



Monthly Update –September 2008 **The Georgia Coast Travel Region**

PLEASE NOTE THAT MY CONTACT INFORMATION HAS CHANGED

Coast Mentions in the Media

- **06/09/08 - FROM ATLANTA TO ... SAVANNAH**
Savannah soothes and seduces with Southern cooking
By Lydia Martin
The Miami Herald
(<http://www.miamiherald.com/413/story/549470.html>)
And again in the AJC
(http://www.ajc.com/travel/content/travel/southeast/ga_stories/2008/06/09/savannah_food_tour.html)
- **6-19-08** - The following was in the "**Across the USA: News from every state...**" section of USA Today.
Georgia: Jekyll Island - The Georgia Sea Turtle Center has attracted more than 120,000 visitors since it opened last year, officials said. The center treats sick and injured sea turtles and gives people a chance to see the endangered turtles firsthand. About 1,000 rare loggerhead sea turtles nest every year along the state's 100-mile coast.
- **8-22-09 - "The Charm of the South"** by Hans Schloemer and Jennifer Johnston in Bild Zeitung. Hans and Jennifer were in Savannah Feb 2008.
Bild is Europe's largest newspaper with a circulation of 3.547 million copies. The story appeared Friday, August 22, and was subsequently in all of their 40 regional editions during the following two weeks.

The ad value for a page in Bild is 344,500 Euros net. The complete article has a value of app. 120,000 Euros net. The Savannah/Georgia part is worth 51,300 Euros net = currently 75,000 dollars. Add 19 percent German VAT, and we arrive at about 90,000 dollar. This is not even counting the online publication of the story. Bild Online is one of the largest if not the most-visited sites in Germany with millions of visitors daily.
(<http://www.bild.de/BILD/lifestyle/reise/2008/08/usa-so-romantisch-ist-amerika/reise-durch-amerikas-sueden.html>).
- **9-15-08 - The AJC has added a new section to AJC.com that features Southeastern festivals.** It suggests that readers plan their daytrip or weekend getaway. Please see the Georgia festivals that were included below.

Southeastern festivals for Sept. 19-21 and beyond

Perspectives 2008 Georgia Pottery Invitational, through Sept. 17, features the works of 50 contemporary Georgia potters. The event

includes exhibits, workshops and studio tours, as well as the chance to purchase handmade pottery. 706-769-4565,

Jekyll Island — Shrimp & Grits Festival, Sept. 19-21, celebrates fresh wild Georgia shrimp. There will be a cooking competition, a shrimp-eating contest, book signings, music, a family area and vendors displaying arts, crafts, antiques and collectibles. Separate activities in the area include shrimping excursions or exploring a real shrimp boat. 1-877-453-5955, www.jekyllisland.com.

- **Group Tour Magazine – GA Coast Article in Southeastern Group Tour Magazine Fall 2008**

<http://www.grouptourmagazine.com/resources/backissue.php>

Click on Fall Southeastern (The one with the Mardi Gras mask, right in the upper left). The article is on page 70. Their Webmaster even added a lighthouse video.

Media Opportunities

- **Freelance Writer Looking for Press Release, Information, Etc., that Represent Southeastern U.S. Destinations** - Please respond directly to Apryl if you have pertinent information.

I currently oversee a southern travel blog, Southern Byways, www.southernbyways.com that receives on average 25,000 hit/month. I am interested in receiving releases, information, etc. that pertains to happenings, openings, activities and really anything in regards to my coverage area. The area I cover is from Arkansas to D.C. If you represent anything at all in the area, please include me on any press release distributions.

Apryl Chapman Thomas

Email: apryl@aprylchapmanthomas.com

Freelance Writer

Website: www.actwriter.com

Publication: www.southernbyways.com

- **Events Media Network, Inc.**, the largest aggregator and web site of event information and attraction information in North America. We feature information in our web site, eventcrazy.com as well supply information throughout the web on sites such as The Weather Channel - weather.com, Hilton.com, Adelphia, Charter, Atlantic Broadband, Knology and many, many others.

In addition to our database of over 150,000 events, venues and attractions, we also have a "Featured Region" section where we give interesting facts, names of local restaurants and other local information that would encourage people to visit your area and put your area in the best possible light.

Currently we do not feature this information with photos other than in the featured region section. Beginning in mid-October, we would like to include a photo or series of photos to go along with the information as well as to permanently attach the photos to attractions, venues and events in your area where appropriate.

I am contacting you to see if we can bring together information from your state that would be included along with our other information. If you or anyone you know could assist me in this process, I would greatly appreciate it.

We have two options, one that you can email photos directly to me at my email

address or I can retrieve them directly from your designated site. Whatever option works best for you is fine with us. Is there a place where I can retrieve them? Of course we would provide the necessary photo credits with any photographs that we include with the information online.

Feel free to contact me through this email address or call me at 609-953-9511 should you have any questions or require any additional information. Thank you very much for your time.

Megan Clark
Editorial Information Analyst

FAMs and Press Trips

- **Sally Dowling with UK publication Take a Break** was recently on Jekyll Island. Sally had a commission to cover SC and Georgia. She is writing for Take A Break Spring Special, scheduled for publication around 10 April 09 for 6 weeks. The 'Special' issues of Take a Break are additional, bumper issues of the top selling women's weekly magazine Take A Break. They are aimed at the same target audience as the main magazine but have the benefit of a longer shelf life. The magazine has mass market appeal and full reader profile can be found at www.Bauer.co.uk.
This issue will have a theme of Family Fun. Sally worked with our UK Rep Anne Young and requested that she be allowed to visit Jekyll Island without being announced...in fact we didn't even have the dates of her arrive and departure. I will share the article once it is printed.
- **GDEcD will host a Travel South FAM** April 8-11. Itinerary has not been finalized – Theme will be 'Adventures on the GA Coast'. I will let you know more as the itinerary develops.

Grants

- **David R. Coffin Publication Grant** - The Foundation for Landscape Studies invites applications for the David R. Coffin Publication Grant, named in honor of the eminent scholar of landscape and garden history, for the purpose of research and publication of a book in the English language that advances scholarship in the field of garden history and landscape studies. It is awarded without restrictions to the period or subject treated, or to the nationality of the author. It will be selected by a jury comprising members of the foundation's board of directors and any outside professionals they may wish to appoint. Deadline: 12/1/2008. For more information, visit: http://www.foundationforlandscapestudies.org/awards_davidcoffin.html

From The State

- **UK Sales Mission** – as a result of our Spring UK Sales Mission I am happy to report that GA gained two additional pages in Virgin Holidays' upcoming catalogue. Last year Atlanta had two pages and GA had two general pages. This year Atlanta will have two pages, GA will keep its two general pages (including Jekyll Island product) and we will gain two pages devoted entirely to Savannah product. This is a great step towards getting more Coast product included in their very popular catalogue...we are shooting for additional product in their October reprint.
- **DCA's September 2008 newsletter** published by DCA Communications. www.dca.state.ga.us/dcanewsletter/200809.html.
- Congratulations to the Kingsland CVB, St. Marys Downtown Development Authority, The Brunswick Golden Isles CVB and the Camden County Public Service Authority for their recent **E-Challenge Grant Awards!** Only one region

was awarded more grants than the GA Coast...Atlanta. Way to go Team Georgia Coast!

- **Jepson Center for the Arts** is featured in the “Must Do” section of Georgia’s Destinations 2 Discover page for the month of Sept
<http://georgia.destinations2discover.com/>
- **Peach Byte!** – GDEcD’s official Georgia Tourism Monthly E-Newsletter available to anyone. If you have not yet signed up to receive Peach Byte, please send an email to peachbyte@georgia.org requesting that your e-mail address be added. If you would like to see past editions of Peach Byte, visit:
<http://my.georgia.org/net/content/go.aspx?s=244185.72586.26.3011>
- **Market Georgia Tourism is an excellent resource for tourism professionals.** You will find industry research, industry presentations, excellent contact information and more...information is added weekly:
<http://my.georgia.org/core/item/page.aspx?s=72456.72586.26.3011>
- **GDEcD will be hosting a Agritourism Conference November 5-6, 2008**
“Regionalism: The Key to Expanding our Agritourism Footprint”
Georgia National Fairgrounds & Agricenter, Perry, Georgia
Travel Industry Futurist, **Judy Randall**, will combine education and entertainment to create “edutainment” as she shares trends and benchmarks that will help Georgia broaden its Agritourism footprint...
 - Agritourism best practices
 - Resources
 - Marketing
 - professional development
 - tours
 - regional programs
 - grants
 - funding
 - cooperative advertising
 - safety
 - insurance
 - risk management
 - product development
 - promotions
 - local, state and federal agency representatives
 - agriculture vendors
 - networking

For more information contact Carla M. Wood, 706-583-0347 or carlam@uga.edu
Online registration available August 25, 2008 at www.areg.ceas.uga.edu

Exploregeorgia.org

- **Partner Page training - Exploregeorgia.org** – GDEcD hosted a partner page training in Savannah on August 26th. We had a great turn out for the session. If you were unable to make the session but would like more information on Exploregeorgia.org Partner Pages, please let me know. I would be more than happy to assist.
- The following **exploregeorgia.org updates** have been released over the past two weeks. Many of these updates are the direct result of suggestions made in our partner admin training, including:
 - 1) Audit listings: this is now functioning again
 - 2) Events: all partners who had a problem associating some listings to an event should see all listings they either own or have access to

- 3) There is a new "register" link on the main page: <http://partner.exploregeorgia.org>, which lets a user create an account without searching for a listing (this is especially helpful for those who only want to add an event)
- 4) Search results "breadcrumb" issue (when you use search and then view a listing, at the top, you see a breadcrumb string with a link back to the search results)
- 5) Safari bug: we have identified why users of safari are unable to search on the site (the browser can't handle the amount of information being sent back to the page for search results, so we'll be limiting the search results to 10 per page for safari only)
- 6) City list not in alphabetical order
- 7) Parking will not appear if nothing is entered into the parking cost, and the "free" box is unchecked

Thank you to all who attended our Savannah session and made excellent observations and suggestions.

- **New Booking Engine on the Exploergeorgia.org website** – If you haven't seen this new feature, check it out - <http://www.exploregeorgia.org/>
If you have questions please let me know.

From the Governor's Conference on Tourism

- **2008 Governor's Conference - Marketing PowerPoint** - Presented by Kevin Langston and Fred Huff
<http://my.georgia.org/hackattempt/2008%20Governors%20Conference%20Marketing%20Powerpoint.ppt>
- **2009 GDEcD Print, Radio and TV Flighting** – this information will allow you to plan your print, radio and TV advertising around the GDEcD's flighting if you wish.
<http://my.georgia.org/content/GeorgiaTourism/2009%20Print%20Radio%20TV%20Flighting.xls>
- **A few notes on Signage** for your community/attraction/lodging/restaurant or retail establishment from Roger Brooks, CEO of Destination Development, Inc. (www.destinationdevelopment.com)
 - Curb Appeal accounts for 70% of sales at your retail establishment (including restaurants)
 - Don't tell them NO, tell them where to go. If you don't have public restrooms, use signage on your door to tell them where to find a public restroom.
 - Proper way finding can increase retail sales by 15-25%
- **Study Looks at What Consumers Want on Travel Websites** ~ A recent study by Kerry Bodine at Forrester Research, Inc. focused on "what consumers want on travel websites." Study findings include:
 - 1) **Many** consumers (33-46 percent of those surveyed) want:
 - _ special offers/coupons ([currently on exploregeorgia.org](http://currentlyon.exploregeorgia.org))
 - _ user ratings/reviews ([coming in 2009 to exploregeorgia.org](http://comingin2009.exploregeorgia.org))
 - _ product or price comparison tools
 - _ customer testimonials [which is similar to "user ratings/reviews" above]
 - 2) **Some** consumers (18-20 percent of those surveyed) want:
 - _ product videos

_ ability to subscribe to email alerts or RSS feeds ([currently on exploregeorgia.org](http://exploregorgia.org))

_ ability to personalize the site or create a personal profile ([currently on exploregeorgia.org](http://exploregorgia.org))

3) Few consumers (12 percent or below of those surveyed) want:

- _ quizzes or questionnaires
- _ ability to upload or view your own content
- _ entertaining games

Despite variations among the generations (18-27 years vs. 63+years), the overall pattern remained the same as above. For example, “special offers” interested 50 percent of Younger Boomers and 35 percent of Seniors, yet it was still the #1 interest of all choices for both groups. Most interesting is that *nothing* was desired by a majority (over 50 percent) and that Seniors (63+) demand the least. But the trends suggest that visitors will increasingly want websites that can help them save money and find out what others have to say about the site and nearby destinations. The entire article is available for a fee at the website.

(www.forrester.com)

- **Some great sites to check out:**

- Farecast.com - Find cheap flights and free airfare predictions
- Kayak.com - We search hundreds of travel sites from all over the world, provide the information to you in an easy-to-use display and send you directly to the source to make your purchase.
- Insidetrip.com - InsideTrip allows you to evaluate all aspects of what makes a trip enjoyable.

All sites that savvy tourist are using or will be using in the near future.

- According to a recent poll, **two times as many people want spas at their hotel than want golf.**

Georgia Visitor Information Center Marketing Opportunities & News

- **The Georgia Visitor Information Center at Ringgold, Georgia will host Fall Colors of Georgia** – A celebration of Fairs, Festivals & Foliage throughout the State on September 26, 2008 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. As we anticipate cooler weather, turning of the leaves, country fairs and fall festivals, we invite our industry partners to join us and promote colorful events and areas all across our beautiful state. Entertainment by the Georgia Mountain Boys. Please bring your own table & chairs – booths will be located outside. RSVP or questions / phone 706-937-4211 / fax 706-937-2850 or by email Ringgold@Georgia.org.
- **Welcome to “Fall in Georgia” at the Tallapoosa Visitor Center** (I-20 east on the Georgia/Alabama line). The FALL CELEBRATION will be Thursday & Friday October 2 & 3, 2008 from 10am to 2pm. Come and Promote your County, Town, Properties, Eateries, Shops and much more. For more information or questions call 770-574-2621 or email tallapoosa@georgia.org. Please bring your own tables and chairs.
- **The Georgia Visitor Center in Tallapoosa invites you to join them on Friday, November 7th from 10am-2pm** as they promote holiday festivities in Georgia. Reserve your spot by the 30th of October 770-574-2621 or email: tallapoosa@georgia.org. Please bring your own table and chairs.
- **The Columbus VIC would like to extend an invitation to all Travel Regions to host a promotional day.** Please discuss at your next association meeting and contact us with a prospective date. Several Plantation Trace partners hosted a successful day on July 25th! A few things to keep in mind...

- We have limited inside space however we can accommodate four 2ft x 4ft tables or card tables.
- Lots of outside space available (please provide tent, tables, and chairs).
- Wed, Thurs, Fri, and Sat are usually busier days. (pending season). We'll try to help determine the busier days of the season.

Contact: Rita Hughes, Manager, Georgia Visitor Center, 1751 Williams Road, Columbus, GA 31904

Ph: 706-649-7455 Fax: 706-649-1291 rhughes@georgia.org

- The Georgia Department of Economic Development's (GDEcD) **Visitor Information Centers (VICs) were honored with an international marketing award for their Canadian Visitor Recognition program.** The National Council of State Tourism Directors (NCSTD) announced the winners of the 2008 Mercury Awards program on August 26 at the Travel Industry Association's annual Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations. The Mercury Award honors the best in state tourism office marketing and promotion programs each year.

Dates to Remember

- **September 26, 2008** Ringgold Visitor Information Center will host Fall Colors of Georgia
- **October 2 & 3, 2008** Tallapoosa Visitor Information Center will host "Fall in Georgia"
- **November 5-6, 2008** Agritourism Conference
- **November 7, 2008** Tallapoosa Visitor Information Center hosts Holiday Festivities in Georgia
- **January 27, 2009** Tourism Day at the Capitol
- **April 8-11, 2009** - Travel South FAM on the Coast

PLEASE NOTE THAT MY CONTACT INFORMATION HAS CHANGED

Regional Contact Information

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