



NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAINS TRAVEL REGION

February 2011 Report

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GEORGIA TOURISM DIVISION NEWS & UPDATE

- Jonathan Boisjolie will join the Georgia Department of Economic Development Tourism Division's sales team this coming Monday (Jan 25) as our International Accounts Manager. Jonathan comes to us with a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst and 10 years of experience in the Travel/Tour industry - most recently as the Senior Manager of Group Sales and Special Events at the High Museum of Art – Atlanta and before that having his own tour operator firm in Orlando.

Jonathan, on International Accounts, will join Pam Kruseck on Domestic Accounts and Joseph Walker, the leader of the sales team. While responsibilities on the team are now broken down between domestic and international, each will aggressively work the group and consumer business segments within their respective market regions. Jonathan's experience in building both group and consumer business at the High Museum and with his tour operator firm will be a valuable addition to the team.

- The Tourism Division suffered the loss of one of our co-workers. After an extended stay in the hospital, Jeffery Tatum who oversaw the Visitor Information Center Operations passed away in late January.
- Thank you** to Hilda Thomason for all her work on the baskets for the Legislators and to everyone who attended and worked the Northeast Georgia Mountains table/booth during Tourism Day at the Capitol. Although you can communicate any time to your legislators, this is a great time to bring attention to the economic benefits of the Tourism Industry in Georgia. It is also a great opportunity to talk to your legislators about issues that concern you and your tourism business.
- 2011 Georgia Travel Guide** was unveiled during Tourism Day at the Capitol. Paula Deen and sons grace the cover. View it online at www.zinio.com/express3?issue=416152361&o=ext&rf=ga_travel11. We'll have it posted to ExploreGeorgia.org very soon, but wanted to pass along the URL to all of you in the meantime. Once we have it posted to the site users can view the Travel Guide in three different ways:
 1. View the flip book (to be posted)
 2. Download the PDF (available now)
 3. Order a hard copy (available now)
- To view photos at www.gdecphotos.smugmug.com. Click on Events, the scroll to the bottom for 2011 Tourism Day photos.
- 20 Days of Prizes Promotion** - A 20-day, instant win giveaway sweepstakes requiring social media users to engage on Facebook, ExploreGeorgia.org or re-tweet messages on Twitter to qualify for daily drawings. The contest will run from late winter to early spring 2011 (February-March). Thanks to all who have contributed prizes that will be used in this promotion. The reason for the promotion is that consumer attention to Georgia events, attractions and lodging historically slow in the first quarter of the year, which means website traffic and user interactions for www.ExploreGeorgia.org also decline. In preparation for our high seasons (spring and summer) the 20 Days of Georgia Giveaway sweepstakes is designed to increase our audience size through incentives that encourage interaction and data capture for future targeted marketing.
- Travel Media Marketplace** will be held in Blue Ridge & Ellijay May 12-14 and Post TMM Fams May 14-17. I am working on a preliminary itinerary that will go through NE GA, Historic Heartland and Classic South.

- 🍌 **Special Offers Newsletter** – To sign up to receive the Special Offers Newsletter go to www.exploregeorgia.org/SpecialOffers .
- 🍌 We are being bombarded with requests for **Civil War** activities in Georgia during the Sesquicentennial. Media, tour operators and others are very interested in what we have planned for the five year commemoration. We send media to www.GACivilWar.org since it is such an excellent resource. Please make sure to submit your Civil War related events over the next five years to www.ExploreGeorgia.org. If you click on the CW box, it will appear on the CW website. Call me if you have any questions.
- 🍌 **Travel South USA** is coming to the “Peach State” for the 29th annual Travel South Showcase, February 22-24, 2011 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Travel South Showcase, the only regional tourism show focused solely on the southern United States, is an invitation-only event open to qualified Tour Operators and Southern Suppliers.
- 🍌 **Travel South Pre-Fam Tours** – As part of the Host State’s duties, pre-show fam tours are conducted. One of which will be in the Northeast Georgia Mountains region. Thanks to all who are hosting the 12 tour operators and journalists. The Fam tours begin Saturday February 19th at 4pm and arrive back in Atlanta on Tuesday February 22nd late morning.
- 🍌 **Regional Visitor Information Centers Workshop** – March 23-25, 2011 in Albany.
- 🍌 **Georgia On My Mind Days at the Georgia Visitor Information Centers**
This is a great opportunity for free marketing and exposure to the thousands of travelers who come through the VICs. Showcase your Georgia attraction, hotel, event, restaurant, destination or product with information, displays and giveaways – it will be a fun and productive day for all! This is generally the highest traffic day for these VICs. **If you want to participate at any or all of the GOMM Days, contact the appropriate VIC to RSVP.**
 - April 1 – Valdosta Valdosta@georgia.org or 229-559-5828
 - April 15 – Sylvania Sylvania@georgia.org or 912-829-0331
 - May 6 – Savannah savannah@georgia.org 912-963-2546
 - May 7 – Plains plains@georgia.org 229-824-7477
 - May 13 – Kingsland kingsland@georgia.org 912-729-3253
 - May 27 – Lavonia Lavonia@georgia.org or 706-356-4019
 - May 27 – Tallapoosa Tallapoosa@georgia.org or 770-574-2621
 - June 10 – Columbus Columbus@georgia.org or 706-649-7455
 - June 17 – West Point westpoint@georgia.org or 706-645-3353
 - June 24 – Ringgold ringgold@georgia.org or 706-937-4211
 - July 15 – Augusta augusta@georgia.org or 706-737-1446
- 🍌 **WWW.EXPLOREGEOORGIA.ORG & TIP(S) OF THE MONTH**
 - 🍌 When submitting an event, the more info you provide the better. If you put basic information, you are not giving the potential visitor enough info to decide to come to your event over another event that is more enticing. Make sure to post your logo or picture as well as pictures of previous events. Get in the habit of taking pictures.
 - 🍌 On the Overview Tab, please fill out the phone number and street address/location. Otherwise folks won’t know where your event is or how to find out more info. This is especially true if you don’t give them a web address to find out more info on your event.
 - 🍌 If you have a pdf of your brochure, you can post it to your listing under the Photos and Brochures tab. Contact me if you have questions.

REGIONAL NEWS

- 🍊 **Winter Chautauqua will be March 6-7, 2011 at the Clarence Brown Conference Center in Cartersville.** Register now at www.winterchautauqua.org (Host Region: Historic HighCountry).
- 🍊 **Persimmon Creek Vineyards** named "Hot Top Ten Small Brand" by Wine Business Monthly
- 🍊 **Stand Fast Cottage** opened in Hoschton. Check it out at www.standfastcottage.com
- 🍊 **York House** in Rabun Gap has a new owner – Janet Fleming

TRAVEL & INDUSTRY TRENDS

- 🍊 **Orbitz Reveals Most-Searched Hotel Amenities of 2010** – Online travel agency Orbitz.com crunched its search data from 2010 to shed some light on what are the most-searched hotel amenities. The results from its analysis, Orbitz says, should tell a bit about what will drive booking decisions in 2011. Online travel sites increasingly let travel shoppers filter potential hotels by the type of amenity they offer, in addition to basics such as specific hotel name, location, rate and some sort of quality rating. Orbitz shoppers searched most for free parking/airport shuttle, swimming pool, pets welcome and spa/fitness center. To find out more, visit www.travel.usatoday.com/hotels/post/2011/01/orbitz-hotel-research-booking-decisions/138891/1; to see the full results, visit www.pressroom.orbitz.com/index.php?s=43&item=840 .
- 🍊 **Driving Demand for Drive-to Meetings** - Are attendees increasingly likely to drive to a meeting rather than fly? Travel industry forecasts and an uptick in regional bookings – corporate as well as association – reported by some CVBs indicate a shift toward more meetings that favor the drive-to market. With everyone from American Express Business Travel to Runzheimer International and the National Business Travel Association predicting a rise in corporate travel this year – along with higher hotel rates and airfares – it's natural to assume that some organizations will find it more cost-effective and convenient to meet closer to home. According to American Express Business Travel's Global Business Travel Forecast, this is indeed likely to be the case. Among the predictions is that more meetings will be held this year than last, but they will tend to be more regional or even local in nature. When the widespread objections to airport body scans and pat-downs are factored in, there is even more reason to believe there will be a shift toward more drive-to meetings in the months ahead. To find out more, visit www.meetingsfocus.com/Magazines/ArticleDetails/tabid/136/ArticleID/15030/Default.aspx.
- 🍊 **IHG Hotels Offer \$100 Checked-Bag Fee Rebate Through Spring Break** – Holiday Inn-parent IHG knows that most travelers hate paying \$25 a bag to check bags with their airline. That's why the hotel giant has decided not only to extend 2010's "Check it free" bag-fee-rebate promo, but to double the offer to \$100. Through April 30, which covers spring break, IHG will reimburse weekend warriors for their airline-checked-bag fees of up to \$100 per household for two bags on the same trip. All 4,500 hotels in IHG-brand hotels are participating, including Holiday Inn, Crowne Plaza, Staybridge Suites and InterContinental. To find out more, visit www.travel.usatoday.com/hotels/post/2011/01/holiday-inn-ihg-hotels-double-checked-bag-fee-deal-winter-spring/137705/1.
- 🍊 **Americans Planning More Vacations, Spending** – Despite high unemployment and a slow economic recovery, more people are planning to travel this year and they expect to spend more money than they did in 2010, according to a new report. Thirty-five percent of 1,403 consumers surveyed by travel website travelocity.com said they will increase their travel in 2011, and only one percent said they do not plan to go anywhere, compared to four percent last year. More than a quarter of people said they would spend \$2,000 or more on their holidays this year, up from 20 percent in 2010. While roughly half expect to keep their travel budget largely unchanged from last year, 37 percent said they will dig deeper into their pockets in 2011. To find out more, visit www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41459140/ns/travel-seasonal_travel.
- 🍊 **Conventions Go to Smaller Cities** – So-called second-tier convention cities are getting a better look from meeting planners. As companies and associations slowly raise budgets for meetings and conventions, they're giving greater consideration to smaller and less-expensive cities that they once might have bypassed for more glamorous locales. "A lot of second-tier cities have been very aggressive in site-inspection (trips), promotions

and financial offerings," says Kevin Iwamoto of StarCite, which connects meeting planners and sellers. Incentive meetings are also making a comeback, often away from Las Vegas, Chicago or Orlando. To find out more, visit travel.usatoday.com/news/story/2011/02/Conventions-go-to-Memphis-Savannah-other-smaller-cities/43425600/1.

- 🍌 **NBTA Renamed as Global Business Travel Association** – Last week, the National Business Travel Association (NBTA) unveiled its new name, the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA). The group said the name change was made to meet the growing demands and increasing globalization of business travel. To find out more, visit www.travelpulse.com/nbta-renamed-as-global-business-travel-association.html.

MEDIA, PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING

- 🍌 **Agri Tourism Signage:** For more information on this program, go to www.agr.georgia.gov/portal/site/AGR/menuitem.e429305ad2099d1d6eff626ed03036a0/?vgnnextoid=5161733860a06210VgnVCM100000bf01020aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=5a0121e7ea1e5210VgnVCM100000bf01020aRCRD and contact Matt Kulinski at matthew.kulinski@agr.georgia.gov if you have any questions.
- 🍌 **Antiques Road Show** coming to Atlanta August 6th: <http://blogs.ajc.com/radio-tv-talk/2011/01/11/antique-roadshow-coming-to-atlanta-august-6/>
- 🍌 **Cemetery Tourism** - If you or someone in your community is thinking about putting together a cemetery tour, here's a good resource for researching renowned people who may be buried in your county. Some are more known than others, but the descriptions can help you tell the story. www.findagrave.com/php/famous.php?page=state&FSstateid=12
- 🍌 **Flavor of GA Food Product Contest** - Entries are now being accepted for the 2011 Flavor of Georgia contest, conducted by the University of Georgia Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development (CAED). The winners will be announced during Georgia Ag Day March 22, 2011. Online registration will run through Feb. 18, 2011 at www.flavorofgeorgia.caes.uga.edu . For more information, call 706-542-9809 or e-mail spkane@uga.edu. Judges look for market-ready foods, either commercially available or prototypes, from across the state.
- 🍌 **STS Top 20 Events Nominations** – Go to www.southeasttourism.org/top20/ for info on how to submit your event.
- 🍌 **U.S. Travel provides toolkit for Travel & Tourism Week May 7-15** - National Travel and Tourism Week, May 7-15, is a collective effort to promote the power of travel through customized events in communities nationwide. The goal is to create better awareness of the industry's contribution to the state's economy and to recognize the cultural and social benefits created by travel and tourism. In 2011, the U.S. Travel Rally Day will be hosted on May 10 in cities and towns across America, with convention and visitors bureau leaders uniting with state and local government and business leaders to promote the message that "Travel Matters." www.ustravel.org/marketing/national-travel-and-tourism-week/toolkit
- 🍌 **From the AAA Morrow Manager:** *"AAA Morrow saves our clients time, money by providing them with affordable travel destinations suggestions and information. Our event is scheduled for February 10th, 2011 we are targeting customers in the branch area Clayton, Henry, Newnan, and Fayette county areas to RSVP their attendance. In the past we have had 30 – 60 people show up for the event. We can add a line on the entry form to request the customers provide their email address and it will be shared with Explore Georgia attraction locations that participate on that day. Please let me know if anyone would like to send pens, bags or any kind of trinket that would remind the customers of their attraction when planning getaways or vacations. I will also have 3 slots open for a 5- 7 minute presentations/or video about their attractions if they would like to attend. We plan to begin presentations at 6:00pm and our event will be from 5:00pm to 7:30pm. Thanks I look forward to your response."* Theresa Billinger-Ward ~ 770-961-8085 X2226

- 🍌 **2011 Motorcycle Map for Georgia** - Due to requests from several advertisers as well as our reps we are delaying the printing of our 2011 map until February 2011. A number of businesses want to come aboard but also want to get by the holiday season for a variety of reasons. We fully understand and are definitely willing to accommodate them. We appreciate your support with this effort, we feel it is making a difference for businesses in state as well as for those riders in Georgia and those coming through the Peach State. If you have any input for the 2011 map please feel free to pass it along. Contact: Dennis Munden - Owner/President www.Motorcycle-Maps.us Cell: 910.639.7093 & Fax: 910.778.1611 & On Facebook @ Motorcycle-Maps.us

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, ARTICLES AND INDUSTRY NEWS

- 🍌 The **Georgia Entertainment Industry Incentive Act** has encouraged many filmmakers and television producers to select the state for various filming projects. According to a [report](#) released by the Georgia Department of Economic Development, the economic impact of production activity increased 440 per cent between fiscal years 2007 and 2010, surging \$1.4 billion. www.facebook.com/GeorgiaFilmsCreateGeorgiaJobs is a Facebook Page created for everyone who has benefited from the GA Entertainment Industry Incentive Act and the tremendous surge of economic activity in the state. Visit the Facebook Page and share your story with the other readers. Feel free to circulate the link to others who are deeply interested in keeping the film industry in Georgia alive and vibrant.
- 🍌 **Job Opportunities** – Go to www.southeasttourism.org/about/jobs.html for postings of available job openings.

GRANTS & FUNDING SOURCES

- 🍌 **List of Grants & Other Funding Sources** - Information on grant programs and other funding sources - www.georgia.org/GeorgiaIndustries/Tourism/Programs/Pages/Grants.aspx#other
- 🍌 **Funding initiatives through Georgia State Parks** - The following is a URL for two programs (the "Land and Water Conservation Fund" and the "Recreational Trails Program"). The Coastal region has utilized these grants for tourism related projects: www.gastateparks.org/net/content/page.aspx?s=8084.0.1.5&siteid=5&wrapid=1
- 🍌 **List of Funding Sources for Historic Preservation Projects (Georgia Historic Preservation Division)**
This is a long and extensive list...be sure to check it out periodically for new funding opportunities. www.gashpo.org/content/displaycontent.asp?txtDocument=213&utm_source=Georgia+Historic+Preservation+Division+e-newsletters&utm_campaign=505ab88541-Preservation_Georgia_Online_June_26-July+2_2010&utm_medium=email

SAVE THE DATE!

- 🍌 Feb. 21-23 – Southeast Festivals and Events Conference – Stone Mountain – www.southeastfestivals.org
- 🍌 Feb. 22 – 24 – Travel South Showcase, Atlanta www.travelsouthusa.org
- 🍌 Feb 25-26 – Weekend for Rivers, Roswell www.garivers.org
- 🍌 Mar. 6-7 – Winter Chautauqua Tourism Conference – Cartersville www.winterchautauqua.com
- 🍌 Mar. 23-25 – RVIC Workshop – Albany
- 🍌 Mar 31 – Apr 1 – Statewide Preservation Conference, Macon
- 🍌 April 8 – STS Top 20 Events deadline for events in October, November, December 2011
- 🍌 April 8-10 – Southeast Travel Show
- 🍌 April 14-16 – Southern Women's Show
- 🍌 May 7-15 – National Travel & Tourism Week
- 🍌 May 12-14 – Travel Media Marketplace – Blue Ridge/Ellijay
- 🍌 July 8 – STS Top 20 Events deadline for events in January, February, March 2012
- 🍌 October 7 – STS Top 20 Events deadline for events in April, May, June 2012

Tourism Industry Calendar – For a listing of tourism industry events such as conferences, trade shows, etc., go to www.georgia.org/GeorgiaIndustries/Tourism/Pages/IndustryCalendar.aspx.