



**SENATE STUDY COMMITTEE
MAKING GEORGIA THE NO. 1 STATE FOR TOURISM AGENDA**

Valdosta – October 15, 2025
Breakfast 8:15 AM | Meeting Begins 9:00 AM

Agenda Highlights

9:00 AM – Welcome and Opening Comments (20 mins)

- Mayor Scott Matheson / Chairman Bill Slaughter (5 mins)
- Dave DiSalvo, CEO, Visit Valdosta (15 mins)

Presentation: “Valdosta/Lowndes County: Georgia’s Southern Gateway”

- Overall impact of tourism on the local economy and ripple across South Georgia
- ROI of an expanded conference center across South Georgia
- Michael Owens, President/CEO, Tourism Leadership Council (10 mins)

The Hotelier Experience in South Georgia (20 mins)

- Paul McNeal, Williams Hotel Group
- David Motley, MotManCo, Inc.
- Danial Bayman, The McKey
- Jaime Phelps, Book and Table Inn

The Workforce Element of Tourism (5 mins)

- Jason Van Nus, Director of Work-Based Learning & Youth Apprenticeship Programs, Lowndes County Schools

Local Tourism Anchors in South Georgia (30 mins)

- Wild Adventures Theme Park (Herschend Family Entertainment) – 10 mins
- Kim Benarket, Executive Director, Okefenokee Swamp Park, Inc. – 5 mins
- Valdosta Wake Compound – 5 mins
- Recoil Trampoline Park – 5 mins
- South Georgia Motor Sports Park – 5 mins

Arts & Education Tourism (25 mins)