

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Flavor Takes Flight at Georgia International Convention Center

Facility Teams With Local Caterer to Reinvent Convention Center Food and Beverage

(Atlanta/College Park, GA) - Convention centers have a long history of hosting impactful and important events in our culture. They have served as the setting for everyone from Presidents and CEOs, to educators and religious leaders, and even technology and the creative arts. Yet, despite the prominence these great venues hold within our society, convention centers have a reputation for producing institutional and mediocre food. Until now.

The Georgia International Convention Center (GICC) and Proof of the Pudding have teamed up to reinvent the food and beverage program at the GICC. This new venture is called *CulinAero* by Proof of the Pudding, and at its core is a commitment to restaurant-quality food made with fresh, sustainable ingredients.

“The GICC is an established leader in hosting events and now we’re ready to build a leading food and beverage program that will continue to enhance our reputation,” said Mercedes Miller, Interim Executive Director of the Georgia International Convention Center. “There are a lot of associations and companies looking for meeting destinations that can serve restaurant-quality food made with fresh ingredients, and we believe the GICC can provide value to this market.”

CulinAero by Proof of the Pudding differs from typical convention center fare by its commitment to restaurant-quality menus, preparation and, in particular, ingredients, produce, meats and fish sourced from local and regional organic farms.

Key Features of the *CulinAero* program include:

- *CulinAero* is a commitment to restaurant-quality food – and only food of the highest quality, prepared passionately using techniques from the finest four-star kitchens the world over.
- *CulinAero’s* commitment to restaurant-quality food extends to our food offerings at concession stands. The GICC is now working with top Atlanta-area food trucks at large public events, making it one of the few convention centers in the country that feature this latest culinary trend.
- *CulinAero* is inspired by new menus from Chef Kieleley that include only the freshest seasonal ingredients sourced nearest to home.
- *CulinAero* is a wide and diverse range of ethnic, regional and international culinary tastes and signature dishes.
- *CulinAero* extends to the presentation and service you’ll receive as a guest and diner at the GICC. An eager staff will serve you in crisp, new uniforms. Throughout the GICC, the art of *CulinAero* will be represented by new packaging, remodeled concession stands and tents, and new services, from digital monitoring boards to our “green vest” floor managers to address guests’ every request.

“We’re thrilled to have a business partner like the GICC, who is so committed to such a respectable standard,” said Ben Witte (like city), Partner and VP of Operations for Proof of the Pudding.

“The hospitality market is very competitive, and we believe creating a partnership committed to exceeding customer expectations in quality and value will give the GICC a competitive advantage.”

Creating Gourmet Meals for Large Audiences

Executive Chef Douglas J. Kieley will lead *CulinAero* and brings more than 20 years of training and dining experience. An Atlanta native, Chef Kieley held previous culinary positions at The Ritz Carlton of Naples, New Orleans’ Commander’s Palace and Dallas-based eatery, Eatzi’s.

“Our commitment is to bring restaurant style food into the convention center environment,” explained Chef Kieley. “Everywhere I’ve ever worked, we’ve had a reputation and standards to uphold. We made everything from scratch using top-notch ingredients; it’s all I know.”

The GICC has just what Chef Kieley needs to live up to that commitment - access to farm-fresh ingredients, including uniquely regional favorites, grown exclusively for the best local restaurants. Chef Kieley will also have access to the GICC Culinary Arts Center, a 9,800-sq. ft. culinary complex boasting the latest in food and refrigeration equipment, allowing the preparation and service of gourmet meals for up to 4,000 guests.

To help bring this new experience to life, Proof of the Pudding has also hired a new General Manager, Alaina Williams. “The reinventing of the food and beverage experience at the GICC makes total sense,” said Williams. “We have tremendous support and buy-in from everyone involved including GICC management, Proof of the Pudding and our new Chef, Doug Kieley. Everyone believes in growing the GICC brand by committing to a high level of service coupled with the standard of providing fresh high quality food.”

CulinAero is part of a complete rebranding initiative that includes new logo, signage, decor, marketing strategy and website. “Culin” is derived from the word, “culinary,” “Aero” is derived from the word, “aerospace,” in reference to the GICC’s direct proximity to the world’s busiest airport. While the new tagline, “Flavor Takes Flight”, emphasizes the facility’s goal of reaching culinary excellence at the crossroads of business and travel.

About Georgia International Convention Center

The GICC is Georgia’s newest, second largest convention center. Located adjacent to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and only 10 minutes from downtown Atlanta, the GICC features 150,000 square feet of exhibit space, Georgia’s largest ballroom, and one of Georgia’s premier culinary centers. Additionally, the GICC campus features two brand new convention hotels, a 403-room Marriott headquarters hotel that opened in August 2010, and a 147-room SpringHill Suites hotel that opened in December 2009. For more information, please visit www.gicc.com.

About Proof of the Pudding

Proof of the Pudding has been a shining star in Atlanta’s culinary landscape for more than 30 years. As a caterer and food service management company, Proof of the Pudding believes that “the first bite is with the eye.” Proof of the Pudding is the nation’s go to company for delicious food and focuses on fresh, local farm to table fare and innovative culinary creations. www.proofpudding.com.

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For more information, contact:

Andria Towne, Georgia Int’l Convention Center - 770.907.3070, adtowne@gicc.com
Suzanne Forte, Suzanne Forte PR – 678.744.4104, suzannefortepr@gmail.com