

# New TV show to spotlight Atlanta restaurants

Atlanta restaurants will be spotlighted in a new television show.

"Atlanta Eats," a weekly 30-minute show, is set to debut on Oct. 20. The show likely will appear each Saturday on CBS 46 and Peachtree TV.

The show was founded by well-known Atlanta sports personality Steak Shapiro and Cody Hicks, formerly with 790 The Zone.

"Atlanta is a city that loves to eat," Hicks said at a Sept. 13 meeting of the

## Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau.

There are about 16,000 restaurants in Georgia. More than 700 are rated by Zagat, Hicks said. "This city is desperate for food-related content."

Each week, "Atlanta Eats" will visit local restaurants to sample dishes and gab with chefs and foodies.



**Shapiro**  
"Atlanta Eats"

For Shapiro, it's a chance to share his passion for food.

"Restaurants are the theater in Atlanta," said the Boston native, who will continue to appear on 790 The Zone's Mayhem in the AM.

"I always look forward to my next meal too much."

Restaurants including The Optimist, Serpas True Food, Table & Main, Bone Lick BBQ, Lotta Frutta and Brick Store Pub are featured in early episodes, Shapiro said.

"Atlanta Eats" also will feature a radio spot on Star 94 where Shapiro will rattle off his top five picks for a variety of food-related topics.



**RESTAURANTS & HOSPITALITY**  
**Amy Wenk**

The goal is to integrate food festivals as the "Atlanta Eats" brand gains strength. Expect two festivals in 2013, Shapiro said.

**LOAN EXTENSION.** The Embassy Suites Atlanta has been granted a two-year extension on its \$80 million commercial mortgage.

The loan for the 321-room downtown Atlanta hotel was transferred to a mortgage servicer in March. It was facing default for a loan that helped refinance the property in 2007, at the height of the market.

The extension was completed in August.

"I think it was the right deal for all concerned," said David Marvin, president of Atlanta-based Legacy Property Group LLC. An affiliate of Legacy, Centennial Hotel Co. LLC, developed the Embassy Suites in 1999 during the downtown boom following the 1996 Olympic Games. The hotel sits on Marietta Street at Centennial Olympic Park.

"Being in business through this recession has been very difficult," Marvin said. "I'm very proud that we've been able to navigate the curveballs that have been thrown our way."

Marvin said his company is looking at expanding the Embassy Suites. A \$25 million deal that would add about 100 rooms, additional meeting space and more

parking could be reached next year, he said. An affiliate of Legacy already owns land adjacent to the hotel.

"We think that actually expanding the hotel may be part of the recapitalization of the existing loan," Marvin said. "It's a real value-added opportunity celebrating the success the Embassy Suites has had since its inception."

Legacy is involved in several other projects at the moment. Those include two hotel projects in Tennessee and a hotel project at Villa Christina near Perimeter Mall. The company also just opened a restaurant and private event space called Olmsted at Midtown's 1180 Peachtree building. It plans to open another restaurant, Article 14, in the same building later this month. Combined, the two will occupy more than 14,000 square feet.

**NEW ORGANIZATION.** The city of College Park has launched a new organization to promote tourism and hospitality called the College Park Destination Marketing Organization.

Hugh Austin will serve as its president and CEO. Austin is the former executive director of the Georgia International Convention Center and served on the board of the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The destination marketing organization is funded by a 2 percent increase in the hotel-motel excise tax, passed by the Georgia General Assembly in 2010. The organization will have an annual budget of \$1.6 million, Austin said.

College Park is home to 33 hotels, 50 restaurants and the second-largest convention center in the state, with 400,000 square feet of meeting space.

The new organization hopes to bring more group business to the city, as well as international travelers.

"It's an ambitious program," Austin said.

He said immediate goals for the organization include developing branding and marketing campaigns, moving into its permanent office, hiring additional staff and attending a variety of conventions to drum up business for College Park.

"We've got a pretty busy schedule," Austin said. "One of most important missions will be to get boots on the ground."

**FESTIVAL FARE.** Music Midtown, a two-day music festival scheduled to be held in Piedmont Park Sept. 21 and 22, has recruited many local restaurants.

It's quite a departure from typical festival fare.

Vendors include such local favorites as Indian restaurant Bhojanic, Fox Bros. BBQ, seafood restaurant Goin' Coastal and Meehan's Public House.



**Austin**  
College Park Destination Marketing Organization

If you have news for Restaurants & Hospitality, contact Amy Wenk at (404) 249-1748 or at awenk@bizjournals.com.

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