

May 1, 2008, Issue #14

## Two Years Later...The Georgia Aquarium's Economic Impact on Atlanta

When the Aquarium opened its doors on November 23, 2005, it created a leisure market that Georgians and visitors to Atlanta had never seen or experienced before. Welcoming more than 3.6 million visitors in its first year of operation, the Georgia Aquarium has spurred a tourism boom for the entire city, boosting attendance at nearby attractions and increasing the city's reputation as a leisure destination. In his vision for the Georgia Aquarium, benefactor Bernie Marcus wanted to promote economic impact for the city and state, bring growth and new jobs and help create a destination to inspire visitors to stay - and stay longer. "I wanted to do something that had a major impact on downtown, ... drawing people to the area, not only... from out of town, but those living in communities around Atlanta, people [who rarely or never visit downtown]," explains Marcus. "When you bring people in, they spend money, and spending money is going to create jobs and an environment where this state can prosper better than it ever did before."

Downtown Atlanta has also seen an explosion of new growth. Some 75 projects are slated to be completed in Atlanta's central business district by 2010, including 3.5 million square feet of office space, 878,000 square feet of retail space and 6,850 new housing units. Since the opening of the Aquarium, new hotels have opened in the surrounding area including Hilton Garden Inn, Twelve Hotel and W Hotel, and Hard Rock Hotel will begin construction soon. This new activity has in turn given employers the confidence to invest in downtown. Ernst & Young, the American Cancer Society and others have recently moved thousands of employees downtown. The Aquarium itself

employs around 420 full- and part-time employees and brings about 1,000 volunteers downtown on a regular basis. A study conducted by Georgia State University estimated that the Aquarium will have an impact of between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion on the state of Georgia in its first five years of operation.

While the Aquarium alone cannot transform downtown, it is playing a major role in changing the perception of the downtown area both locally and nationally. With their local partners at the new World of Coca-Cola, Imagine It! Children's Museum, CNN Center, Philips Arena, Georgia Dome and Centennial Olympic Park, the Aquarium is leading the downtown revitalization. By creating a destination appeal and a world-class venue to complement the hospitality infrastructure, Atlanta will grow as a successful city for conventions and international business. It is the goal of the leaders of Atlanta and the Georgia Aquarium to get conventioners to stay "just one more day."

For more information on the Aquarium, please RSVP for CREW's member only event in May, where you will get a "Behind the Scenes" tour that will allow you to see a different perspective of the world's largest aquarium. You will enjoy special views from the top of the various exhibits; learn how salt water and crashing waves are created and how the water is filtered with their high-tech system as well as view the husbandry commissary, vet clinic and surgical room. In addition, the tour features A.J. Robinson, President of Central Atlanta Progress, who will discuss how the Georgia Aquarium has been an unprecedented catalyst for economic growth and is remaking Atlanta's city center.

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## First Behind the Scenes of the Year

**\*\*CLICK HERE TO REGISTER\*\***

**Members Only Event, Wednesday, May 28th**  
**"Two Years Later: The Georgia Aquarium's Economic Impact"**

Location: Georgia Aquarium, 3:00 p.m.,  
Arctic Room, Georgia Aquarium, \$45

## Crew Awards Luncheon

**\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\***

CREW Awards Luncheon  
June 5 at the Cobb Energy Center

## ACE LEED Class

**\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\***

For Members Only; Limited to 25 members.  
July 15th.

## ACE Inspirational Breakfast with Leo Wells

**\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\***

July 23, 7:30 am; Location tbd

## CREW Scholarships

CREW Network takes pride in announcing its career outreach agenda designed to interest young women in joining this rewarding career. We are accepting online applications for scholarships. For more detailed information please visit [www.crewcareerzone.org](http://www.crewcareerzone.org).

## 2008 Capital Campaign Update

We have reached or exceeded our goals for Chapter Sponsorships and Event Sponsorships. We are currently at 71% of our member pledge goal of \$50,000. We need to raise \$15,000 more in the member pledge category to reach our goal. Please consider donating, if you have not already contributed. Contact Capital Campaign Managers Leslie Burke at 770-395-6588 or [leslieatlanta@msn.com](mailto:leslieatlanta@msn.com), Mary Jim Evans at 404-222-9100 x 229 or [mje@legacyproperty.com](mailto:mje@legacyproperty.com) or Marsha Bomar at 770-813-0882 or [marsha@streetsmarts.us](mailto:marsha@streetsmarts.us).

### Thanks to the following members for their personal pledges to support the Capital Campaign

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