites introduced in-house food service and catering; additions are planned for 2017 to include 40 new guest rooms and two new meeting rooms