

City of Atlanta to Continue Funding for Brand Atlanta Campaign

City of Atlanta:

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ATLANTA - May 15, 2006 -- Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin announced today that the city will support the Brand Atlanta Campaign by committing \$14 million in city funds to sustain a competitive branding and marketing campaign for Atlanta over the next two years. This funding will sustain the Campaign while the city's hospitality community identifies a permanent funding source.

The \$14 million in funding, subject to approval by Atlanta's City Council, will allow the city to continue the successful campaign that was announced last November. Since the campaign began six months ago, it has reached over 450 million advertising and public relations impressions with target audiences. A regional media rollout campaign will begin today in Birmingham, Alabama; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and Greenville/Spartanburg, South Carolina.

The Brand Atlanta Campaign was organized through Mayor Franklin and the Atlanta Committee for Progress, a public-private partnership of corporate and university leaders who are working with the Mayor to help achieve Atlanta's economic development goals.

"The Brand Atlanta Campaign is recognized as being critical to the ongoing perception of Atlanta as a destination market for visitors," said Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin. "Cities that we consider our competitive peers have secured public funding to sustain their marketing campaigns for the long term. When compared to these peer cities, we currently lag significantly in the funding dedicated to marketing Atlanta. Our goal is to provide comparable levels of funding to support the marketing efforts of the hospitality, tourism and entertainment industries, which are instrumental to the city's greater economic development. This Campaign's success to date and broad support from stakeholder groups provides great momentum for taking the Campaign to the next level."

Hospitality and Business Community Support

Hospitality leaders initially asked the city to lead a branding campaign for Atlanta. The Mayor agreed that the city needed a comprehensive branding effort and marketing campaign in order to remain competitive as a destination market for visitors, tourists and conventions. This new campaign was also considered important to communicate what makes Atlanta such a great place to live, work, learn, visit and play.

Since 2005, the Brand Atlanta Campaign has received tremendous funding support from Atlanta's corporate and philanthropic communities, led by The Coca-Cola Company, which provided a loaned marketing executive, Jackson Kelly, in addition to significant cash and in-kind contributions.

“The Coca-Cola Company has been honored to provide marketing leadership to launch the Brand Atlanta Campaign,” said Neville Isdell, Chairman and CEO, The Coca-Cola Company. “We are immensely proud of the work Jackson Kelly has done to lead Brand Atlanta through the process of establishing the marketing footprint for the city. It is the legacy of The Coca-Cola Company to support major initiatives undertaken by Atlanta and the business community that enhance economic development and the quality of life for our residents and visitors. With Mayor Franklin’s announcement of this new funding, we are confident that this campaign will continue to share Atlanta’s great story globally.”

“This level of commitment from the City of Atlanta is extremely generous and will sustain Atlanta’s marketing efforts while the city’s hospitality community identifies a permanent funding source,” said Spurgeon Richardson, President and CEO, Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau. “The Brand Atlanta Campaign successfully united a broad range of interested groups that regularly promote Atlanta. For the first time these stakeholders have an ongoing interest in marketing the city in a unified fashion around a single brand identity. The hospitality community believes that this is the most comprehensive marketing initiative the city has ever initiated. We look forward to providing leadership and support to this campaign as it progresses.”

“On behalf of Brand Atlanta, I would like to thank Mayor Franklin for recognizing the importance of this funding to the long-term success of the Brand Atlanta Campaign,” said A.D. “Pete” Correll, chairman of the Board, Brand Atlanta, Inc. “The funding will allow the campaign to continue to communicate the many reasons to visit our city.”

“Brand Atlanta is one of the key initiatives that the Mayor’s Atlanta Committee for Progress (ACP) has supported,” said Phil Humann, CEO, SunTrust, and chairman of ACP. “The success of this campaign is strengthening Atlanta’s hospitality, tourism and entertainment industries, and will ultimately help the city achieve the ambitious economic development goals the Mayor has set.”

Brand Atlanta Organizational Updates

During the two years of funding from the City, the Brand Atlanta Campaign will be affiliated with the Atlanta Development Authority (ADA), the city agency that acts as a catalyst for economic development in Atlanta and which is affiliated with several of the city’s major economic development initiatives.

Virginia Hepner, a former Wachovia banking executive and a member of the Campaign Leadership team, will act as the interim Executive Director for Brand Atlanta. She has agreed to serve until a permanent Executive Director is identified later this year. Jackson Kelly, a marketing executive on loan from The Coca-Cola Company who led the Campaign since its inception, is returning to the company as Vice President of Coca-Cola International and Director of International Marketing Services. He will work together with Ms. Hepner to ensure the transition is a smooth one for the Campaign and will continue to serve on the Brand Atlanta Board of Directors. The Brand Atlanta Board of Directors will continue to be chaired by Mr. Correll.

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