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November 2011

News from Georgia Tourism:

- Mark your calendars for **Monday and Tuesday, January 23-24, 2012**. We all know what a difference an investment in tourism can do to improve the quality of life for all Georgia residents. It is more important than ever that we build strong advocacy programs in order to showcase the important role of tourism across the state.
This annual event will begin with an **“Advocacy 101 Session” on the afternoon of Monday, Jan 23rd** to educate participants on “how to work with your Legislator”. The **“Travel and Tourism Day” industry event at the Capitol will be Tuesday, Jan 24th, and following those activities a “GDEcD Open House” is being planned to give everyone an opportunity to meet the GDEcD staff and visit the department offices.** There are several additional exciting changes in the event format so stay tuned for more information. Also, this year we will be working with Georgia Hospitality & Lodging Association (GHLA), Georgia Restaurant Association (GRA) and Georgia Chamber of Commerce (GCC) to increase the impact and attendance at “travel/tourism” events hosted yearly at the Capital. This will allow for more time to educate the legislators on the importance of the industry. It also makes sense for our organizations to work closer together on events that allow us to educate our constituents and legislators on the impact and issues in our industry. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Tonya Rosado, Executive Director, Kingsland CVB at tonya@visitkingsland.com
- The Georgia Agritourism Association (GAA) is pleased to be one of the state's newest associations to meet the needs of the growing agritourism industry. We hope you will plan to join us for the **2012 Georgia Agritourism Conference on Jan 5-6, in Savannah.** This year's conference will be held in conjunction with the SE Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference, and promises to be an exceptional event. We've added something else new this year -- **A GAA silent auction!** We are collecting items for the auction, and welcome all gifts, large and small! Please consider what you can contribute -- perhaps a season pass, a gift basket, 10 lbs of worm casings, admission to a corn maze, a case of wine, lodging, books, food, gift certificates, classes etc. Please be creative, as we think that it will be a lot of fun to "know you" by gifts representing your venue and/or a passion of yours to share with others. The Georgia Agritourism Association is a 501 (c) (6) entity; your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more information about the conference or the silent auction please contact: Sarah Cook at smcook@uga.edu or call 229-391-6882
- **The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation announced its 2012 List of Ten Places in Peril** in the state on October 25. Sites on the list include: Rutherford Hall on the University of Georgia campus in Athens; Orange Hall in St. Mary's; W.W. Law House in Savannah; historic railroad buildings of Atlanta; Historic Liberty Street in Milledgeville; Randolph County Courthouse in Cuthbert; **Mt. Zion Church in Sparta**; Crown Mill Store in Dalton; Secondary Industrial High School in Columbus; and Chattahoochee Park Pavilion in Gainesville.

- **The Tourism Division of GDEcD has officially switched the Twitter feed over to www.twitter.com/exploregeorgia.** We are excited to have the same name associated with our Facebook and Twitter pages. Everything else will stay the same! www.twitter.com/georgiatourism no longer exists.
- **Travel Media Marketplace 2012 is scheduled to take place in May.** Bid forms have been sent out and all **bids are due back to GDEcD by December 16th.**
- If you are interested in **submitting an event to Southern Living** - Click on the link below- fill out the form to submit your event to their travel directory. They need event information no less than four months in advance in order to consider the event to be listed. www.southernliving.com/static/generic/travel/events/submission_form.html
- **Georgia On My Mind (GOMM) merchandise is now available to both tourism partners and consumers for the first time via our new online store on ExploreGeorgia.org.** Go to ExploreGeorgia.org - click 'Shop for Georgia Items!' on the right rail of the homepage to check out our wearable merchandise including beach towels, bags, blankets, etc. All merchandise is available with an embroidered GOMM logo (black, white, full color and tone-on-tone). No minimum quantities when ordering and a discount is available when ordering quantities of 24 or more. Another option is for Georgia tourism-entities to order co-branded merchandise with their logo featured as well. Click on the "Contact Us" link for more information, or to submit a special request.
- **Pam Kruseck will be attending AAA Carolinas Superbowl of Knowledge November 18 - 19, 2011 in Greensboro, NC.** 'Superbowl of Knowledge' is an annual gathering of AAA Carolinas Travel Counselors and staff to learn about new offers and tourism products for their members. AAA Carolinas is expecting 300 employees including Travel Counselors and Drive Vacation Specialists. A lunchtime tradeshow allows Travel Counselors an opportunity to meet with us and gather information.
- **The sales team is participating in a Travel South Sales Mission to Orlando, Florida to meet with key receptive operators from November 29 to December 4.** These receptive operators provide U.S. and Georgia travel products to international tour operators around the world.
- **GDEcD will once again be participating as sponsors for the National Tour Association (NTA) Annual Convention from December 5 - 9, 2011 and the American Bus Association (ABA) Annual Marketplace from January 6 - 10, 2012.** As part of our sponsorships we will have a booth on the marketplace floor which allows maximum exposure to all attendees and provides a better opportunity to sell Georgia. We are changing our level of participation this year for ABA and will be the show bag sponsor - we will offer co-sponsorship to our partners. Co-op information will be available soon.
- Make your plans to participate in the **"2011 Holiday Happenings" promotion at the Georgia Visitor Information Center – on I-20 in Augusta on December 9, 2011 from 10am-2pm.** This is a great time to showcase attractions, holiday events, hotels, restaurants and discounts for shopping. Contact Keri Ogletree at 706.737.1447 or email kogletree@georgia.org
- **Georgia Tourism will attend the Tennessee Motorcoach Operators Association Annual Convention from January 22 to 26, 2012 in Lexington, Kentucky.** The Annual Meeting will include appointment sessions with members of each Association, educational seminars and networking opportunities. For additional co-op information, please contact Pam Kruseck via email at pkruseck@georgia.org.

- **Kevin Langston and Joseph Walker participated in the Travel South Italy Mission that included the TTG Rimini Travel Show, Tour Operator trainings in Milan, and a presentation of the Southern states at an event in Rome.** Georgia Tourism met with more than 30 tour operators while in Italy. Statistics show that Italian travel to Georgia is up 20 percent.
- **Georgia Hotel Trending Data- September 2011**
 - * Hotel/motel **occupancy** increased 2.8 percent statewide
 - * **Room Rates (ADR)** in Georgia were up 2 percent from last September
 - * Statewide, **RevPAR** was 4.9 percent
 - * Georgia **room revenues** increased 4.6 percent
 - * **Room Demand** increased 2.6 percent in the state
 - * **Room Supply** was down - 0.2 percent

Year-to-date

- * Hotel/motel **occupancy** is up 4.7 percent statewide through August 2011
 - * **Room Rates (ADR)** in Georgia are up 0.7 percent
 - * Statewide, **RevPAR** is up 5.4 percent
 - * Georgia **room revenues** are up 5.4 percent
 - * **Room Demand** is up 4.7 percent in the state
 - * **Room Supply** is flat in the state
- **ExploreGeorgia updates: Please remember to add New Hotels, New Attractions and Special Offers to the website as well as all your 2012 special events.** A logo or photo must be included with all listings. The more information you provide in your listing, the more likely you will be featured in one of our many newsletters.
 - **To sign-up for the monthly “Peachbyte” newsletter** which gives you all the latest Georgia Tourism News please email peachbyte@georgia.org
 - **Ga. Tourism Industry Calendar** – For a listing of tourism industry events visit www.georgia.org/GeorgialIndustries/Tourism/Pages/IndustryCalendar.aspx
 - **Learn how to become Camera Ready:**
<http://www.georgia.org/GeorgialIndustries/Entertainment/FilmTV/cameraready/Pages/default.aspx>

Regional News

- **The Morris Museum of Art won five awards in the 2011 Southeastern Museum Conference (SEMC) Publications Competition**-a Gold Award in the Newsletter & Calendar of Events category, for the quarterly newsletter; a Gold Award in the Brochure & Rack Card category, for the "Art of Belonging" membership solicitation piece; and three awards in the poster category, including a Gold Award for the Philip Morsberger poster, Silver Award for the "Southern Soul & Song" Steel Drivers poster (designed by Wierhouse for the concert series), and Honorable Mention for the "Southern Soul & Song" Ralph Stanley poster (also designed by Wierhouse for the concert series)
- **(November 2, 2011)--Billy Johnson, Director of Operations at the BEST WESTERN Evans Hotel in Grovetown, GA, was recently honored with the “Heroic Hospitality Stars Award” for Maintenance.** Billy was presented with the award at Best Western International’s annual North American Convention held recently in Orlando, FL, in front of more than 2,000 industry peers.

- **Congratulations to Trent Mercer, for receiving the STS Shining Example Award at the STS Annual Meeting** that was held in New Orleans in November.
- **Congratulations to “Lights of the South” for being selected as one of the Top Ten Events for 2011 by Southeast Tourism Society!**
- **THE RITZ-CARLTON LODGE, REYNOLDS PLANTATION EARNS FOUR-STAR FOR LODGING, SPA!** Forbes Travel Guide Releases 54th Annual Ranking of World’s Top Hotels GREENSBORO, Ga. (Nov. 22, 2011) – Reaffirming its status as one of Georgia’s top luxury resorts, The Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation has been awarded Four Stars from the venerable Forbes Travel Guide – formerly known as Mobil Travel Guide – for both the hotel and spa.

Mark Your Calendars:

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| November 15, 2011: | Classic South Travel Association Meeting- Augusta- Meadow Garden- Augusta 10:00am- noon |
| December 9, 2011: | Holiday Happenings- Georgia Visitor Center- Augusta |
| January 6 2012: | STS Top 20 Events deadline for July, August, September 2012 |
| January 24, 2012: | Travel and Tourism Day at the Capitol – Atlanta |
| January 30- February 2, 2012: | Classic South Fam Tour- Georgia Visitor Center’s |
| April 6, 2012: | STS Top 20 Events deadline for events in October/November/December 2012 |
| August 26-29 2012: | The 2012 Governor’s Conference on Tourism- Atlanta Marriott Buckhead Hotel & Conference Center |