



Atlanta.net, Atlanta's Official Travel Portal

ATLANTA (April 16, 2002) – The Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau's (ACVB) Web site, www.atlanta.net, is continuing to expand to be the number one resource for visitors to Atlanta. New initiatives for 2002 include online vacation packages, instant message technology for site visitors, new booking options, a CRM system implementation and more, which will enhance the already successful ACVB Internet program.

Currently on atlanta.net, more than 8.8 million pages are viewed per month, and the amount of traffic and leisure room nights booked for the first quarter of 2002 already exceeds the leisure room nights booked in the first quarter of last year by more than 400 percent. The ACVB exceeded its goals for the Internet program in 2001 as it lured conventions and leisure visitors to Atlanta for work or play – by 44 percent in terms of registered users with nearly 40,000 Web site visitors registering to receive regular information on atlanta.net, by 50 percent in terms of unique visitors with more than 2.4 million and by 35 percent in hotel rooms booked with nearly 700,000.

The ACVB strives to stay ahead of the curve with Internet destination marketing, and we are focused on the future," said Spurgeon Richardson, ACVB president. "Our goal is to make atlanta.net the unquestionable official travel portal for Atlanta for visitors and to be the leader in destination Web sites."

According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), more than 95 million Americans currently use the Internet and are travelers. A majority of those users, 65 million, say they are online travel planners, and 63 percent of those use destination Web sites to plan their travel. In addition, one third of all travelers who are online and about half of online travel planners (more than 31 million online travelers) are now actually booking or making travel reservations online. Online travel booking is still growing at a faster pace than online planning, increasing 26 percent over 2000 and 106 percent over 1999.

For the first time, the ACVB is now offering online vacation packages on Atlanta.net. In partnership with some of Atlanta's top attractions, there are eight themed packages, from family-fun to culture and sports, which include tickets to attractions and a two-night stay at a local hotel for a family of four. Additional nights and people can be added and costs differ depending on the type of hotel chosen.

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“Research shows that more and more people, especially families, are looking for no-hassle vacations,” said Leah Woolford, president of US Destination Marketing, the ACVB’s Internet marketing company. “People are staying closer to home, taking shorter vacations and are looking for ways to make the best use of their time both while planning a vacation and on that vacation. By offering packages, the ACVB is once again staying ahead of the curve in terms of leveraging technology to sell the city.”

As the ACVB continues to move forward with online programs, Internet advertising programs are becoming hot commodities with local travel partners and members because of the tremendous targeted traffic to the Web site and the online marketing and advertising programs. Atlanta.net drives business to Atlanta hotels, attractions, cultural partners, restaurants, retail and all organizations that benefit from conventions, leisure and business travelers.

“The ACVB raises more than three million dollars a year in advertising funding to promote the city through traditional and online programs,” said Richardson. “But regardless of whether we are using direct mail or TV ads, everything points back to atlanta.net, because it is our best vehicle for us and our partners to sell the city.”

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