

101ST ANNIVERSARY

101 REASONS + MORE

We Love Aiken

For 101 years, the Aiken Chamber has served the business community of Aiken and the region. Our association is dedicated to making Aiken a destination place to live, work and visit.

To celebrate our 101 years of service, we are sharing 101 things we love about Aiken proving that if you're lucky enough to live in Aiken, you're lucky enough.



1-4

In the 2018 edition of the *Southern Living* Magazine's "South's Best" awards, Aiken took home not one- but four- honors:

South's Best Small Town

South's Friendliest Town

Second South's Best Food Town

Second South's Best Hotel,
awarded to The Willcox

5

Central to Everything

Aiken is conveniently located to everything – about a short **3-hour drive** to the mountains and beach.



6

LIVE MUSIC

Spend a night out with live music at any one of Aiken's live music venues:

Amp the Alley

Fourth Friday at the Village

The Willcox

Rose Hill in Aiken

7

Hopelands Gardens

Walk the winding path through Hopelands Gardens and enjoy the romantic landscape of historic oaks, cedars, and magnolia trees.

8

South Boundary

The stunning oaks arching over South Boundary Avenue are recognized as one of the prettiest avenues in the south, according to *USA Today's Travel Experience South*. Shown on previous page.

9

Arboretum Trail

The variety of trees in downtown Aiken is so diverse that a 4-mile wide area has been designated as an Arboretum. Using a cell phone, you can access an interactive self-guided tour providing facts about each tree.

10

Hitchcock Woods

The largest urban forest in the nation, Hitchcock Woods attracts equestrians, hikers, dog walkers, and runners to 65 miles of sandy trails through the stunning longleaf pine forest.



11

Equestrian Culture

Perfectly situated in a mild southern climate, Aiken is the perfect host for year-round equestrian events. Enjoy polo tournaments in the spring and fall played on historic Whitney Field, triple-crown equestrian events and dressage riding tournaments.

12

Polo

The Aiken polo experience is truly exceptional. The surrounding landscape holds 40 professional polo fields with 9 registered polo clubs in Aiken.



13

Health Care

Acute care, behavioral health, preventive medicine and wellness programs – from Aiken to Augusta, residents have access to superior health care.

14

Housing is Affordable

Find the home of your dreams for 36% less than the national average.

15

Cost of Living

The Aiken-Augusta area cost of living is 85%, **15% below** the national average.

16

The Sun Shines More in Aiken

Aiken enjoys on average over 216 sunny days every year.



17

Mayor Rick Osbon

Rick is the third generation owner of Osbon's Dry Cleaners. He brings leadership and practical experience to making Aiken the best place to work, live and visit.

MANUFACTURING IS THRIVING IN AIKEN (#18 - #23)

More than 100 manufacturing companies are located in Aiken. These companies are responsible for 1,000's of jobs in Aiken and the region. Aiken's top manufacturing employers are below:



The Department of Energy: Savannah River Site employs 11,200 in a variety of positions including engineering, technical services, and liquid waste management.



Bridgestone, the international leader in tire and rubber manufacturing, has two plants in the Aiken area employing 1,400 local residents.



Kimberly-Clark Corp, recognized by *Forbes* as one of America's best large employers in 2018, employs 1,100 in the Aiken-area making consumer paper products.



Shaw Industries, a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc., is the world's largest carpet manufacturer. Shaw operates plant 78 in Aiken, employing 600.



AGY manufactures fiberglass insulation and circuit boards and employs 731.



Emerson ASCO LP fluid automation solutions include over 50,000 solenoid and pneumatic valves, cylinders and actuators, air preparation equipment + accessories, and employs 427.

VISIT AIKENCHAMBER.NET FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF MANUFACTURERS AND LARGE EMPLOYERS.



SPORTS + RECREATION GALORE

24 Citizens Park: Aiken's premier athletic complex has 15 ball fields and 8 batting cages. The complex is host to baseball, softball and soccer leagues and tournaments throughout the year. It also has playgrounds and walking trails.

25 Aiken Tennis Club: The Aiken Tennis Club was founded in 1898 by William C. Whitney, of the prominent Whitney family. The club was constructed on Newberry Street in 1902 and is listed on the National Register of Historic places. The Aiken Tennis Club is internationally renowned and attracts famous players, world champions, and distinguished supporters. See #29.

26 Pickleball: Grab your paddle and head to any one of the 20 public pickleball courts in Aiken. Or better yet, call the Pickledillys and join a team.

27 H. Odell Weeks Activity Center: You can do most anything here. From business meetings to personal parties, basketball to disc golf, the H. Odell Weeks Activities Center is the perfect location for any event or sport.

28 Aiken State Park: Just 15 minutes down Highway 302, Aiken State Park offers picnic areas, canoeing, hiking and camping. Enjoy a getaway without having to go away.

CELEBRITY SIGHTINGS

29

British Royalty Comes to Aiken

In September 2018, England's Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex, came to the Aiken Tennis Club as part of his Real Tennis Tour and to promote the Duke of Edinburgh's foundation and play a game.

30

Kevin Kisner

A professional golfer on the PGA Tour, Kisner, who was born and raised in Aiken, is married and raising his young family here. The Kevin & Brittany Kisner Foundation is active in creating a positive environment for children to grow, learn and play.

31

Dekoda Watson

Being a linebacker in the National Football League since 2010, has allowed this hometown star athlete to give back to others and make a difference in the Aiken community. Local students enjoy spending time with Watson at the many Koda's Kids Foundation events.

32

The Legacy of the Vampire

Dacre Stoker, the great-grand nephew of Bram Stoker, the Irish author of the legendary original *Dracula*, calls Aiken home. Dacre co-authored *Dracula: The Un-dead*, reviving his family's place in the vampire legacy.



A RICH PAST + PRESENT (#33-37)

Rye Patch

Curious where these Winter Colonists stabled their horses? Visit the Rye Patch. Statues of the horses can be found in their stables along with information on the horses and their owners.

Aiken County Historic Museum

Housed in the winter cottage once owned by Richard Howe, owner of the International Harvester Co., the museum holds exhibits about the area from prehistoric times to modern day. On the site you can tour Aiken's oldest surviving school house and log cabin.

The Winter Colony

Aiken gained fame in the late 19th century as a winter resort for the country's wealthy industrial elite. It didn't take long for Aiken to become a winter home for many famous and notable people, known as Winter Colonists.

Visitors Center and Train Museum

Explore our railroad museum showcasing interactive exhibits on the 1880-1954 passenger line and 9 dioramas illustrating life in 1916.

Savannah River Site Museum

The SRS museum displays the history of the construction of the Savannah River Site. The construction project helped triple the size of the city, drawing everyone from construction workers to PhD holders. One construction worker, **Jim Nabors**, better known as **Gomer Pyle**, came to Aiken and made his entertainment debut in the clubs of Aiken and Augusta. Many of the **munchkins** from the Wizard of Oz came to Aiken during the construction of the Savannah River Site. They were instrumental as welders, fitting pipes where average men couldn't fit.

Farmer's Market

The oldest continuous farmers market in SC, is open every Saturday year-round, and also on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the summer.



LOCAL CUISINES (#39-#49)

From innovative cuisine to old-time favorites, more than 30 local restaurateurs serve-up artisan food for an unforgettable dining experience. Below are just a few of the local favorites:

Anshu Asian Café

Apizza di Napoli

Highland Park Grille

Linda's Bistro

Malia's Restaurant

Prime Steakhouse

Takosushi

The Village Café

Whiskey Alley Spirits & Tapas

The Whitney Restaurant & Bar

The Willcox

TOP RATED HIGHER EDUCATION

50

USC Aiken

USC Aiken is once again ranked as the #1 Regional Public College in the South by U.S. News and World Report.

51

Aiken Tech

Aiken Tech offers a transformative 2-year education to prepare students for the modern workforce.

52

Limestone College

Limestone College has been a pioneer in accessible education since 1845.



55

Boyd Pond

Boyd Pond is a 30-acre fishing pond surrounded by wooded parkland. The park has boat ramps, fishing, self-guided bird watching, and geocaching. The dense woods provide a refreshing canopy for summer outdoor fun at any of the park's baseball fields, soccer fields, hiking and biking trails.

56

Palmetto Shooting Complex

Enjoy the premier shooting destination in the Southeast, which houses sporting clays and trap and skeet fields. The Palmetto Shooting Complex is part of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) and offers member, youth, collegiate and military discounts.

57

Virginia Acres and Carolina Bay

Great park for all ages and all interests! This park boasts trails for walking, running and rollerblading. It has basketball, tennis, soccer, racquetball, disc golf, climbing walls, canoeing, picnic areas, playgrounds and more. If it's outdoor and fun, it's at Virginia Acres and Carolina Bay.

60

The Center for African American History, Art and Culture

The Center's historical preservation and interactive education celebrates the cultural legacy of the African American Communities in Aiken County and the contribution of African Americans in South Carolina and the United States. Located in the historic Immanuel Institute to educate African Americans, built in 1881 by Rev. W. R. Coles, a Presbyterian missionary, the Center hosts lecture series, art shows, traveling exhibits, special events, and concert series.

53

The Aiken Peach

The first peach trees were planted in Aiken in 1857 by William Gregg. He shipped his juicy fruit across the country to demonstrate the superior farming achievable in South Carolina. Today, South Carolina is the largest peach producer in the southeast most of which come from the orchards of Aiken, Edgefield and Saluda counties.

54

U-Pick Herb n Blueberry Farm

Enjoy the simple pleasure of a sunny country day and the juiciest berries around. Picking season begins mid-May and lasts through July, weather permitting.



58

The People of Aiken

Simply neighborly, they'll greet you with "Hey!" and a smile. The citizens of Aiken are a perfect blend of small-town charm and cosmopolitan sophistication.

59

Relax, Refresh and Rejuvenate

If you're looking for a massage, a facial, hot stone, or just peace in the sauna, turn your afternoon into a mini-vacation at any Aiken spa.



61

Fashion Sense

Aiken's clothiers carry chic clothing, accessories, jewelry and limited collections of unique boutique fashion.

FESTIVALS + EVENTS

Art, antiques, food, music and equine, Aiken is host to festivals all year-long for every interest and enjoyment. Many of these events are free, or go to support a good cause.

Find a reason to celebrate and enjoy the many festivals happening in Aiken.



SPRING + SUMMER (#62-75)

Harness Races: March 9

Aiken Trials: March 16

Aiken Spring Steeplechase: March 23

Pacers and Polo: March 30

Aiken Horse Show: March 29-31

Hopelands Gardens Concert Series
Every Monday Night April-June

Horses n' Courses
April 2

Aiken Spring Classic Masters: April 17-21

Aiken Spring Classic Finale: April 24-28

Strawberry Festival: April 27

Aiken Charity Horse Show: May 1-12

Aiken Bluegrass Festival: May 10-11

Hops N' Hogs: May 17

SC Equestrian Special Olympics: May 18-19

FALL (#76-83)

Aiken's Makin'
September 6 - 7

Oktoberfest
September 21

Mane and Shell
October 3

Chocolate Festival
October 5

Western Carolina State Fair
October 18-27

Aiken Fall Steeplechase
TBD

Applefest
November 2

Katydid Combined Driving Event
October 21 - November 3



WINTER (#84-88)

Antiques in the Heart of Aiken
February 1-3

Mardi Gras
February 9

Battle of Aiken
February 22-24

Agamacon
March 2-3

Joye in Aiken
March 8-15





CHRISTMAS IS MAGICAL IN AIKEN

There is nothing like experiencing the season of lights in the beauty of Aiken. Events throughout November and December celebrate the fun, the elegance, and the meaning of Christmas. Come one; come all to take part in a magical Aiken Christmas.

89

**Aiken Symphony
"Home for the Holidays"**

90

**Hoofbeats and
Christmas Carols Parade**

91

**Bloodies & Bagels and
Blessing of the Hounds**

92

One Table

93

**Downtown Christmas
Tree Lighting**

94

Madrigal Feast

95

Festival of Trees at the Depot

96

Night of 1,000 Lights

97

Aiken Jaycees Christmas Parade

98

Ugly Sweater Crawl Downtown

99

**8th Annual Santa
at the Depot**

100

Christmas in Hopelands

Stroll through Hopelands Gardens, taking in the sights and sounds of the holiday season, while sipping hot cocoa or apple cider. This enchanting walk-through exhibit features over two miles of lighted pathways and illuminated displays.

Over 100,000 twinkling lights in the peaceful setting of Hopelands Gardens are a must-see during the holiday season. The Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame, The Dollhouse, Rye Patch and the Rye Patch Stables are open and decorated for visitors to enjoy.

Learn more about these events at
WWW.AIKENISMAGICAL.COM



AIKEN'S FRONT DOOR

Refreshing for the Future

For a century, the Aiken Chamber of Commerce has served the business interests of Aiken and the region, and since 1998 it has done so from its office building at 121 Richland Avenue East.

The building has served the needs of the organization and has been a front door welcoming members and visitors to Aiken for 20 years, but on the centennial anniversary of the organization, the Chamber's board of directors decided it was time to refresh the interior of the building and prepare it for the next 20 years. This became known as the Centennial Project.

The Project began by engaging a diverse group of stakeholders in focus groups to align the building's form and function with the needs of future Chamber members and the community. This work was completed by Community Design Solutions and presented to the Chamber's board of directors in the summer of 2016 and became a part of the Chamber's program of work for 2017.

How to create an updated yet classic space that would not date itself quickly was one goal. Another goal was making the space more open and inviting for conducting business and hosting meetings. It was also determined that no exterior changes were needed.

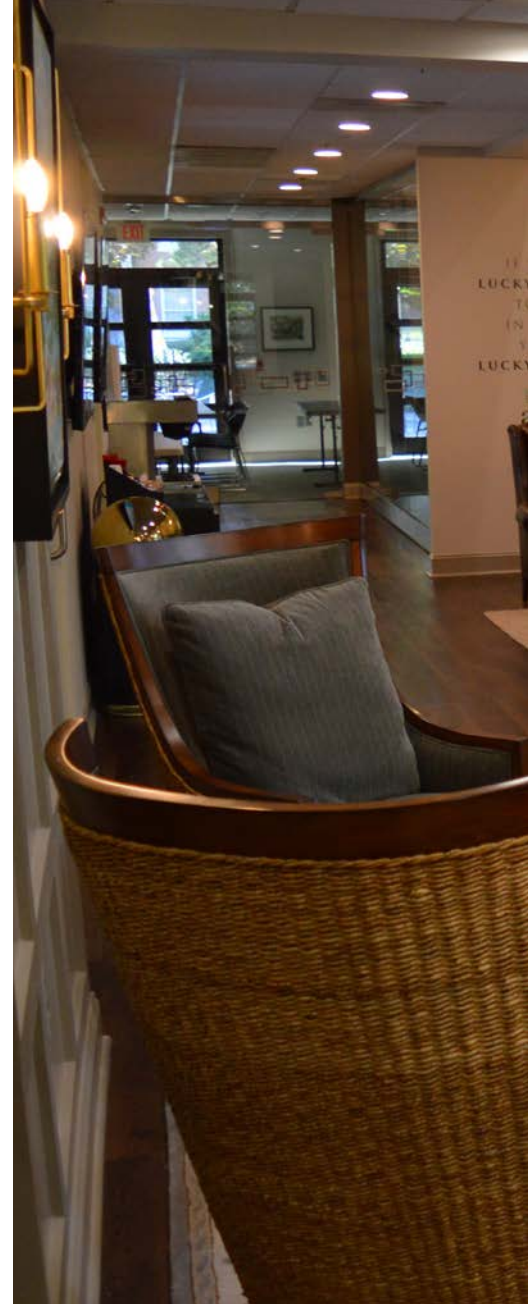
To accomplish these goals, the Chamber reached out to interior designers in the membership. Assuming the Chamber would need to select one designer over another, it was a pleasant surprise when Material Things owner, Katy Lipscomb, and Nandina Home and Design owners Sue Shannon and Susan Victor decided to collaborate with one another on the project.

J.E. Stewart Builders, Inc. was selected to handle the structural modifications needed inside, and a complete plan was in place by the summer of 2017. Work began in September and The Centennial Project, the hallmark piece of the Chamber's centennial year, was unveiled in January 2018.

The interior of the building is now aligned with the design and function needed for future Chamber members. The feel is stylish, classic and welcoming.

RIGHT

A new conversation area with embroidered pillows reminding guests to "Shop Aiken" is beside the custom display showcasing member information. The tagline, "It's a great day for business in Aiken, South Carolina" is featured on the wall. Seven television screens are located throughout the area to feature member information.





Guests are welcomed through new front doors into an open lobby with a mixture of textures and a pleasing clean aesthetic. Warm brass, updated millwork and new lighting add to the main gathering area.



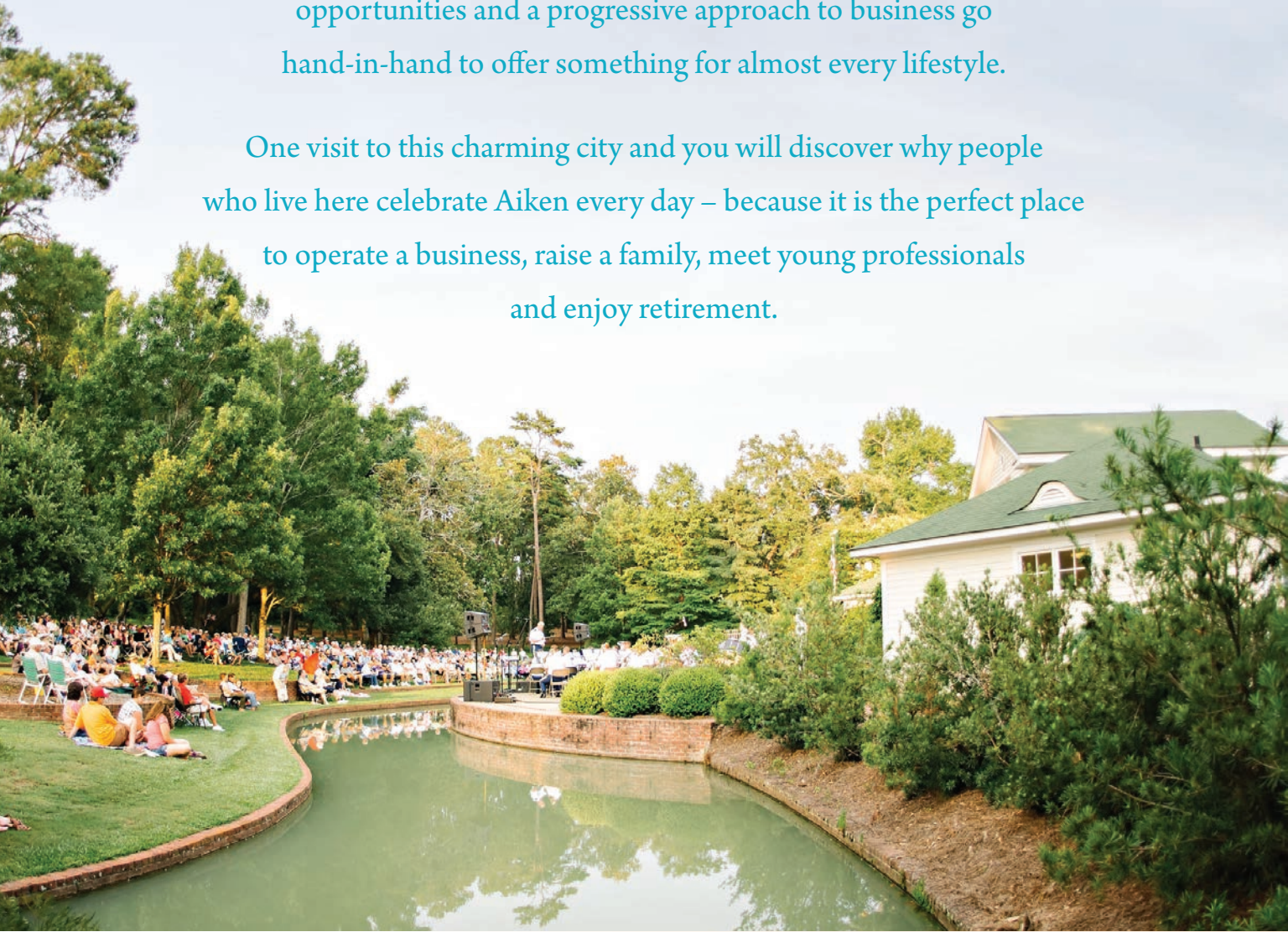
The colorful public art piece, "Interconnected," a representation of the Chamber's work to connect the community to business, is easily seen outside. The piece is the inspiration for the Chamber's logo which carries through the new interior on the large glass barn doors.

Quality of Life

AIKEN IS THE PERFECT PLACE FOR
ALL AGES AND FOR ALL SEASONS.

It offers distinctiveness often unheard of in today's world, where affordable housing, award-winning schools, diverse recreational opportunities and a progressive approach to business go hand-in-hand to offer something for almost every lifestyle.

One visit to this charming city and you will discover why people who live here celebrate Aiken every day – because it is the perfect place to operate a business, raise a family, meet young professionals and enjoy retirement.



If you are looking for a place that offers all the amenities you'll ever need, a place that offers a perfect balance between the charm and grace of yesterday and the promise of tomorrow, you will find it in Aiken, South Carolina. With its rich heritage, impeccable beauty, cosmopolitan flair, and unparalleled quality of life, Aiken is the ideal place to come and spend a day, a week or a lifetime.



STRONG COMMUNITY

One of Aiken's greatest assets is its people — individuals from diverse backgrounds who are dedicated to the economic and overall well-being of the community. By working together, public and private entities have successfully implemented numerous programs that have improved infrastructure, attracted business, saved money, supported health care and education, and ultimately, created a thriving, vibrant community.

IDEAL LOCATION

Aiken is ideally located and accessible to major interstates and airports. Aiken's residents have the best of both worlds — they can enjoy big city life without having to live in a large metropolitan area.

HISTORY + CULTURE

Aiken sits in the middle of the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor — one of several corridors in the United States. The corridor was designed to encourage people to get off the interstates and onto the back roads of South Carolina

MILD CLIMATE

The climate is another plus; Aiken's residents can enjoy the change of seasons without prolonged severe weather.

Where else can you find unique combinations that mesh so incredibly well?

An exceptional business environment located in a small, but globally cosmopolitan, town

An active, modern lifestyle entrenched in charm and history

A contemporary, progressive college and university with a small town appeal

Technically advanced health care services delivered with a friendly hometown feel

Modern vehicles sharing unpaved streets with riders on horseback

Cozy cottages and single-family homes nestled among grand, historic estates

A beautiful, thriving downtown with retail shops and restaurants complemented by national chains and franchises throughout the community

Aiken provides a lifestyle that suits almost any taste - from growing families to the empty nesters and retirees.



Arts + Culture

The Aiken community is passionate about art – all kinds of art – and residents and visitors alike support the arts with an enthusiasm that could rival most any large city. Visual and performing arts thrive year round and touch many cultures and lifestyles, while showcasing local, national and international talent.

Participation in the arts is highly encouraged in the area through art education and enrichment classes. Both visual and performing arts classes are available and give all citizens the opportunity to learn a new skill or enhance an existing one.





Aiken Center for the Arts

Local, as well as international and national, artist shows and receptions flourish throughout the year and offer a unique mix of art media. Classes for children and adults are taught daily.

Aiken Choral Society

A community chorus dedicated to providing the best singing experience to interested and talented singers throughout the Aiken area. The group's repertoire is wide and includes celebrating the best in composition from early music to hit movie themes.

Aiken Civic Ballet

South Carolina's longest continuously operating dance company has been in existence for over 48 years. Under the artistic direction of Diane Toole Miller, the company produces original ballets and contemporary dance works.

Aiken Community Playhouse

Offering seven main stage productions each season, several Black Box events, Coffeehouse Productions, workshops and a Youth Wing Program, shows range from drama to comedy and musicals.

Aiken Performing Arts Group (APAG)

Quality professional artists perform in Aiken - including classical, jazz, brass, chamber, bluegrass, big band, Broadway and ethnic music performed by individual vocalists and instrumentalists, bands and full orchestras- plus dance, comedy, satire and variety programs.

Aiken Symphony Guild

Annually, the Guild is the presenter of the Youth Concerts for all fifth-grade students in Aiken and Edgefield counties and the Concerto Competition for students eighteen years of age and younger.

Aiken Symphony Orchestra

The ASO provides artistic leadership to the community through the presentation of symphonic music that educates, entertains and enriches the human spirit, in addition to a program of classical and pops concerts.

The Etherredge Center for the Fine and Performing Arts

Located on the campus of the University of South Carolina Aiken, the Center hosts many cultural events open to the community, including the annual Cultural Series featuring traveling theater companies and performers.

Hopelands Gardens Summer Concert Series

Various entertainment including bands, ballet, bluegrass and clogging perform on Monday evenings from April through July at the Windam Performing Arts Stage at Hopelands Gardens.

Joye in Aiken

The Joye in Aiken Festival brings the world's best young artists from the Juilliard School and beyond to Aiken for public performances, chamber concerts, master classes and outreach programs in area schools.

Southern City Institute

The Southern City Film Festival seeks to create venues in the community to encourage education, artistic expression and acknowledge emerging filmmakers from around the world and within the community.

USCA Convocation Center

One of the region's premier entertainment facilities, it features everything from internationally known music stars to comedians, musicals and even professional bull riding.

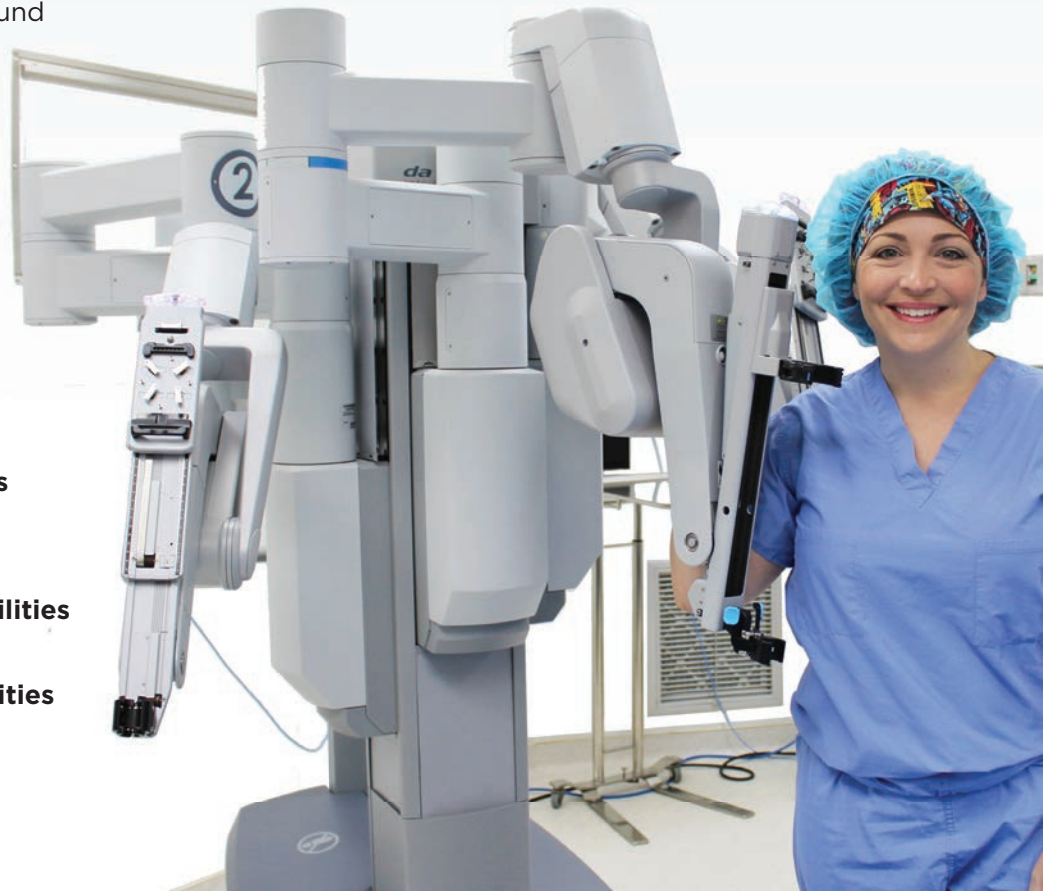
Health Care

Health Care is a top priority in Aiken and Aiken County. Health care providers and citizens alike recognize the value of a healthy community.

With highly trained professionals who are dedicated to the wellness of the entire person — from acute care to behavioral health, preventive medicine and wellness programs — the Aiken area offers superior health care services covering a broad spectrum of specialties.

A comprehensive range of health care services can be found in Aiken County, including:

- * Home Health
- * Physical Therapy
- * Occupational Therapy
- * Therapeutic Massage
- * Chiropractic Care
- * Hospice Care
- * Sports Medicine
- * Behavioral Health
- * Exercise Programs
- * Special Interest Programs
- * Support Groups
- * Educational Programs
- * Comprehensive Care Facilities
- * Adult Day Services
- * Assisted-Living Communities



AIKEN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTERS (ARMC)

302 University Parkway, Aiken, SC

ARMC's culture of being "dedicated to serve" resonates with the Aiken Community. With most physicians and staff living and working in this community, their commitment to excellence and compassion are evident at every encounter. More than 150 physicians representing 40-plus specialties serve in our 273-bed hospital.

Services + Facilities

24-Hour Emergency Department	Aurora Pavilion
Computerized Tomography Scanning	Behavioral Health Services
Same-Day Outpatient Surgery	Cardiovascular Institute of Carolina
Dialysis Treatments	Cancer Care Institute of Carolina
Pain Management	Inpatient Rehabilitation Center
Sleep Evaluation Center	Women Enlightened for Better Health (We)
Women's LifeCare Center	Surgery Center
Diabetes and Nutrition Teaching Center	

UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

University Primary Care - Silver Bluff

1021 Silver Bluff Road, Aiken, SC

Services include the diagnosis and management of simple and chronic health problems as well as management of all acute, chronic, simple and complex medical issues of adults.

University Prompt Care - Silver Bluff & Richland Avenue

1021 Silver Bluff Road, Aiken :: 3515 Richland Ave. West, Aiken

Offers walk-in appointments for non-life-threatening conditions

University Hospital in Augusta

1350 Walton Way, Augusta, GA

Serves 25 counties in Georgia and South Carolina with 581-beds at their not-for-profit community hospital

AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM

Our region's Level 1 adult and pediatric trauma centers:

Augusta University Medical Center

1120 15th Street, Augusta, GA

A teaching- and research-based hospital with 478 beds

Children's Hospital of Georgia

1446 Harper Street, Augusta, GA

Pediatric hospital with 154 beds

A variety of centers and units such as the Sports Medicine Center and the Georgia Cancer Center



MILITARY

The Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center offers a variety of health services to meet the needs of our nation's Veterans:

- Audiology and Speech Pathology
- Dental Services
- Mental Health
- Pharmacy
- Primary Care
- Rehabilitation

Specialty Care including all surgical specialties as well as neurology, radiation, oncology and audiology

The VA Outpatient Clinic in Aiken provides primary care and mental health services for Veterans.

The Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon serves active-duty personnel and their beneficiaries.

803.641.5000

aikenregional.com





Cost of Living

The Cost of Living Index in the Aiken-Augusta area

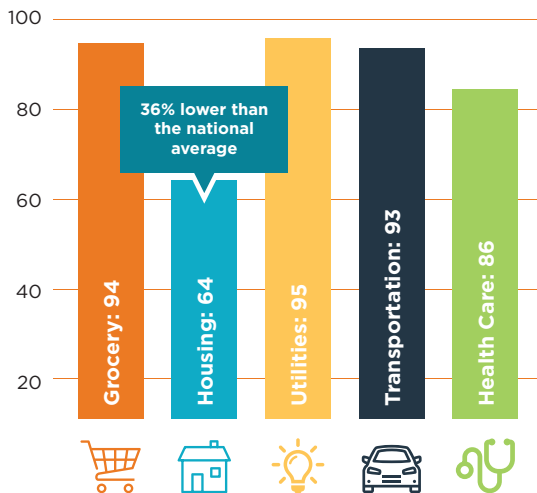
85

15% BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

Source: Council for Community and Economic Research.

This is the **lowest composite index** in the 28 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), measured in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, and is the 24th lowest of the 273 areas measured across the nation.

Second Quarter 2018



Comparison To Nearby Cities

-  **ASHEVILLE, NC: 96.1**
-  **ATLANTA, GA: 99.6**
-  **CHARLESTON, SC: 102.5**
-  **GREENVILLE, SC: 96.2**
-  **HILTON HEAD, SC: 108.2**

Property Taxes

Average property taxes are \$733.96



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