



Magnolia Midlands Travel Region

Regional Tourism Representative Report
November 2008

GEORGIA TOURISM DIVISION NEWS

- **2007 TRAVEL PROFILE AVAILABLE:** The 2007 Travel Economic Impact reports are now available online. Visit www.marketgeorgia.org for a statewide analysis as well as a regional analysis. You may use this information to help provide information to your board and communities about how tourism impacts your local economy.
- **CREATIVE ECONOMIES:** 2008 Creative Economies Summit will be held in Blairsville on Thursday, November 20, 2008 to discuss what is new with the Creative Economies Initiative. Artisans and crafts people are also eligible for the "Products of Distinction" designation. Find further details at www.georgia.org/foundation.
- **PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:** The second round of product development grants are now available on www.marketgeorgia.org under Tourism Grants. This grant must be applied for by the City, County or Development Authority. It is a 50/50 match with a cap of \$8,000. Please keep in mind that your project should be competitive and show promise of new product development within a reasonable time frame. Please feel free to discuss any prospective project with your regional representative or Mary Stansfield.
- **CHANGES TO TRAVEL GUIDE CRITERIA:** Due to the increase in volume of entries to the new tourism website (www.exploregeorgia.org) and the growing tourism product in the state of Georgia, we were required to revise the criteria for the 2009 travel guide. Many entries will be removed based on not meeting the criteria. Among other criteria, attractions that do not have regular hours or are only open on weekends will no longer be printed in the guide. However, you are highly encouraged to make sure your listings are updated on the website. The internet is continuing to grow in popularity among travel planners and your exposure on the website is invaluable. For questions regarding new criteria, please contact your Regional Tourism Representative.

MAGNOLIA MIDLAND'S REGIONAL NEWS

- **TOURING THE MAGNOLIA MIDLANDS- PRODUCT:** Joseph Eason of Burns World Travel, LTD is currently working on collecting information from prospective attractions for a group tour to be sold through his travel agency. These tours could potentially be one day excursions from Savannah and/or two night, three day or three night/four day trips

around the region. If you have attractions that would be interested, please have them contact Joseph at jeason@burnsworldtravel.com.

- **SALES CALLS FOR THE MAGNOLIA MIDLANDS TRAVEL ASSOCIATION:** Dorie Bacon and I have begun sales calls in the region to help explain the benefits of the RTA. If you have suggestions for attracting new members or know interested parties, please get in touch with Dorie or Lori.
- **SHANNON VINEYARDS AND WINERY IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS:** Shannon Vineyards of Sylvania, GA has now opened their new winery. The beautiful winery is complete with a full service restaurant, party facilities, tours and a beautiful view.
- **OLD-FASHIONED CANE GRINDING:** Metter Welcome Center is hosting an old-fashioned cane grinding and syrup making on November 25. All Regional Travel Association Members are invited to attend. If you'd like to participate, contact Susan Mikell at ebim2@pineland.net to reserve a spot. We are to meet at the welcome center at 11 am, have lunch (dutch treat) and experience the old-fashioned art of making homemade cane syrup.

DEPARTMENTAL ASSISTANCE

- Laurie Rowe Communications (LRC)

"We like to give a voice to smaller destinations and tourism venues that sometimes get drowned out by the "big guys". But we are not pigeon-holed pr."

Tourism professionals Laurie Rowe and Kathy Witt have combined destination sales, marketing and PR experience with award-winning travel writing to offer cost-per-project pricing for creative conceptualization and professional writing services for press releases and travel news stories, comprehensive press kits; targeted press release and story idea distribution; brochure, newsletter and website content; seasonal or special-purpose promotions; direct mail and e-promotions; plus media services and press trips to your destination. For more information go to www.LRCpr.com; www.KathyWitt.com

- **YOUR PARTNER PAGE:** Thank you all for efficiently assisting with proofing of the 2009 Travel Guide. Keep in mind that all the information included in the State's Publications comes directly from www.exploregeorgia.org. You are responsible for populating your partner page and it certainly makes proofing much easier. Please keep your attractions, accommodations and events updated as often as possible. Just because we added information for your community to the accommodations and attractions portions of the guide DOES NOT mean that they are automatically updated on the website. Please take the time to update those items on your partner page. Thank you for being such outstanding tourism partners.

- **IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:**

- Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie- October 14-16, 2008

- Magnolia Midlands Travel Association Meeting- Statesboro, GA on December 11, 2008

- Tourism Day at the Capitol: January 27, 2009 in Atlanta

- Southern Women's Show: February 6-8, 2009 in Savannah (all co-op members are encouraged to participate)

- 2009 Winter Chautauqua- SAVE THE DATE! March 1-2, 2009 will be hosted in North Georgia



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For travel information, visit www.exploregeorgia.org

To learn more about experiencing the Magnolia Midlands, visit www.magnoliamidlands.org