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News from Georgia Tourism:

- **The 2009 Co-Op Marketing Final Reports are due by May 29th.** All reports must be submitted to Leslie Breland by May 29th in order to receive your reimbursements.
- **The 2010 Co-Op Marketing Program deadline will be extended until July 31, 2009.** Budgets are not set in stone until the legislative session convenes. Therefore the deadline for applications has been extended to give you all time to prepare your application should the funding for the co-op be restored.
- **The Georgia Visitor Center on I-20 in Augusta will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary on April 24th at 11:00am** at the Visitor Center on I-20 in Augusta. For more information email augusta@georgia.org or call 706.737.1447
- **GA Made GA Grown Products Web Registry** - The web registry is available for the Creative Economies businesses to register for free. Go to www.gamadegagrown.org - enter your information and please encourage others to register. To learn more about the Creative Economies initiative can be found at www.georgia.org/foundation
- **The 2009 Techno Tourism Conference** – will be held at the Chattahoochee Technical College in Marietta- April 20-21, 2009. Because the grant process is on hold, the requirement for attendance in order to receive funding is waived. This year's theme, Social Media Marketing - Affordable, Effective & Essential, highlights the potential of social networks to reach vast audiences in both local and global communities.
- **The www.ExploreGeorgia.org photo contest kicked off January 1st!** The contest is open to only U.S. citizens and must be at least 18 years old. Once photos are submitted, the GDEcD will have full usage rights of photographs. There will be one winner each month through October 2009 and winners will be chosen by an internal judging panel. Each winner will receive a new GPS system and will be featured in the 2010 Georgia Travel Guide. This is a contest that can excite everyone including those visiting the state!
- Check out www.marketgeorgia.org for all the resources and services that we offer Georgia Tourism partners.
- **The Group Tour Boot Camp will take place June 18-19th** at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in Macon. The boot camp will focus on itinerary building. More info coming soon!
- **Hands-On Restoration Workshop -April 29, 2009** – Hampton, Georgia. This conference will offer two workshops entitled Hands-On Restoration and Design Camp which we hope to empower you with the knowledge needed to assist your downtown building owners and prospects with their decisions on design-related issues. [Download Registration Form](#)

- The GDEcD Marketing and Tourism teams were honored with **FIRST PLACE at the 2009 American Marketing Association's AMY awards for the department's Tourism Web Site, www.exploregeorgia.org**. This is a huge accomplishment for the department since we competed with hundreds of other websites including many major consumer brands from the private sector. What an honor!

- **MAKE YOUR EXPLOREGEORGIA.ORG LISTING STAND OUT**

We're now taking into account listing quality when ranking search results. This new "**Most Relevant**" search ranking provides site visitors with a great user experience, and it also lets you have some control in how highly your listing ranks in search results! We've provided some tips for making your **ExploreGeorgia.org** listing stand out: Taking these simple steps will help your listing get more exposure and marketing to the more than 40,000 people that visit **exploregeorgia.org** each month.

Upload a Logo/Default Photo: There's nothing more important to the quality of your listing than having your logo (or a small photo) uploaded to represent your listing. These images appear on the search result page and help site visitors identify your listing and entice them to learn more.

Upload More Photos: Now that we've updated the photo gallery page for your listings, it's more important than ever to upload photos of your listing. The more photos you upload, the more opportunities you have to market your attraction/lodging to site visitors.

Have a Great Summary and Description: Your summary gives visitors a quick snapshot of your listing, and should be written to make you stand out in the crowd. You only have 300 characters, so make your words count. Point out a couple of exciting features of your listing. The description is your chance to really market your listing. Take this chance to tell visitors about all of the great features that make your attraction or lodging unique!

- **Vacation/Overnight Packages** – The Tourism Division is collecting lodging and attractions packages to use in promoting Georgia. I have pulled a few packages from your websites but if you have any packages please make sure that I have them- you can send to me at jbuttrum@georgia.org Packages need to include lodging and at least one attraction (meals optional.)

Regional News:

- **The Classic South Travel Association's** May meeting will be held in **Lincolnton on May 26, 2009**. Katie Baasen from the GDEcD will be our guest speaker and will talk about the Georgia Group Tour Marketing Program and representatives from Gainesville will also be at the meeting to give us information about the 2009 Georgia Governor's Conference on Tourism.
- **Lauren Neal** has been hired as the new Tourism Director for the Greene County Tourism Office. You can reach Lauren at Lauren@visitlakeoconee.com Welcome to the Classic South Lauren!
- **Congratulations to Flat Creek Lodge in Swainsboro - as the overall winner of the 2009 Flavor of Georgia contest for their Aztec Cheddar.** The contest focuses on the Agricultural Advisory Commission's goal of entrepreneurship and rural development by showcasing the diversity of Georgia's agriculture and food processors.

Grant Opportunities:

- **USDA and Museum Funding** - Funding is available through USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities Program if the museum is located in a rural area and owned by a non-profit or public body. Grant funds are only available for

the purchase of equipment. Loan funds are at very good terms, currently around 4.75% for a maximum of 40 years, for the purchase of real estate, construction, renovation, higher cost equipment, etc. Go to www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/ for more information.

- **Save Our History 2009/2010 grant cycle announced** - Applications are due June 5, 2009 <http://www.history.com/content/saveourhistory/grant-program>
Email info@saveourhistory.com for more information.
- **Arts Grant Opportunity** - All services must be completed by June 30, 2009. The guidelines/application forms are available on www.southarts.org/southernvisions
For more information contact Nikki Estes, Program Director - Presenting & Touring, at 404-874-7244 ext. 16 or nestes@southarts.org
- **Challenge grants** – The National Endowment for the Humanities’ challenge grants are capacity-building grants intended to help institutions and organizations secure long-term improvements in and support for their humanities programs and resources. Funds may also be used for one-time capital that bring long-term benefits to the institution and to the humanities more broadly. For more information visit www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/challenge.html or email- challenge@neh.gov Applications due by May 5, 2009.

Mark Your Calendars:

April 10, 2009	STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for Oct.- Dec. 2009. Go to: http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html .
Apr 20-21, 2009	Techno Tourism Conference, Athens www.areg.caes.uga.edu .
May 26, 2009	Classic South Travel Association Meeting- Lincolnton
July 26-31, 2009	STS Marketing College- Dahlonega-North Georgia College
Aug 31–Sept 2, 2009	Georgia Governor’s Conference on Tourism- Lake Lanier Islands
June 18-19, 2010	Group Tour Boot Camp- Macon (Georgia Music Hall of Fame)

2009 Georgia On My Mind Days at the State Visitor Centers:

April 3rd – Valdosta-	Valdosta@georgia.org
April 16th – Sylvania	Sylvania@georgia.org
May 9th – Plains	plains@georgia.org
May 15th – Kingsland	kingsland@georgia.org
May 22nd – Lavonia	lavonia@georgia.org
May 29th – Savannah	savannah@georgia.org
June 5th – Tallapoosa	Tallapoosa@georgia.org
June 19th – Ringgold	ringgold@georgia.org
July 17th – Augusta	augusta@georgia.org
July 31st – West Point	westpoint@georgia.org

