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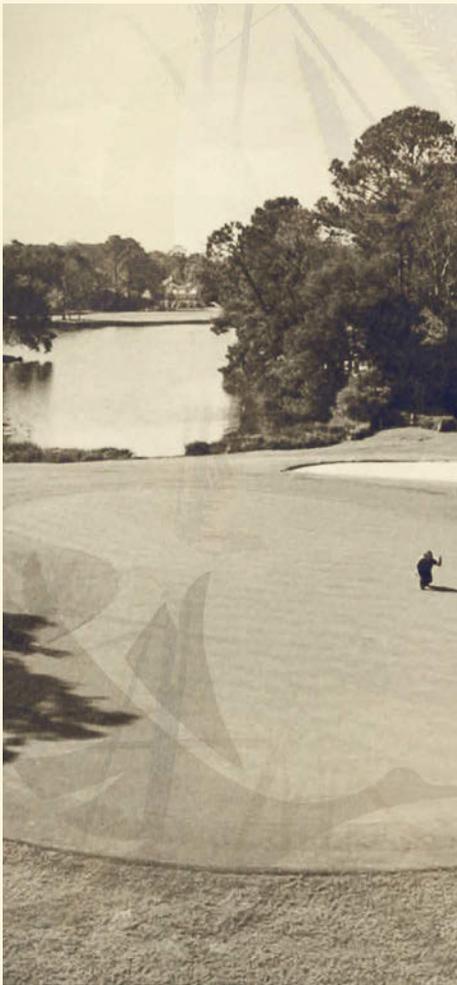
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BY JOHN P. HARRISON, CAE, CMP



### Save the Date for GSAE Events in 2018

To help you plan your professional development year, GSAE's current calendar of events is available below. We will offer more than 25 hours of in person CAE-matched programming this year, plus 24 hours of online learning opportunities. GSAE is a Preferred CAE Provider through the CAE Commission. Our list of events is always available online at [www.gsae.org](http://www.gsae.org) (Calendar View). Various Shared Interest Group meetings will be added throughout the year. We look forward to seeing you!

- April 18 Quarterly Luncheon at Omni Hotel at The Battery Atlanta; sponsored by Jekyll Island Authority
- July 11 Summer Luncheon, sponsored by Coral Hospitality
- \*September 20 Quarterly Luncheon, The Abit Massey Lecture Series, sponsored by Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau (\*date change due to Yom Kippur)
- November 14 Tech Showcase & Luncheon
- December 12 Holiday Luncheon, Awards Show, Silent Auction & Annual Business Meeting, sponsored by Jekyll Island Authority



### GSAE Sponsorship and Hosting Opportunities

**Luncheons** are the primary venue for networking in GSAE. About 180 members generally attend each luncheon, which is preceded by a 30-minute networking reception. Your exclusive sponsorship includes an exhibit table during registration and the networking reception, 2-3 minutes of podium time, rights to leave a brochure or flyer on each seat, luncheon registration for five people, recognition in promotional materials and post-event attendee mailing labels. Sponsorship opportunities are available for November and December (one remaining).

The **host property** of each luncheon will receive an exhibit table during registration and the networking reception, the opportunity to place material at each place setting, podium time, significant exposure and an attendee mailing list following the luncheon. This is a great opportunity to showcase your property! Available 2018 dates: July 11, September 20, November 14 and December 12.

The **Annual Meeting** remains GSAE's top professional development program. This year, we'll be at the Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, May 30-June 1. We expect a total conference attendance of more than 200 members and guests. Sponsorship packages include full conference registration and all sponsors will be recognized in print and electronic promotional materials, in the annual meeting program, AM app and with signage and a gift during the meeting. Opportunities include general sessions, breakfast, breakout sessions and breaks.

Please visit [www.gsae.org](http://www.gsae.org) (Support/Sponsorships) or call the GSAE office at (404) 577-7850 for more details.

### 2018 GSAE Annual Meeting, May 30-June 1 at Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort in Miramar Beach, FL

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Additional fun fact: Up to half of your CAE renewal or CAE application hours may be completed online with qualifying courses. Visit [education.gsae.org](http://education.gsae.org) to view the full catalog of upcoming live webinars and nearly 100 self-study courses!

## ASAE's DELP Applications Open



ASAE invites qualified association professionals to apply for the 2018-2020 class of the Diversity Executive Leadership Program (DELP) by Monday, March 19, 2018. The Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau is the exclusive sponsor of DELP since 2001. DELP is an accelerated leadership program of education, mentoring and volunteer service in the association community. Candidates who have at least three years of mid-senior level association management experience or at least one year of experience as an association CEO (as of the date of their application) and are members of a racial/ethnic minority group, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender, or have a disability are encouraged to apply.

During this two-year program, DELP scholars will experience membership and volunteer service in ASAE and have access to industry leaders who could serve as career coaches or mentors. DELP scholars from Georgia receive complimentary GSAE membership during their appointment. For more information and to see the list of previous DELP scholarship recipients, visit [asaecenter.org/DELP](http://asaecenter.org/DELP).

## Congratulations to GSAE's Newest Certified Association Executives

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**Teresa Tatum, CAE**  
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Savannah Marriott  
Riverfront

**Matt Beard**  
Director of Group Sales  
Westin & Sheraton  
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**Jordan Bradford**  
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Specialist  
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**Debbie Brady**  
Account Executive  
Association Services Group

**Carla Carroll**  
Director of Global Sales  
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**Robert Coleman, MBA**  
CEO  
Georgia Pharmacy  
Association

**Cheryl Dermyre**  
Technical Projects Manager  
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**Valerie Drake**  
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**Sharon Hopkins**  
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**Benjamin Hopper, COSS**  
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Manager  
TAPPI

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Industrial Asset Management  
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**Renee Lalanne-Wuerdeman**  
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**Rebecca Masic**  
Account Executive  
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**Ashley Owens**  
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# Clearer Metrics for a Clearer Vision

**COMING FROM A** background that includes significant experience as a vice president with Kellen and as vice president of association management at Cornerstone Communications Group, **Jim Fowler, CAE**, who was the chair of GSAE in 2015, brought with him a wealth of lessons learned from years of observing—as well as actively participating in—association governance.

Fowler, who serves currently as president of the Atlanta/Georgia Apartment Association, noted how important it is for board members to have clear, easily digestible and salient metrics at their fingertips. Although a board of directors is by definition a deliberative and contemplative body, time is still a precious currency not to be wasted. The clearer the metrics, the more informed the decision.

Fowler says that he was “fortunate to serve in a time where our organization wasn’t faced with any major issues.” Like many of the chairs before him, Fowler entered his time as GSAE chair during a period of equilibrium. The organization was in a steady

state, matching member needs with timely, leading-edge offerings while balancing the revenue and workflow challenges that come with growth.

Recognizing that not all board members are equally fluent in interpreting financials, Fowler saw an opportunity to simplify the financial reporting process without diluting or simplifying the information the board received.

“I spearheaded an initiative to streamline our financial reporting, which provided clarity and resulted in easier-to-interpret financials for our board members,” he says.

The new process enabled the board members to better understand the full financial health of GSAE, giving them greater confidence in decision making and enabling the organization to focus on what Fowler says were his main strategic goals as GSAE chair: “To spread the word about all the great things associations accomplish and to continually pump up GSAE members, regardless of rank or position, in that everyone makes

a difference in what they do; to get folks feeling good about themselves and their contributions to the greater cause.” This inclusive spirit continues to define GSAE as a place for *all* association professionals, not just C-suiters.

When he’s asked what he most enjoyed about his time as chair, Fowler answers, “Serving with a great board of directors, working alongside a great staff, and representing an incredibly smart and talented group of association leaders in Georgia.”

And like every good volunteer leader, Fowler recognizes just how vital the relationship between elected leader and chief staff officer is. “I enjoyed a very transparent and fluid relationship with **Wendy W. Kavanagh, CAE**,” he says, “where we each had a clear understanding and respect for our respective roles. As one of my last roles as past chair, I introduced a more focused, goal-oriented annual review process, which was adopted going forward for ease of use for Wendy and the executive committee.” 

Fowler's goal as GSAE chair: “To spread the word about all the great things associations accomplish and to continually pump up GSAE members, regardless of rank or position, in that everyone makes a difference in what they do; to get folks feeling good about themselves and their contributions to the greater cause.”



## Fine-Tuning the Future

**AS ANYONE WHO** has spent time in the GSAE community knows, an organization's might has little to do with its resources or size and absolutely everything to do with the people who comprise it: not just the staff and elected leadership but every single person who touches the organization.

During his tenure as GSAE chair in 2016, **David Ellis, CAE**, helped GSAE make even better uses of its resources as the organization constantly and rapidly evolved to address emerging member needs.

When asked how he approached his position as elected leader of the organization, Ellis says, "I was elected to make sure that something that was already going really well—GSAE—continued to go really well. I saw what I was tasked to do as keeping the trains on track.

"We weren't selling cookies to make budget," he adds with a laugh, "so I saw my tenure as a great time to fine tune delivery, to see how we could provide services and programs even better, more efficiently, and with improvements in technology and delivery."

Ellis didn't seek to make a "big splash" as chair. Instead, "I focused my time on nuance," he says. "What we had was working. My job—our job, really, because everyone was involved—was to make things even better."

Ellis credits GSAE's success to the hard work of everyone. "The thing that we really work hard at, particularly in leadership, is we work as a team toward the long-term plan, toward what happens when our turn at the wheel, so to speak, has long passed," he says. "What will this organization look like next year? In 10 years? Twenty years? What might be down the road? What is right around the corner. We have to all look at that together, and it takes many, many sources of input to do that with any real success."

Ellis says the obvious and most important source of this input is members, and he especially credits GSAE President **Wendy W. Kavanagh, CAE**, as a major strength in this area. "Wendy does a fabulous job working with the members of GSAE," he says. "She is dynamic and innovative and keeps her finger on the pulse of everything. She would

call to tell me she has solved a problem, rather than presenting me with a problem. She's incredibly smart and incredibly resourceful, and we're so fortunate to have her."

Ellis, who for the past 12 years was the executive vice president of the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association and before that served as EVP of the Collier Building Industry Association, says that what he valued the most as GSAE chair, and continues to value, is the time that he spent with other association executives.

"I got to know a wide variety, a diverse group of professionals who work in my industry," he says. "The only people I meet all day long in my position are home builders, who of course I love talking to. Those are the people who I serve. But when working with GSAE, you get to meet people from all kinds of associations—healthcare, food service, technology. It really broadens you and gives you a platform to hone your craft and learn more about what's out there, and it enables you to better serve your members." ◀

When working with GSAE, you get to meet people from all kinds of associations—healthcare, food service, technology. It really broadens you and gives you a platform to hone your craft and learn more about what's out there, and it enables you to better serve your members.



## Heart and Soul

**"I DIDN'T REALLY** have any aspirations to be chair," says the 2017 chair of GSAE, **Tara Morrison, CAE, CMP**, who currently serves as president of Association Management Executives, Inc. in Norcross, Georgia. "I didn't have my eye on the chair, but I've always wanted to be involved. It's an organization that is near and dear to my heart."

"Heart" is a fitting metaphor for Morrison's motivation, what drives her. "When I first delved into association management, I was the director of corporate wellness and CPR programs at the American Heart Association in Georgia. Following that, I was executive director for special societies at the Medical Association of Georgia."

Few sectors are as demanding, changing and challenging as healthcare. Many of your members have actual life and death on the line in their jobs, every day. It's imperative for association executives serving that sector to have foresight, to serve as trusted counselors and advisors to people with often-grueling career challenges. Her experience in that

sector, as well as her extensive experience managing all types of associations through her firm, equip Morrison with valuable vision and experience, which she is putting to work for GSAE's members and for the organization's future.

Morrison says that just as important as a leader's knowledge—and perhaps more so—is the leader's deliberate practice of listening carefully to others and always displaying empathy. "Getting to know people that I hadn't had a chance to meet before has been enlightening and really informative," Morrison says. "I get to be involved in a lot of committee work that I otherwise wouldn't have been involved in, and through that, I get a clearer picture of how the entire organization comes together."

She emphasizes the importance of understanding that even when everyone is working toward the same goal—as they are on a board—people are still people. They are relentlessly individual and relentlessly unique, and no two groups will ever have the

same dynamic. While everyone may be focused on a common end, the paths they find desirable will always be filled with differences. The job of the board collectively—and especially the board chair—is to pull from these competing viewpoints a singular vision and strategy.

The key, Morrison says, is to "think about the golden rule. In our industry, we are basically like a conveyor belt; you have constant movement, and different people come through, some of whom don't have agendas that are in line with your organization, or at least aren't in line with where the majority of the organization's stakeholders believe it should go."

She encourages all to keep empathy and fairness in mind, especially with the challenges that come when volunteer leaders turn over. "Think about the golden rule when new volunteer leadership comes through. It can be hard to deal with different personalities and people with different agendas. Lean on your staff to make sure that they can manage things and be the constant." 

**"Think about the golden rule when new volunteer leadership comes through. It can be hard to deal with different personalities and people with different agendas. Lean on your staff to make sure that they can manage things and be the constant."**



# Moving a Convention with Two Weeks' Notice

BY MARY LOU JAY

## ASSOCIATIONS GENERALLY PLAN

annual conventions years in advance. So imagine finding out at the very last minute that you have just two weeks to move everything to a new venue more than 1,000 miles away.

Staff members at the National Association of Elevator Contractors (NAEC) faced that challenge in September 2017. Just days before its convention and exposition at Orlando Convention Center, Hurricane Irma began aiming straight for the site.

The official convention start was September 11th, but exhibitors and attendees would start arriving on September 9th, according to NAEC Executive Director **Teresa Witham**. In the days before the storm's expected arrival, NAEC staff constantly monitored the weather and talked every day with convention and hotel staff. But they held off cancelling the event, hoping the hurricane would change course.

Two things occurred to force a decision. "The Hyatt Regency, our primary hotel, told us that all food outlets would be closed and all guests' meals would be served buffet style in banquet rooms. While bars might stay open, a curfew might be imposed so people would have to stay in their rooms," said Witham. Then the airport announced on September 8<sup>th</sup> that it would be closing on the first arrival day for NAEC's meeting participants.

At that point there was little choice; the NAEC Exhibitor Advisory Group and the Board, led by President Craig Zomchek, and Witham determined the Orlando convention could not go on.

## Cancellation Not an Option

NAEC has approximately 750 members. They include contractors who maintain, install and modernize elevators and lifts, elevator manufacturers, consultants, inspectors and universities with their own elevator

shops. While NAEC is best known for its trade show, it also has extensive educational offerings.

Education programs and membership dues provide some revenues, but the trade show serves as NAEC's primary income source, so cancelling the convention would have been financially devastating.

In addition, many of NAEC's members are small to medium-sized companies who depend on the annual show to reach customers. Many elevator companies also use the continuing education options to meet their licensing requirements.

Even before NAEC pulled the plug on the Orlando meeting, Witham had informally polled exhibitors and convention registrants to get their feedback on possible rescheduling. "We were flooded with support; it was so overwhelmingly positive," said Witham. "They told us 'This is critical to our business—if you can make this happen, we will be there!'"

## The Stars Aligned

Witham had communicated constantly throughout this time with **Connie Bergeron, CMP** of Site Selection Solutions Inc., NAEC's long-time partner for all association meetings. Since Orlando had no availability for 2017, they contacted Atlantic City, site of the 2018 NAEC convention, to see if they had space for 2017.

Atlantic City was happy to help since another organization had just canceled an upcoming meeting. This had opened up 2017 space in the convention center and at four hotels. However, the available dates were September 22-26, which gave association staff just two weeks to readjust schedules, notify the 1,900 exhibitors, speakers and participants, and transport show exhibits from Orlando to Atlantic City.

Several things made this process possible. NAEC had been to Atlantic City many times before, so the association knew

the Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority, and hotel representatives were familiar with NAEC's needs. Freeman, NAEC's show decorator, had worked on some of these Atlantic City shows, and RCS, which had handled NAEC registration for several years, could accommodate the new schedule. In addition, NAEC had just completed the space draw for the 2018 Atlantic City convention, so they used those booth assignments for 2017 as a starting point. All of these entities worked together to move the freight originally shipped to Orlando to Atlantic City and to handle the many convention details.

When the staff redid the four-day program schedule, they found that only one of the dozen-plus speakers wasn't able to attend the rescheduled show. Exhibitors also came through, with 145 (out of a typical 190) participating. Although a few downsized their booths, several upsized them, since Atlantic City is a big market for the elevator industry.

"The stars were definitely in alignment," said Witham.

## Positive responses

NAEC staff members (eight full-time and one part-time) worked long hours prior to the rescheduled meeting to ensure everything went smoothly. It was a trial by fire for the two new staff members who had never attended a NAEC convention.

Handling the flood of emails that poured into the office was challenging. After first attempting personal responses, staff members eventually resorted to an autoresponder that referred senders to the website and assured them they would be contacted after cancellation and rescheduling decisions had been made. Once the event was rescheduled, the staff sent out email blasts to alert the entire industry of the changes.

"Those two weeks passed in a blur," recalls Witham.



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But NAEC accomplished the seemingly impossible, and the rescheduled show was a success. “The exhibitors and attendees who came to Atlantic City were a phenomenal group of upbeat, supportive people who were so happy to be there. In some ways, it was one of the best conventions we’ve ever had,” said Witham. Members and non-members personally thanked her, the staff and the Board for their extraordinary efforts to make the convention happen.

There were some downsides. The show didn’t generate as much revenue as budgeted, and NAEC took a hit because it had to refund some exhibitor and registration fees. Fortunately, many agreed to apply their payments towards the 2018 show. “That distributed our hurt over two years instead of just one,” said Witham. “Instead of one financially horrid year we will now have two challenging ones, and we will be fine after that.”

Witham said it would be difficult to plan in advance for an emergency like this, especially since they are so rare. “I’ve been in a meeting-oriented environment for 40-plus years, and I’ve never encountered anyone who had to do this type of thing.”

Reflecting on the experience, Witham said she’d like NAEC to develop a formal process for refunding its own exhibitors and attendees in the event of an emergency. If that policy had been established and in place, it would have allowed the staff to focus more on the planning needed for the change rather than on so much back and forth communication with the cancelling parties. She advises associations to confirm, months in advance, that they have insurance policies to limit their losses in the event of an emergency. NAEC is now having claim challenges due to some delays and lack of communication from their insurance-related vendors.

While Witham and her staff hope they never again have to reschedule

a convention, she says that overall the experience provided growth opportunity for the staff and reinforced an already strong in-house team environment. She expressed pride in how well the staff handled the pressures of the volume of work in a short period of time.

Witham also reiterated that without the cooperation of the Orlando team, Freeman, the Atlantic City teams, Connie Bergeron, the confidence of the membership and the interest of the industry, the 2017 Convention would not have happened. She is also appreciative of the board and volunteers’ quick responsiveness throughout those weeks.

“It was certainly not a bed of roses, but it was a million times better than not having a convention and exposition,” Witham added. “While, I wouldn’t wish the experience on anyone, I can’t imagine it could have turned out much better.” <



# What to Do First in an Active Security Threat

BY J. TRIPP MITCHELL, CPP

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### **WHAT IS AN** active security threat?

For the purpose of this article, a working definition becomes anytime a serious life threatening security incident is about to happen, is in progress and/or is expanding. These incidents include such threats as workplace violence, active shooters and killers, targeted ideological violence and even terrorism. In a nutshell, you are in the wrong place at that wrong time!

During my career, I have had the blessing of speaking, training and consulting with major organizations about security matters and threat management. As a certified trainer in active shooter response and emergency management, I have seen firsthand the true need to be prepared for this type of event. Unfortunately, one of the biggest hurdles to overcome is apathy of the individual. People believe "it will never happen here." This mindset turns to chaos and carnage when an active security threat, such as an active shooter, emerges. In fact, it is that apathy that inspires me to train even harder.

There are many approaches to enhancing your security protocols and personal protection when security threats become active. Here are my Top 2:

#### **1. Situational Assessments**

This is one of the simplest approaches to personal security one can use. Situational assessments are all about evaluating your environment and paying attention to your surroundings. Many who are oblivious to their surroundings become victims. Taking just a few moments to look and assess the

### **Many just hope for the best, but that is not enough. Preparation is as easy as increasing awareness, planning a response, and executing that response.**

places you enter and evaluate a quick emergency response once you are inside could save your life.

For example, look for suspicious individuals standing around doorways or inside cars lurking around the parking lot. Gauge it first, then do not go inside if you see something alarming. At your job, restaurants, church or anytime out in public, take time to identify the key exits in an emergency. Where do you sit? Are you paying attention to who enters? How will you escape? Where will you take shelter or cover? I recommend this whole heartedly. I conduct my own quick mental risk assessment almost everywhere I go nowadays, not out of paranoia, but out of precaution.

#### **2. Prepare Your Plan**

My security management firm takes time to review and learn from case studies that involve incidents of mass murder, active shooters and terror. Many of these studies have been beneficial to my training seminars as I try to bridge the gap on how to survive an active threat. One common theme I train for is to prepare and plan for it. Many just hope for the best, but that is not enough. Preparation is as easy as increasing awareness, planning a response, and executing that response. The plans for individuals do not have to be difficult, just realistic.

**GET READY** – Situational awareness meets risk management. For example, if you see something suspicious (or something just not right), you could be putting yourself at risk by even going inside or remaining in a location too long.

**GET UP** – Move and be ready to move out of harm's way as rapidly as possible.

**GET OUT** – Will you have the mindset to escape when a threat turns active? Did you see the fire exit? Where are the doors? What could you hide behind that could provide cover (not just hide). Also think of a "Plan B" if something does not go as you expected.

You are ultimately responsible for your own personal safety. At the end of the day, only YOU can make the decisions to save yourself and others. The awareness you have and the plan you make will be the difference between life and death. By considering these two proactive strategies you can formulate an instant action plan almost everywhere you go. <



*J. Tripp Mitchell, CPP, is CEO of the professional security management firm Guardstar, LLC. He is an experienced investigator and security practitioner with a demonstrated track record of providing results and effective leadership as well as training in professional and academic settings. Tripp spoke at the 2016 GSAE Annual Meeting and the GSAE Luncheon on February 21.*

congratulations

# GSAE Presents Annual Awards

**GSAE'S ANNUAL AWARDS** were presented during the Holiday Luncheon, December 13 at SunTrust Park. On behalf of the GSAE Awards Committee, comprised of past GSAE and GSAE Foundation presidents, chairs, and previous recipients of the Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award, we are happy to share a few reasons *why* the committee chose this year's recipients. Videos featuring the award winners premiered at the ceremony and are available online ([www.gsaе.org/About/2017 GSAE Award Winners](http://www.gsaе.org/About/2017_GSAE_Award_Winners)). The contributions of these members help drive GSAE's continued success. Thank you to this year's award recipients.

## 2017 Clifford M. Clarke Award Recipient: Jim Moody, CAE



The Clifford M. Clarke Award is GSAE's highest recognition, bestowed upon a Georgia association executive who has demonstrated exemplary personal leadership and service. The award honors outstanding accomplishments and service in association management. Established in 1969, the award is named for the

late Clifford M. Clarke, President Emeritus of the Arthritis Foundation.

**Jim Moody, CAE** has served as President of the Construction Suppliers Association for 11 years. In that time they've expanded from an initial two states to five, as of January 2018. Jim and his board have focused on turning a social organization into one that provides meaningful business help to its members through benchmarking, safety and HR services, and assistance with generational transitions in family businesses. CSA also stabilized its self-insured worker's compensation fund so it provides a solid return for members and the association. Previously, Jim served in executive roles with the Building Owners and Managers Association of Atlanta and GSAE. He began his association career with the American College of Rheumatology.

Jim is a consensus-builder and a noted *NICE* devil's advocate. He volunteers, both within his community and within GSAE. He was the 2012 Chairman of the GSAE Board of Directors, served as a presenter and panelist for both the Leadership Academy and the CAE Study Group, and has mentored numerous association rock stars. He was named one of GSAE's 90 Movers & Shakers in 2007, a GSAE Superlative in 2017, and has received several awards including the Alan R. Johnson Award for servant leadership and the Skelton-Massey Award for helping GSAE grow in size and effectiveness.

Jim exemplifies the highest ideals and standards of our

shared profession. Please join us in congratulating him.

## 2017 Alan R. Johnson Award Recipient: Abit Massey, CAE



The Alan R. Johnson Award, established in 1994 and named in memory of a past chair of the GSAE Foundation, is given to an association executive in Georgia who has demonstrated qualities of teamwork, vision and servant leadership.

Abit has served the association community for many, many years. He's a past president of both ASAE and GSAE, an ASAE fellow, Clifford M. Clarke Award winner, a 14 time winner of our membership recruitment award, and most recently, a 2017 GSAE Superlative.

In his local community, Abit and his wife Kayanne work in the Gainesville First Baptist Church Nursery during Sunday School hour and are in rotation two Sundays a month as greeters and ushers for the 8:30 service. He is President of Junior Achievement of Northeast Georgia, Chair of Advisory Council for United Way of Hall County and Chair of the Georgia Games Commission.

Abit's support of our state's precious resources is boundless. He is Chair of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Warm Springs Memorial Advisory Committee, Chair of Friends of Healan's-Head's Mill, a partnership with Hall County to preserve and restore a grist mill built in the 1850s on the North Oconee River. In addition, he is Immediate Past

President of Georgia Women of Achievement, which every year honors exceptional women who are a continuing inspiration.

Amazingly, he is also serving as a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the University of Georgia Research Foundation and enjoying working every day with the Georgia Poultry Federation and its President Mike Giles.

**2017 Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award Recipient: Julia Boyd, CAE**



The **Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award** is presented to an association executive with ten years or less of experience in associations who demonstrates leadership through service to GSAE, their own association and to their community. The award was named in 2014 to honor past president Sharon Hunt, CAE, who mentored a generation of association leaders during her career.

Julia served as Chair the CAE Study Group in 2017 and previously led GSAE's Emerging Professionals Shared Interest Group. Julia is a member of ASAE and holds the Certified Association Executive designation. Julia graduated from GSAE's Leadership Academy in 2016 and serves on the 2018 Board of Directors.

Said the member who nominated her, "I wanted to nominate Julia for every GSAE award. This association likes to talk about promoting association rock stars ... we've got one in Julia. She's extremely bright

in her association management skills, volunteers at every turn, and is also just a lot of fun to be around! And isn't that what all association executives should strive to be?"

**2017 Chair's Award Recipient: Lori K. Spear, CAE**



The **Chair's Award** is presented to the member that the chair feels has made a significant contribution to the Society, advancing the aims, ideals and standards of GSAE and association management.

While Lori's accomplishments are many—she is a Certified Association Executive, a past president of GSAE, a 2017 GSAE Superlative, and a recipient of the Clifford M. Clarke Award—she is being recognized this year for her contributions to the enormously successful "Pay the Pig" program. Implementing an idea created with our partners at the Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau in 2015, Lori and her team of volunteers and sponsors, including Map Dynamics, have raised over \$8,000 to benefit local charities in our host cities. 2017 Chair Tara Morrison, CAE, CMP said, "Lori's commitment to supporting our charitable work in local communities is unwavering and endlessly creative. She added ribbons to the Pay the Pig promotion this year on her own dime, and I believe they were gone by the end of the first day. Staff could not pull off such a successful fundraiser without Lori's leadership."

**2017 Stephen Styron Award Recipient: Jennie Nessor, CAE**



The **Stephen Styron Award** is presented in honor of one of GSAE's past presidents. This award is given to the volunteer leader the current chair feels has done the most outstanding job.

As chair of the Table Hosts Committee in 2017, Jennie's enthusiasm and support of GSAE allowed us to engage members in an authentic, personal way. In addition, she appeared in a video promoting the Foundation's internship program. Jennie helps GSAE succeed in one of our most important areas—creating opportunities to build meaningful relationships in the association community. We appreciate her contributions this year to connect leaders and advance associations.

**2017 Peggy Seigler Corporate Member of the Year Recipient: Jeff Sabourin, PRG**



The **Peggy Seigler Corporate Member of the Year** is presented to the corporate supplier member

who has demonstrated outstanding and continuous service to the association community in Georgia. Named in 2015, the award honors the many contributions of Peggy Seigler, MPA, CDME, a beloved and valued member of the community.

Jeff and his company, PRG, have provided audio visual equipment and support for luncheons, workshops and the Annual Meeting for many years. Our GSAE staff relies on Jeff's professionalism and can-do attitude to produce effective and engaging events. His expertise and willingness to help us disseminate information effectively and offer engaging professional development opportunities provide the backbone of our successful in-person events.

Wrote one of our members, "As long as I have been a member, I have seen, heard, and experienced the support that Jeff has given to GSAE and our events. His event support allows GSAE to 'appear

larger than it is.' He's a mainstay at all GSAE events and always has a smile and a consult ready for GSAE members."

**2017 Skelton-Massey Award Recipient: Karl M. Kirsch, CAE**



Renamed in 2010, the **Skelton-Massey Award** recognizes the member who sponsors the most new members, strengthening GSAE in size and effectiveness. We hope the award, named after two

legendary recruiters and GSAE past presidents, inspires members to promote GSAE's value and benefits loudly and often.

Karl is being honored for his promotion of GSAE membership and involvement to his professional staff and to others in our community. When we ask our newest members why they joined GSAE, the answer we hear most often is, "My CEO said." Having a supervisor who is supportive of active engagement in GSAE cannot be underestimated. These are the folks who encourage their staff to give GSAE the time, energy and talent we need to support our mission. Karl was awarded GSAE's highest honor, the Clifford M. Clarke Award in 2016 and, most recently, GSAE members recognized Karl's ability to connect the right people with one another by naming him one of GSAE's 2017 Superlatives in honor of the 100th anniversary. <



  
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# Holiday Luncheon, Awards Show, Officer Installation & Silent Auction

**WE CELEBRATED THE**

accomplishments of our 2017 award recipients (read more about them on page 18) at the annual Holiday Luncheon on December 13. Thanks to our generous silent auction donors and bidders, we raised more than \$20,700 in 2017 to help support the high level, quality programming we all enjoy at our meetings and conferences. A huge thank you our committee leaders **Spence Downs, Loren Einstein** and **Karla Yeck**, along with the

entire Silent Auction Committee and everyone who bid at either of our auctions. Check out a list of our donors online and thank them for supporting GSAE. Attendees donated 295 pounds of food to support the Atlanta Community Food Bank through our annual food drive. **Lori K. Spear, CAE**, Chair's Award recipient, encouraged attendees to donate to Toys for Tots, raising \$600 over the course of the luncheon.



**Mike Giles, Abit Massey, CAE** and **Bryan Tolar** sporting their most festive holiday ties.



**Jennie Nesspor, CAE, Jeremy Minnick** and **Angela Holland, CAE**

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2017 GSAE Board Chair **Tara Morrison, CAE, CMP** with the 2017 award recipients: **Jeff Sabourin, Abit Massey, CAE, Lori K. Spear, CAE, Julia Boyd, CAE, Jennie Nesspor, CAE, Jim Moody, CAE** and **Karl Kirsch, CAE**



**Linda Minnick** and **James Pace** assisting with the annual ACFB food drive.



**Kevin Shea, CcD, Sheryl Ehlers** and **Kelly McLendon, CAE**

# GSAE's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala



**THE GEORGIA SOCIETY** of Association Executives celebrated our 100th anniversary with a gala at the Biltmore Ballrooms in Midtown on November 15, 2017. Attendees enjoyed walking the red carpet and posing for the photographer, a cocktail hour, dinner by Bold American Catering and an after-party with desserts and the opportunity to sign the "Who's Who" keepsake program. Superlatives were voted on by the membership

and recognized at the event, with categories ranging from fun to mission critical to GSAE. This was an evening people will be talking about for years to come! A special thank you to the task force for their hard work: Ragan Cohn, CAE; Pat Dunwoody, CAE, LEED AP; Sam Evans; Erin Hall; Dawn James; Felicia Kenan; Karl Kirsch, CAE; Robin Lane, CAE; Mike Pennington, CAE; Lori K. Spear, CAE; Mary Wheatley, CAE; Jacob Wilder, CAE. <

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There were 19 past presidents and chairs of the GSAE Board of Directors in attendance.



ACR staff **Kamilah Greene, David Haag, MSM, CAE, Amy Kane, CAE, Robin Lane, CAE, Julie Anderson, CAE, Mary Wheatley, CAE, IOM, Charlie Haws, Janell Martin and Sharon Ross**



**Lowell Aplebaum, CAE, Gabriel Eckert, FASAE, CAE and Christopher Oronzi**



**Abit Massey, CAE and Kayanne Massey**



**Darcel Ivey and Marva Huie**



**Jim Fowler, CAE, Megan Entriken, Karla Yeck and Martin Bay, CMP**



2017 Board Chair, **Tara Morrison, CAE, CMP** and Gala emcee **Mike Pennington, CAE**



Georgia Municipal Association staff **Yalonde Tanner, Erica Powell, CMP and Janice Eidson, CMP**



**Amy Clark, Suzanne Cross, Sheryl Ehlers and Mr. Abit fan head (Jared Trauis, we think!)**



Presenting sponsor Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau's **Jay Markwalter, TMP** and **Barry White, IOM, CDME**



# What Can CVBs Do For You?

**LOOKING TO INCREASE** attendance and get members excited about the next meeting? The professionals at your chosen destination's convention and visitors bureau are your partners in planning.

## Beyond Dates & Rates

Research is showing that many business travelers take extra days after conferences to enjoy leisure time in their event's destination, and CVB staffers can help you market your meeting's locale in ways that can boost numbers.

"Planners need to know the ins and outs of the destination," says **Renee Lalanne-Wuderman**, director of conference & group sales for Visit Panama City Beach. Many CVBs offer superb online tools that not only help planners get a handle on everything a city offers, but allow association

members to play a bit and find more reasons to attend.

"Through our 'Make It Your Real. FUN. Beach' campaign, our team can interact with the planner, while showcasing the destination's authentic, fun, and high-quality beach attractions and accommodations."

Meanwhile, a fun quiz (that divides attractions into Family/Beach, Ecotourism, Adrenaline and Romance) invites visitors to choose from the wide range of activities that can get attendees' wheels spinning with fun post-conference—or even between-session—ideas.

## Superb Site Selection

"The CVB sales team are the local experts and can save you time identifying the right property for your needs," says **Beth Gendler**,

vice president of sales for Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism, who also touts laser-sharp referrals for things like catering and team building. "Whether you are seeking an upscale space for an incentive trip or a board retreat or a large conference center, save time and let the sales team source proposals on your behalf from only the properties meeting your needs."

## Grow Your Numbers, Shrink Your Spend

"Your local CVB sales professional may be able to provide free services to promote attendance at your meeting," Gendler explains. Her team, for example, provides complimentary e-postcards with unlimited use and personalized messaging to promote early registration—or other important messages to client attendees. Ask what your destination's team can do to help you market your event.

## Customization is King

"No two groups are the same, so it is important to enter each partnership with a clean slate," says Lalanne-Wuderman. "Meeting planners are always looking

for something different, and understanding your destination, and understanding what they do well, is key.”

For example, Visit Panama City Beach recently launched their Décor by the Shore Shopping Trail, which connects each coastal emporium store throughout the beach.

“By picking up a Décor by the Shore punch card, your group can visit all of the stores to win a swag bag from Visit Panama City Beach. Getting the groups engaged with small businesses in the community is just one of the ways to customize a group’s visit.”

And seriously: who doesn’t love swag?

## Supplier Relationships: The Power of F2F

It’s not something that should need explaining in the meetings

industry, but when was the last time you sat down—really, sat down, like at an actual table—and met with your key suppliers?

While modern tech adverts from email to Skype have for sure made things easier, as association planners, we know the value of face-to-face interaction. In ways, its value has only climbed. What better way to let a supplier know how much you value the relationship than to make time to meet in person?

Live meetings may require a significant time investment, but interacting on a more personal level builds rapport, confidence, positivity; it forges teams. And meeting for something social—coffee or a meal—while doing business will also afford insight into one another’s personalities, something even face-timing can’t really convey.

Sharing information with your supplier is essential—he or she may well have insight

into some of your concerns through experience with another planner—so come to the table forthcoming about your agenda. For suppliers, sharing all those tidbits—best practices and mistakes made—go a long way in showing planners you’ve seen it all; it turns you from mere supplier into trusted adviser.

Last but not least, don’t forget to follow up. Quarterly business reports notwithstanding, communication is key. Note the key points discussed in your meetings and touch base regularly as the year rolls on. Each of you has a lot of names in that virtual Rolodex, reminders are wonderful. Make plans to schedule a follow-up—perhaps this time a call or Skype session—perhaps to discuss business, perhaps just to touch base if there’s nothing on the calendar just yet. It’s a great way to stay up to date on processes, plans and future possibilities. <

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# All Meetings Point South

**EARLY 2018'S ICY** weather blast came creeping way too far South for many folks' liking, so warmer thoughts are likely in the minds of your membership. Considering heading down to the beach? Here are some of the newest hotels, hot spots and more along the Emerald and Gulf Coast—each is worthy of further investigation!

## **SANDESTIN**

In a few short months, GSAE will gather at the **Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort** for the 2018 Annual Meeting. Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort is a top-rated Florida destination along the state's Emerald Coast. Known for its white sand beaches and tasty seafood, Sandestin is all about helping guests and attendees

alike experience and share moments to remember.

Sandestin's 65,000 square feet of meeting space can be customized for groups from 10 to 1,600 and features more than 25 breakout rooms, a 13,500-square-foot ballroom, a 12,600-square-foot exhibit hall and four boardrooms.

For those seeking adventure or relaxation, there are a number of activities to choose from, including a round of golf, tennis lesson, boating, biking or a sunset dinner cruise. Options for mixers and private dining abound just steps away in the Village, offering dozens of entertainment and dining options, from restaurants, bars and nightclubs to retail merchants and a seasonal ice-skating rink.

Sandestin also features an impressive list of activities for groups. The resort's four championship golf courses are perfect for a group outing. There's also charter boat fishing from Baytowne Marina and beach bonfires with live entertainment. For team-building programs, Sandestin challenges groups with everything from a ropes course and ziplines to a rock-climbing wall and stand-up paddle boarding.

Teambuilding activities include fun runs, beach Olympics, scavenger hunts, relay races, bay fishing, Baytowne Adventure Zone, stand-up paddle board relays on Choctawhatchee Bay, Minute to Win it Challenges and much more.

Proven professionals in the conference industry, Sandestin



delivers seamless service, flawless programs and impressive corporate retreat facilities. A meeting resort like Sandestin is the perfect way to make the 2018 Annual Meeting a fun, productive and memorable event.

### PANAMA CITY

Opening in 2018 along the Florida panhandle is the 200-room SpringHill Suites by Marriott in Panama City. While the property's lazy river, splash pad and other family-friendly amenities will draw in vacationers, it will also attract business travelers seeking a little fun and sun on the job.

### GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH

Coming this year to Gulf Shores is the highly anticipated Lodge at Gulf State Park. A national sales team is now in place and accepting RFPs for the 350-room,

LEED Gold and SITES Platinum-certified property. The Hilton-branded hotel and conference center is expected to open in fall 2018 and include meeting space for up to 1,500. Alabama's governor has already said the beachfront destination will be a "crown jewel." The property will connect to nearby Gulf State Park, with any number of places for people to gather, including a beach pavilion, butterfly garden and amphitheater.

It will join the Hotel Indigo Orange Beach and Gulf Shores, a 62-room boutique property that opened in 2017. Each Hotel Indigo is designed to highlight the local culture and character, so the Orange Beach and Gulf Shores property features contemporary design mixed with beach elements that help guests feel relaxed and at ease. The hotel also has a coffee

shop, fitness center, pool and executive meeting space, and it's adjacent to the new Big Wave Dave's restaurant, which offers a fusion of Gulf Coast seafood and traditional American fare.

Finally in Orange Beach, there's the Island House Hotel—a DoubleTree by Hilton, which just completed a multi-million-dollar renovation in 2017. The Island House boasts one of the largest private beaches of any hotel along Alabama's Gulf Coast, and each of its 161 rooms features a large private balcony overlooking the emerald waters. To top that off, the property has nearly 6,000 square feet of meeting, ballroom and banquet space that can accommodate meetings of nearly any size. ◀

*Sources: Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, Visit Panama City Beach, Gulf State Park, Hotel Indigo Orange Beach and Gulf Shores*



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# Graduation Has Meaning



**BY JOHN HARRISON,  
CAE, CMP**

**SPRINGTIME IS JUST** around the corner, and that means graduations. And that means graduation ceremonies and, of course, commencement addresses. There are some such speeches that are inspirational and make the news. I frequently read those and have even been moved to wonder what I would write if given such an opportunity. Would I bring the newly-minted

graduates great wisdom and inspiration? Or would I sink low and use the chance to nitpick at some of the things that are growing nuisances. Here goes:

Ladies and gentlemen, congratulations! I'm here to provide you some parting advice as you leave this great institution. In the interest of time I shall use only two-thirds of the tried and true formula of tell-em-what-you're-going-to-say/say-it/and-then-tell-em-that-you've-said-it. I'm going to speak to both sides of your brain and impart droplets of existential knowledge and then tell you the meaning of life without any summary at the end. So, please don't wait until the phrase "in conclusion" to pay attention because there will be no summary at the end.

First, all the women in the audience please stand up. Now repeat after me, "I—state your name—am a proud alumna of this university." Good. Now, all of you ladies together say, "We are proud alumnae of this university." Right, that's pronounced, alum-nay, by the way. Now, if the ladies will please sit down and all the men please stand up. Now, gentlemen, repeat after me, "I—state your name—am a proud alumnus of this university." That's good. Now, guys, all together say, "We are proud alumni of this university." Perfect. OK, everyone please stand up, and say together, "We are proud alumni of this university."

I bet some activist out there is wondering why is the masculine plural, alumni, used for everybody. My answer is this: The common and mundane generally takes on the masculine, and the special and life-bearing takes on the feminine. Thus, some say, "you guys," for everyone; most use "gay," the male version, for gay, lesbian, etc., and originally we said "a person, he," instead of the more cumbersome, "a person, he or she." Ships, airplanes, nations, and yes, our mother earth, are special and feminine because they carry life. Please respect that. Unless we in the workforce, in our speech, and in our daily lives accommodate and honor motherhood, our future generations may not be plural.

Speaking of plural, when you combine with another person in marriage or in a sentence, let it bring out your best. Do not say, "Me and Mike are going to the store." Think about what you would say if you were going by yourself, without Mike. Would you say, "Me is going to the store?" No. And do not say, "They gave the prize to Mary and I." Would you say, "They gave the prize to I?" Treat the concept and the grammar of the team properly; let not combination cause sloppiness. When together in a partnership, the rules of civility and pleasantness are important. Your grammar should reflect this attention. You have now been

educated. Mike and I should show this to Mary and me.

Now to the other side of the brain, the more quantitative. Numbers and graphs are important. They tell a story in few words. The greatest graph of all time is the space and time record of Napoleon's march into Russia. In that fascinating graph, the x-axis is time and the names of the battles and terrain features (those are the independent variables because they keep going independently no matter what), and along the y-axis is the numbers of soldiers remaining (that's the dependent variable, because it well, depends). You can see the march of the season along the time and terrain axis and how the number of troops starts to wither. You can picture the poor souls dropping from hunger, disease and frostbite, and perhaps even battle. Remember there is poetry, meaning and effort behind the numbers. Appreciate the effect of a good graph.

Learn to understand a few basics of accounting. It has little to do with math; many a mathematician has perished in accounting. It is simply a set of rules for putting quantities in a certain holding place. Don't let it be a mystery, for you will pay a higher price. The basic equation is ALE, Assets = Liability + Equity, or, in other words, what you have is a summation of what you owe and what you own. Drink up the ALE and try to own more than you owe.

And when you do own something, invest it (or in it) wisely, for you must earn a much higher percent than you lose to get back to the same starting point. Remember this: If you have \$1,000 and lose 20 percent, you end up with \$800. You then have to earn back 25 percent—or a higher percent than you lost—to get back to \$1,000.

Now, the moment all you alumni have really been waiting for: the meaning of life. It is very simple. The meaning of life is [drum roll] to give life meaning. It sounds easy,

and it can be. Do not be misled by your education. You had faith in something originally—or before you became informed. You must make the transition back to the pre-informed truth—and have post-informed faith. That will give you meaning to give life meaning.

I told you at the start I would give you two-thirds of the formula and simply tell you what I was going to say, then say it—but I wouldn't tell you that I said it (no summary). And I won't. Always keep your word, and if you—for good and unselfish reason—ever need to amend it, do so cleverly and in a fashion that still complies with the contract. In other words, use both sides of your brain. Pay close attention to respectful grammar. Appreciate that which carries life. Love numbers, for they too contain a poetic story, as do all the languages. It all has meaning, as it did before you came here and will after you've gone. Especially if you give it such. <



## GSAE Leadership Academy 2.0

The next Leadership Academy class will begin in October 2018 and will offer up to 56 credit hours to qualify to sit for the Certified Association Executive (CAE) exam or to recertify. The class will kick off with an overnight retreat followed by 8 day-long sessions and will include experiential learning opportunities and tours of

local associations. Convenient payment plans are available as long as the balance is met by December 31, 2019.

GSAE's Leadership Academy launched in 2008 as a result of a three-year task force co-chaired by two past presidents, the late **Clare B. Reagan, CAE, IOM** and **Ragan Cohn, CAE**. It continues to be a flagship program, thanks to

the efforts of more than 50 volunteers who have shared their knowledge with the next generation of association leaders in Georgia. The Leadership Academy is an excellent opportunity for association professionals to build their knowledge of

organizational management, while providing GSAE with a deep bench of leaders. Over a third of the participants have since earned the Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation and more than three-fourths have volunteered with the Society.



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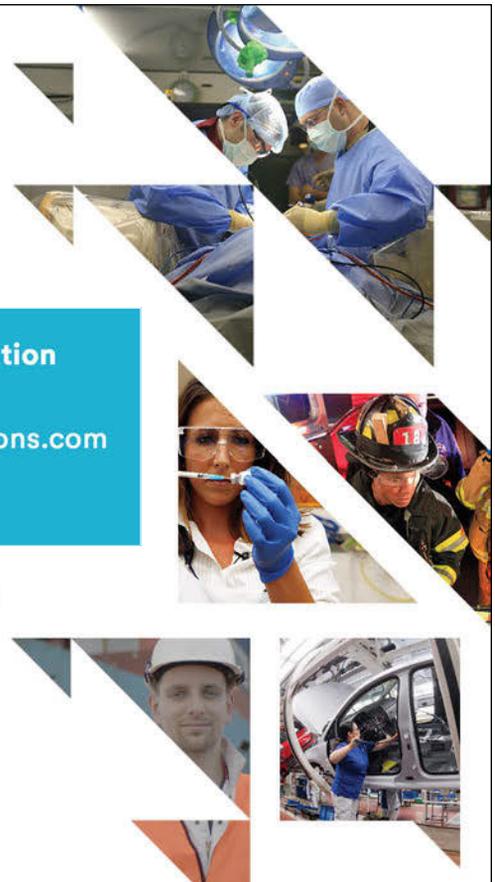
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