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CITY OF ATLANTA, HIGHWOODS PROPERTIES, AND SOUTHFACE PLEDGE TO TURN LIGHTS OUT FOR BIRDS

(Atlanta, Ga.) April 18, 2017 – Atlanta Audubon Society is excited to welcome the City of Atlanta, Highwoods Properties, and the Southface Energy Institute as the first commercial participants in **Lights Out Atlanta**. Sponsored by Atlanta Audubon and the Atlanta Better Building Challenge (ABBC), Lights Out Atlanta was launched in March 2017 to reduce bird deaths caused by building collisions.

“Atlanta Audubon Society is thrilled to welcome the City of Atlanta, Highwoods Properties, and Southface, as the first commercial partners in the Lights Out Atlanta program,” says Nikki Belmonte, Atlanta Audubon Executive Director. “We appreciate their leadership on this issue and their commitment to make Atlanta a more bird-friendly community.”

The City of Atlanta has enrolled four buildings, including Atlanta City Hall, Atlanta Municipal Court, Atlanta Public Safety Headquarters, and Atlanta Watershed Management. Highwoods Properties has enrolled four buildings as well, including One Alliance Center, Monarch Plaza, Two Alliance Center, and Monarch Tower. Finally, the Southface Energy Institute has enrolled their building on Pine Street in Atlanta. Each of these properties has agreed to turn off or minimize both outdoor and indoor lighting during peak migration.

In addition, nearly 50 individual homeowners ranging from Peachtree City in the south to Milton in the northern suburbs have signed the Lights Out Atlanta pledge.

Each year, an estimated 350 million to 1 billion birds die in the United States after colliding with buildings. The problem is particularly bad during spring and fall migration. **Lights Out Atlanta** is a voluntary program encouraging commercial properties and homeowners to turn off or reduce lighting during peak bird migration periods, March 15 to May 31 (spring) and August 15 to November 15 (fall), between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 AM.

Studies have shown that bird deaths during peak migration periods can be dramatically reduced when exterior architectural and unnecessary lighting is turned off. **Lights Out Atlanta** has an additional benefit of reducing energy usage and cost to help properties achieve their sustainability goals.

Lights Out Atlanta Commercial Participants Pledge to:

- Turn off exterior decorative lighting
- Extinguish spot and flood-lights
- Substitute strobe lighting where possible
- Reduce lobby and atrium lighting where possible
- Turn off interior lighting, especially on upper floors
- Substitute task and area lighting for workers staying late
- Down-shield exterior lighting or limit to ground level

Partnering with the ABBC for outreach was a natural fit since the Program’s goal to reduce energy and water use in commercial buildings by 20% by 2020 already encourages participants to turn off any unnecessary nighttime lighting, says Belmonte

Atlanta Audubon Society has been studying collision-related bird deaths through its **Project Safe Flight Atlanta** Program for the past two years. **Project Safe Flight** volunteers patrol selected routes during peak bird migration periods collecting birds that have died or been injured after colliding with buildings. Since the program launch in fall 2015, more than 500 birds of 70 different species have been collected.

For more information or to participate in **Lights Out Atlanta**, please visit www.atlantaaudubon.org/lights-out-atlanta

The mission of Atlanta Audubon Society is to protect Georgia's birds and their habitats through conservation, education, and advocacy.

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Media Note: Photos to accompany these article and a MS Word version of the press releases are available for download at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y3l9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>.