

**REG MURPHY CENTER**  
FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY STUDIES  

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COLLEGE OF COASTAL GEORGIA

**The Size and Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry  
in the Golden Isles and South Georgia Coast**

Prepared for

Golden Isles Wedding Association

Prepared by

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# The Size and Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry in the Golden Isles and South Georgia Coast

## Executive Summary

This study provides estimates of the size and economic impact of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the eight counties of the South Georgia Coast (Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, McIntosh, Pierce, Ware and Wayne counties) for 2017.

The wedding industry consists of the many vendors that provide products and services for weddings. The number and variety of vendors that make up the industry is remarkable.

The size and economic impact of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast were estimated from input-output models constructed from local and regional industry data for 2017 and impact multipliers estimated with IMPLAN economic modeling software.

The size of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the eight counties of the South Georgia Coast can be measured by the *direct effects* of the vendors that make up the wedding industry. The size of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast in 2017 is shown in Table A below:

**Table A. Size of the Wedding Industry, 2017**

	Glynn County	South Georgia Coast
<b>Employment</b>	305	531
<b>Labor Income</b>	\$7,069,000	\$11,172,000
<b>Output</b>	\$15,963,000	\$31,086,000
<b>Value-added</b>	\$8,578,000	\$13,782,000

In Glynn County, the wedding industry directly generated a 305 jobs, \$7,069,000 in labor income, \$15,963,000 in output and \$8,578,000 in value-added in 2017.

In the eight counties of the South Georgia Coast, the wedding industry directly generated 531 jobs, \$11,172,000 in labor income, \$31,086,000 in output and \$13,782,000 in value-added in 2017.

The economic impact of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast is the sum of the direct effects of the industry plus the subsequent economic activity generated by the industry. The full economic impact of the wedding industry in the Golden Isles and the South Georgia Coast in 2017 is shown in Table B below:

**Table B. Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry, 2017**

	Glynn County	South Georgia Coast
<b>Employment</b>	395	665
<b>Labor Income</b>	\$10,270,000	\$15,400,000
<b>Output</b>	\$26,653,000	\$46,172,000
<b>Value-added</b>	\$14,628,000	\$21,942,000

In Glynn County, the wedding industry generated a total of 395 jobs, \$10,270,000 in labor income, \$26,653,000 in output and \$14,628,000 in value-added in 2017.

In the eight counties of the South Georgia Coast, the wedding industry generated a total of 655 jobs, \$15,400,000 in labor income, \$46,172,000 in output and \$21,942,000 in value-added in 2017.

In short, the economic impact of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast is quite significant. The wedding industry is clearly a vital component of the economies of Glynn and the South Georgia Coast.

Note: Definitions of key terms used in this study are provided on page 19.

# The Size and Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast

## I. Introduction

The wedding industry is big business in the U.S. According to The Wedding Report ([www.theweddingreport.com](http://www.theweddingreport.com)), the 2.2 million weddings celebrated in the U.S. in 2016 generated \$59 billion in sales of wedding related products and services.

The wedding industry is also big business in Glynn County and the eight counties that make up South Georgia Coast.<sup>1</sup> The beaches, natural beauty, fine restaurants and unique accommodations of Jekyll Island, Sea Island and St. Simons Island make Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast a prime wedding destination.

Casual evidence of the industry's significance to the region abounds. Local hotels regularly book large wedding parties. Beach weddings are a common sight year round. The Golden Isles Convention & Visitors Bureau ([www.goldenisles.com](http://www.goldenisles.com)) dedicates a prominent section of its website to Wedding Services information. And recently, the Golden Isles Wedding Association (GIWA; [www.goldenislesweddings.org](http://www.goldenislesweddings.org)), a trade association of more than one hundred local wedding services providers and supporters, was formed to promote the local wedding industry and better serve purchasers of local wedding services. GIWA members provide the full array of wedding services: attire and accessories, beauty and spa, entertainment, flowers and decorations, gifts and favors, invitations, jewelry, photography and video, planning and consulting and venue and catering. It is clear from the size of the GIWA member list that the wedding industry is a significant component of the economies of Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast.

Yet the local wedding industry has lacked any reliable estimates of its size and economic impact. This study corrects that deficiency.

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<sup>1</sup> The eight counties of the South Georgia Coast are Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, McIntosh, Pierce, Ware and Wayne.

**II. The Size of the Wedding Industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast**

The size of the local wedding industry can be measured in a variety of ways. The simplest is to gauge the size of the industry by the number of businesses located in the area that provide wedding products and services, the number of weddings celebrated in the area and total sales of wedding products and services in the area in a recent year.

Estimates from The Wedding Report of the number of wedding industry businesses, the number of weddings and wedding industry sales for Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast in 2016 are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Size of the Wedding Industry, 2016**

	<b>Weddings</b>	<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>Businesses</b>
<b>Glynn County</b>	716	\$18,961,828	135
<b>South Georgia Coast</b>	1,717	\$38,954,402	287

According to The Wedding Report, the 716 weddings celebrated in Glynn in 2016 generated almost \$19 million in sales to the 135 businesses that made up Glynn’s wedding industry. The 1,717 weddings celebrated in the South Georgia Coast generated almost \$39 million in sales to the 287 businesses that made up the region’s wedding industry.

Estimates of the number of weddings, industry sales and the number of business firms in the industry can be used to compare the size of the wedding industry in different places. For instance, dividing wedding industry sales by the number of weddings yields sales per wedding, often referred to as the average wedding spend. The average wedding spend in Glynn, the South Georgia Coast, Georgia and the U.S. in 2016 are shown in Table 2 on the next page.

**Table 2. Average Wedding Spend, 2016**

	Average Wedding Spend
<b>Glynn County</b>	\$26,483
<b>South Georgia Coast</b>	\$22,687
<b>Georgia</b>	\$22,649
<b>U.S.</b>	\$26,720

As Table 2 indicates, the average wedding spend of \$26,483 in Glynn was roughly equal to the average wedding spend in the U.S. but significantly greater than the average wedding spend in Georgia in 2016. The average wedding spend of \$22,687 in the South Georgia Coast was roughly equal to the average wedding spend in Georgia in 2016.

Wedding industry size comparisons can also be made by calculating the number of weddings per 1,000 population, wedding industry sales per 1,000 population and the number of wedding industry businesses per 1,000 population. Those rates for Glynn, the South Georgia Coast, Georgia and the U.S. are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Size of the Wedding Industry by Population rates, 2016**

	Weddings per 1,000 population	Sales per 1,000 population	Businesses per 1,000 population
<b>Glynn County</b>	8.5	\$224,395	1.60
<b>South Georgia Coast</b>	6.4	\$145,732	1.07
<b>Georgia</b>	5.8	\$131,879	0.81
<b>U.S.</b>	6.8	\$182,858	0.76

The figures in Table 3 show the relative importance of the wedding industry to the economy of Glynn and the South Georgia Coast. Glynn’s 8.5 weddings per 1,000 population in 2016 is 25 percent greater the nation’s 6.8 weddings per 1,000 population and 47 percent greater than Georgia’s 5.8 weddings per 1,000 population. Glynn’s \$224,395 wedding industry sales per

1,000 population in 2016 is 23 percent greater than the nation’s \$182,858 wedding industry sales per 1,000 population and 70 percent greater than Georgia’s \$131,879 wedding industry sales per 1,000 population. And Glynn’s 1.6 wedding industry businesses per 1,000 population in 2016 is twice the number of wedding industry businesses per 1,000 population in the U.S. and Georgia.

More sophisticated measures of the size of the local wedding industry are the employment, labor income, output and value added generated directly by the industry in the area in a recent year. Employment refers to the number of employees of the businesses that make up the wedding industry in the area. Labor income refers to the combined payrolls of the businesses that make up the wedding industry in the area. Output is the market value of the products and services produced by the businesses in the wedding industry in the area. Value-added is the difference between output and the cost of inputs employed to produce the output.

Employment, labor income, output and value-added are the *direct effects* of the industry. The direct effects of the wedding industry in Glynn and the South Georgia Coast in 2017 were estimated by IMPLAN economic modeling software. The estimates are shown in Table 4 below:

**Table 4. Direct Effects of the Wedding Industry, 2017**

	Glynn County	South Georgia Coast
<b>Employment</b>	305	531
<b>Labor Income</b>	\$7,069,000	\$11,172,000
<b>Output</b>	\$15,963,000	\$31,086,000
<b>Value-added</b>	\$8,578,000	\$13,782,000

In 2017, the wedding industry in Glynn County generated 305 jobs, \$7,069,000 in labor income, \$15,963,000 in output and \$8,578,000 in value-added. In the South Georgia Coast, the wedding industry generated 531 jobs, \$11,172,000 in labor income, \$31,086,000 in output and \$13,782,000 in value-added.

### III. The Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast

The full economic impact of the wedding industry on Glynn County and the eight counties of the South Georgia Coast extends beyond the direct effects listed in Table 4. The wedding industry's activities also have *indirect effects*: purchases of supplies and services by local and regional wedding industry vendors from local and regional suppliers generate additional revenues for those suppliers, which generate additional jobs, income, output and value added in the local and regional economies. The wedding industry's activities also have *induced effects*: industry employees, as well as employees of firms who sell supplies and services to industry vendors, spend their earnings on consumer goods and services produced by other firms in the area, which generates additional jobs, income, output and value added for the local and regional economies. Indirect and induced effects are often called *multiplier effects*.

This study estimated the full economic impact – direct, indirect and induced effects – of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast with an *input-output model*, an economic model that quantitatively depicts the relationships between industries within an area. An input-output model captures the volume and value of inputs and outputs that flow between industries in the process of producing goods and services for households, businesses, and government entities. Accurately capturing the flows of inputs and outputs between industries makes it possible to accurately estimate the economic impact of an event, a business firm or, as in the case of this study, an industry, on the area.

Estimating the economic impact of an industry on an area requires the estimation of *multipliers*. Multipliers determine the magnitude of the indirect and induced economic effects generated by the direct effects of the industry's activities on a region. Expressed simply:

(1) Indirect effect = direct effect x indirect effect multiplier

(2) Induced effect = direct effect x induced effect multiplier

As stated earlier, an industry's activities have indirect and induced effects on employment, income, output, value added, and tax revenues for an area. A unique multiplier must be estimated for each separate effect.

Multipliers are estimated with sophisticated software. The software used in this study was IMPLAN Online, Version 4.1.0.21613. IMPLAN Online contains a huge amount of county level data on inter-industry trade, commodity trade between regions, and household and government spending. From the IMPLAN data, the input-output model was constructed, the multipliers were

estimated, and the indirect and induced effects of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast in 2017 were determined.

**A. The Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry in Glynn County**

The direct, indirect and induced economic effects of the wedding industry on employment, labor income, output, and value added in Glynn County in 2017 are listed in Table 5 below:

**Table 5. Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry in Glynn County, 2017**

	<b>Direct Effect</b>	<b>Indirect Effect on Supporting Industries</b>	<b>Induced Effect from Household Spending</b>	<b>Total Impact</b>
<b>Employment</b>	305	40	50	395
<b>Labor Income</b>	\$7,069,000	\$1,327,000	\$1,874,000	\$10,270,000
<b>Output</b>	\$15,963,000	\$4,648,000	\$6,042,000	\$26,653,000
<b>Value-added</b>	\$8,578,000	\$2,518,000	\$3,532,000	\$14,628,000

***Employment Impact***

The wedding industry in Glynn County directly employed approximately 305 workers in 2017. Supporting industries in Glynn County employed an additional 40 full- and part-time workers to supply goods and services to the wedding industry in Glynn. The spending of labor income by workers of Glynn’s wedding industry and supporting industries on housing, food, healthcare and other consumer goods and services created an additional 50 jobs in the county. In total, the wedding industry created 395 jobs in Glynn County in 2017.

### ***Labor Income Impact***

Wedding industry vendors in Glynn paid their workers \$7,069,000 in wages, salaries and other forms of compensation in 2017. The industry's activities generated an additional \$1,327,000 in labor income to workers of supporting industries in Glynn. The spending of labor income on consumer goods by wedding industry workers and workers of supporting industries generated an additional \$1,874,000 in labor income in Glynn. In total, the wedding industry generated \$10,270,000 in labor income to Glynn County workers in 2017.

### ***Output Impact***

In 2017, the wedding industry in Glynn produced \$15,963,000 in output. To supply Glynn's wedding industry, supporting industries produced \$4,648,000 in output in Glynn. The spending of labor income on consumer goods by wedding industry workers and workers of supporting industries generated an additional \$6,042,000 in output in the county. In total, the wedding industry generated \$26,653,000 in output in Glynn County in 2017.

### ***Value-added Impact***

Value-added is the net value created by a firm or industry. It is the difference between the value of the output of a firm or industry and the cost of inputs.

Glynn's wedding industry generated value-added of \$8,578,000 in 2017. In supplying the industry with supplies and services, supporting industries generated value-added of \$2,518,000 in Glynn. An additional \$3,532,000 in value-added was generated by the spending of labor income on consumer goods by wedding industry workers and workers of supporting industries in the county. In total, the wedding industry generated \$14,628,000 in value-added in Glynn County in 2017.

### ***Total Impact***

All told, the wedding industry produced 395 jobs, \$10,270,000 in labor income, \$26,653,000 in output, and \$14,628,000 in value-added in Glynn County in 2017.

**B. The Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry in the South Georgia Coast**

The direct, indirect and induced economic effects of the wedding industry on employment, labor income, output, and value added in the eight counties of the South Georgia Coast in 2017 are listed in Table 6 below:

**Table 6. Economic Impact of the Wedding Industry in the South Georgia Coast, 2017**

	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect on Supporting Industries	Induced Effect from Household Spending	Total Impact
<b>Employment</b>	531	71	63	665
<b>Labor Income</b>	\$11,172,000	\$2,035,000	\$2,193,000	\$15,400,000
<b>Output</b>	\$31,086,000	\$7,620,000	\$7,466,000	\$46,172,000
<b>Value-added</b>	\$13,782,000	\$3,836,000	\$4,324,000	\$21,942,000

***Employment Impact***

The wedding industry in the South Georgia Coast directly employed approximately 531 workers in 2017. Supporting industries in the South Georgia Coast employed an additional 71 full- and part-time workers to supply goods and services to the wedding industry in the region. The spending of labor income by workers of South Georgia Coast’s wedding industry and supporting industries on housing, food, healthcare and other consumer goods and services created an additional 63 jobs in the region. In total, the wedding industry created 665 jobs in the South Georgia Coast in 2017.

***Labor Income Impact***

Wedding industry vendors in the South Georgia Coast paid their workers \$11,172,000 in wages, salaries and other forms of compensation in 2017. The industry’s activities generated an additional \$2,035,000 in labor income to workers of supporting industries in the region. The spending of labor income on consumer goods by wedding industry workers and workers of supporting industries generated an additional \$2,193,000 in labor income in the region. In total,

the wedding industry generated \$15,400,000 in labor income to South Georgia Coast workers in 2017.

### ***Output Impact***

In 2017, the wedding industry in the South Georgia Coast produced \$31,086,000 in output. To supply the South Georgia Coast's wedding industry, supporting industries produced \$7,620,000 in output in the region. The spending of labor income on consumer goods by wedding industry workers and workers of supporting industries generated an additional \$7,466,000 in output in the region. In total, the wedding industry generated \$46,172,000 in output in the South Georgia Coast in 2017.

### ***Value-added Impact***

The South Georgia Coast's wedding industry generated value-added of \$13,782,000 in 2017. In supplying the industry with supplies and services, supporting industries generated value-added of \$3,836,000 in the South Georgia Coast. An additional \$4,324,000 in value-added was generated by the spending of labor income on consumer goods by wedding industry workers and workers of supporting industries in the region. In total, the wedding industry generated \$21,942,000 in value-added in the South Georgia Coast in 2017.

### ***Total Impact***

All told, the wedding industry produced 665 jobs, \$15,270,000 in labor income, \$46,172,000 in output, and \$21,942,000 in value-added in the eight counties of the South Georgia Coast in 2017.

#### IV. Wedding Industry Sales Details for the Brunswick MSA

The Wedding Report has estimated wedding industry sales by market category and item for the Brunswick Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) for 2016. The Brunswick MSA consists of Brantley, Glynn and McIntosh counties. The estimates for the number of weddings in which the item was purchased (out of a total of 882 weddings in the Brunswick MSA in 2016), average amount spent per wedding and total sales of the item are shown in Table 7 below and on the following two pages:

**Table 7. Wedding Industry Sales Details for the Brunswick MSA, 2016**

Category	Estimated weddings	Average Spend	Total Sales
<b>Attire &amp; Accessories</b>			
Dress accessories	670	\$212	\$142,108
Tuxedo/suit accessories	635	\$97	\$61,599
Tuxedo/suit rent/purchase	653	\$197	\$128,578
Wedding dress	714	\$1,154	\$824,441
<b>Beauty &amp; Spa</b>			
Hair service	635	\$63	\$40,008
Makeup service	520	\$51	\$26,539
Manicure & pedicure	591	\$43	\$25,410
<b>Entertainment</b>			
DJ/MC	573	\$667	\$382,391
Lighting	450	\$311	\$139,894
Live band	229	\$1,538	\$352,694
Soloist, ensemble	326	\$561	\$183,077
<b>Flowers &amp; Decorations</b>			
Bouquets	714	\$324	\$231,472
Boutonnieres, corsages	653	\$140	\$91,375
Decorations	626	\$425	\$266,143
Flowers & arrangements	617	\$590	\$364,266
Table centerpieces	635	\$311	\$197,497
<b>Gifts &amp; Favors</b>			
Gifts for attendants	582	\$95	\$55,301
Gifts for parents	520	\$111	\$57,762
Tips	653	\$350	\$228,438
Wedding favors	626	\$218	\$136,516

**Table 7. Wedding Industry Sales Details for the Brunswick MSA, 2016 (continued)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Estimated weddings</b>	<b>Average Spend</b>	<b>Total Sales</b>
<b>Invitations</b>			
Ceremony programs	547	\$121	\$66,168
Announcements	362	\$103	\$37,247
Guest book	635	\$58	\$36,832
Invitations, reply cards	714	\$215	\$153,600
Postage	714	\$100	\$71,442
Reception menus	388	\$119	\$46,182
Save the date cards	529	\$106	\$56,095
Table/place name cards	494	\$81	\$40,008
Thank you cards	679	\$86	\$58,406
<b>Jewelry</b>			
Bracelet	203	\$171	\$34,689
Earrings	326	\$146	\$47,646
Engagement ring	662	\$3,109	\$2,056,604
Necklace	247	\$195	\$48,157
Wedding ring for bride	662	\$717	\$474,296
Wedding ring for groom	697	\$416	\$289,860
<b>Photography &amp; Video</b>			
Digital or photo cd/dvd	467	\$268	\$125,279
Engagement session	441	\$363	\$160,083
Photo booth	194	\$352	\$68,302
Prints, enlargements	450	\$217	\$97,611
Wedding album	370	\$384	\$142,249
Photographer	688	\$1,470	\$1,011,301
Videographer	370	\$978	\$362,290
<b>Planner/Consultant</b>			
A la carte services	53	\$882	\$46,675
Day of coordinator	123	\$759	\$93,721
For getting started	44	\$818	\$36,074
Full service	132	\$2,593	\$343,054
Month of direction	44	\$993	\$43,791

**Table 7. Wedding Industry Sales Details for the Brunswick MSA, 2016 (continued)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Estimated weddings</b>	<b>Average Spend</b>	<b>Total Sales</b>
<b>Venue, Catering &amp; Rentals</b>			
Ceremony officiator	635	\$196	\$124,468
Event accessories	644	\$300	\$193,158
Bar service	529	\$2,182	\$1,154,714
Food service	626	\$4,288	\$2,685,231
Event location	635	\$3,312	\$2,103,252
Event rentals	573	\$1,594	\$913,840
Hotel after reception	573	\$289	\$165,684
Limo rental	335	\$443	\$148,476
Other transportation	273	\$475	\$129,875
Rehearsal dinner	591	\$525	\$310,244
Wedding cake/dessert	688	\$384	\$264,177

## **V. Summary**

In short, the economic impact of the wedding industry in Glynn County and the South Georgia Coast is quite significant. Again: the wedding industry produced 395 jobs, \$10,270,000 in labor income, \$26,653,000 in output, and \$14,628,000 in value-added in Glynn County in 2017; while the industry produced 665 jobs, \$15,270,000 in labor income, \$46,172,000 in output, and \$21,942,000 in value-added in the eight counties of the South Georgia Coast in 2017. The wedding industry is clearly a vital component of the economies of Glynn and the South Georgia Coast.

## Terms

*Direct effects* are the immediate effects of an economic activity. In this study, the direct effects of the wedding industry are the industry's employment, labor income, output, and value-added.

*Employment* is the sum of full-time, part-time, and seasonal jobs.

*IMPLAN* is the computer based software that estimates regional input-output multipliers and models.

*Indirect effects* are secondary effects of an economic activity; specifically, the additional employment, income, output and value added that are generated by an industry's purchases of goods and services from local suppliers.

*Induced effects* are further secondary effects of an economic activity; specifically, the additional employment, income, output and value added that are generated by the spending on consumer goods and services by employees of the industry in question and employees of supporting local suppliers.

*Input-output model* is an economic model that quantitatively depicts the relationships between industries within an area.

*Multipliers* indicate the magnitude of the indirect and induced economic effects generated by the direct effects of an economic activity on a region.

*Output* is the market value of goods and services produced.

*South Georgia Coast* consists of the eight Coastal counties of Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, McIntosh, Pierce, Ware and Wayne.

*Value-added* is the difference between output and the cost of inputs employed to produce the output.