



Case Study: AAA Parking Scores Big for Auburn University

Like most colleges and universities, Auburn University, located in east-central Alabama, suffered major parking and traffic problems with every home football game. AAA Parking brought organization and seamless control to a tough playing field, while delivering a new revenue stream to the university.

Challenges

In 2011, the Auburn Tigers football team won the school’s first national title since 1957, defeating Oregon for the BCS National Championship. The growth in home game attendance following that season was welcome, but increased parking problems for the university. With a stadium capable of seating more than 87,000 Tiger fans in a town with a population of almost 59,000, gridlock had always been a fact of life for Bob Ritenbaugh, Associate Vice President of Auxiliary Services.

“Game day was total chaos and disorder, with people trying either to find a space to park or trying to save a space for their friends and families,” Ritenbaugh says. “A lot of emphasis was placed on the fan experience, but parking was often overlooked.”

Situation

Auburn’s parking assets are typical of most colleges and universities, with a centrally-located stadium served by two large, adjacent parking decks along with multiple surface lots scattered throughout the campus. The lack of a definitive plan, complicated by no reserved parking for the general public, meant first-come, first-served, and usually resulted in blocked streets, towed vehicles, upset fans, and general turmoil.

Solution

After conducting a detailed on-site evaluation, AAA Parking implemented a customized plan focused on creating organization, mitigating congestion, and delivering revenue for the university.

With a team of 60 AAA Parking personnel including on-site leadership for each home game, fans now enjoy a level of service and hospitality previously unheard of. On game day, Auburn fans are greeted at each managed lot by a uniformed AAA Parking attendant who verifies parking passes or collects cash payments, and then directs them to open spaces within each lot. After the game, attendants are there to assist with leaving the area, including providing directions and route suggestions.

One major factor in alleviating parking problems has been the implementation by AAA Parking of an online, mobile-friendly reservations system. The system allows fans and alumni to pre-purchase season parking passes and receive directions to their space, removing one source of game day frustration.

“People are quick to pay for parking because they want the anxiety and uncertainty removed from finding a place to park,” says Ritenbaugh. “You’re coming to the game knowing you have a place to park, as opposed to coming with a hunting license.”

Results

With the introduction of AAA Parking’s solution, Auburn has seen parking revenue grow by 20-25 percent per year. Almost every lot is pre-sold for the whole season before the first game.

“Revenue from parking has grown as we’ve added more spaces under AAA’s supervision,” says Ritenbaugh. “We’ve had a five year climb since Cam Newton played here, which makes it easy for us to sell all our spaces. My only regret is that I can’t get them more spaces, because AAA can sell and manage them.”

Auburn alumni have seen benefits, as well. Contributors to the Athletic Department have always received seasonal parking passes, but donors to individual schools and colleges did not have access to similar accommodations. With the implementation of the reservation service, deans are now able to provide donors the opportunity to pre-purchase designated parking in lots shared with others from the same school or college.

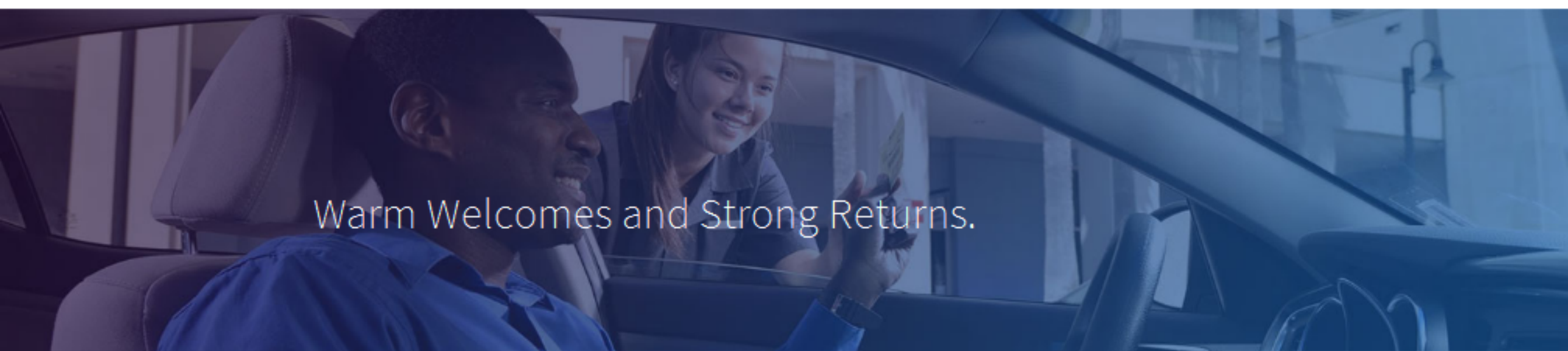
“The upside is that I have very happy deans that can offer something to donors,” Ritenbaugh remarked. “The campus benefits from better control, and the colleges and schools benefit from additional financial support.

“AAA brought expertise to the table that we didn’t have. They are extremely responsive, and always deliver a solution to whatever problem I have. They’re very low maintenance for me and get the job done, so it’s one of my easier tasks.”

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