

Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau

Birmingham AREA Development

BIRMINGHAM

Photo by Ryan Hittie

What's New in the Greater Birmingham Area

A look at what's going on in a city that doesn't stand still

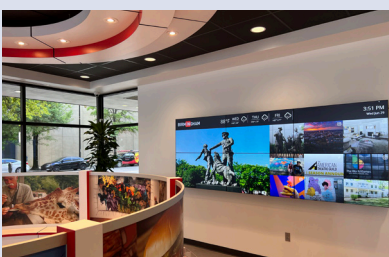


The World Games 2022 | Thousands of international visitors and visitors from across the country came to Birmingham for The World Games 2022, July 7-17. It was an introduction of sorts---to sports never experienced before and, for many, an introduction to the American South. Spectators saw sumo and softball and watched as novices to parkour and wushu. It was a first-class experience for athletes and for fans and validation of the greater Birmingham area's expertise in hosting large sporting events. It also was excellent experience in preparation for the **World Police and Fire Games** coming in 2025. That event is expected to bring more than 10,000 first responders to compete in 1,600 medal events.

USFL in Birmingham | The USFL was all about Birmingham in its inaugural season this spring. The city hosted all 40 regular season games at the new **Protective Stadium** and at refurbished Legion Field. The professional football league is supported by national networks NBC Sports and FOX Sports and has eight teams, all of them playing their season here. USFL headquarters will remain in Birmingham for the 2023 season but play will be in multiple cities. **The Birmingham Stallions** became the sweethearts of local fans as they racked up wins and went on to defeat the Philadelphia Stars in the USFL Championship game. Hosting the season was another show of Birmingham's sports strength in the national market.



CityWalk | The new 1.5-mile linear park known as CityWalk was completed just in time to serve as The World Games Plaza. Eight years in the making, the park stretches for 10 blocks under the Interstate 59/20 overpass bridges. Beautifully landscaped and outfitted with playground equipment, CityWalk also has one of the finest skateboard parks in the country. Pickleball courts, dog parks, and handsome gardens are also part of the project. Running adjacent to the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex, CityWalk is expected to be a popular location for social functions, art exhibitions, and other gatherings.



New Along CityWalk | New businesses have joined established places like **Eugene's Hot Chicken** with CityWalk as their front door. The Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau opened a new **Visitors Center** just in time to greet visitors to The World Games. The center has multilingual kiosks, along with videos, brochures, and knowledgeable personnel. **K&J's Elegant Pastries** recently opened, serving up flavors of their delicious milkshakes and cupcakes. Also new to the boulevard is **Uptown Jazz**, presenting a regular schedule of local and nationally known performers.

A.G. Gaston Motel Restoration | An historic landmark in Birmingham's famed Civil Rights District has its first phase of restoration complete. Opened in 1954, the A. G. Gaston Motel accommodated Black guests, including high profile civil rights leaders in the 1960s. Room 30 in the motel became known as the "War Room," where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., strategized with the Reverends Fred Shuttlesworth and Wyatt Tee Walker, along with other movement leaders. Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and other dignitaries were on hand for the June ribbon cutting. Restoration will continue on the motel's coffee shop and other public areas.



Lighting Historic Sloss Furnaces | "Lighting Sloss Furnaces is going to put a big spotlight on this very important tourist attraction," Alabama Tourism Department director Lee Sentell said. He was referring to an extensive project to light up the tall, rusting stacks that once burned bright with ironmaking

in Birmingham's earliest days. Now a National Historic Landmark, Sloss teaches thousands of visitors every year about Birmingham's industrial history. It is the only 20th century blast furnace in the country to be preserved and interpreted as a museum.

Photos by Misti Hittie



New Restaurants and Bars | There are reasons Birmingham is widely known as the "Dinner Table of the South." One of those reasons is the interesting and lively variety of dining establishments in the area. A downtown favorite is the **Pizitz Food Hall**, with stalls serving everything from Hawaiian and Vietnamese fare to wings and French fries. New to the hall is **SOCU Southern Kitchen & Oyster Bar**, where the name tells it all, and **I Love Tina & Gina's**, a New York-style deli and sandwich stall.

Bar La Fête, a Parisian-style wine bar, joins other commercial development at the new **Mercantile on Morris**. The chefs behind The Essential, a wildly popular all-day café on historic Morris Avenue, are creating a space where "guests feel at home." The Avondale neighborhood welcomes **Parkside on Fifth** where the curried fried chicken is highly acclaimed. The restaurant joins other new dining rooms in Avondale including **Munchies on 5th** and **The Goose**. **Good Dog Bar & Dog Park** is a much-anticipated place to bring Buffo for a romp while you enjoy wines, seltzers, and local brews.



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