



NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAINS TRAVEL REGION

January 2012 Report

Cheryl Smith
Regional Tourism Representative
GA Dept of Economic Development
Office: 770-535-5757 ~ Cell: 678-640-4355
csmith@georgia.org

GEORGIA TOURISM DIVISION NEWS & UPDATE

- 🍌 **TDAG Update:** The TDAG Board of Directors has chosen to cease operation of the alliance as of November 30, 2011. This decision was made after numerous TDAG Executive Committee Meetings, Board Meetings and planning sessions with other tourism industry partners and professionals,

We are pleased to announce that the Tourism and Entertainment Committee of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce will be taking the lead role in tracking legislative issues in the upcoming session of the Georgia General Assembly. The committee has recently expanded and seven of the previous TDAG Board members are on the Tourism and Entertainment Committee.

Additionally, three important tourism industry organizations have been working together to develop a common legislative platform, coordinating industry days at the Capitol and improving communication between all three entities. These include the GACVB, GHLA and GRA. We have already seen positive results from this improved working relationship and the three entities working in partnership with the GA Department of Economic Development. All are committed to working together with the GA Chamber to move Georgia Tourism ahead.

- 🍌 **Note from Kevin Langston:** Joseph Walker has decided to resign his position here at the Department. In his couple of years with Georgia Tourism, Joseph did some great work opening up new markets for the state in Italy, France, China and Brazil and helped further develop existing relationships in the UK and Germany. He felt that this was a good time to move on to his next challenge in the private sector promoting international tourism and sales, likely focusing on Brazil.
- 🍌 The GDEcD **FY11 Annual Report** detailing the results of our work during the last fiscal year is now available online at the following link:
http://georgia.org/About/Documents/FY11_Annual_Report/GDEcD_FY11_Annual_Report.pdf

🍌 **November Smith Travel data**

- Hotel/motel **occupancy** decreased -0.9% statewide in November 2011
- November 2011 **room rates (ADR)** in Georgia were down slightly -0.7%
- Statewide, **RevPAR** was down -1.5%.
- Georgia **room revenues** decreased -2.3% in November 2011
- **Room Demand** decreased -1.6% in the state from November 2010
- **Room Supply** was down 0.7%

YTD

- Hotel/motel **occupancy** is up 3.6% statewide YTD (through November 2011)
- YTD **room rates (ADR)** in Georgia are up 0.6%
- Statewide, **RevPAR** is up 4.2% year-to-date.
- Georgia **room revenues** are up 4% year-to date.
- **Room Demand** is up 3.3% in the state year-to-date.
- **Room Supply** is down -0.2% in the state year-to-date.

- 🍌 Stefanie Paupeck recently read a story about how Disney is having a big event for leap year! Are any of you doing anything for leap year? Let me know and I will share with Stefanie so she can try and pitch a story as well. <http://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/2012/01/leap-year-2012-brings-one-more-disney-day-to-disney-parks/>

REGIONAL NEWS

- 🍌 **Tourism Job Openings:** www.southeasttourism.org/IndustryJobs.cfm
- 🍌 **Jerry Brown** is now new Executive Director of the Alpine Helen-White County CVB. His email is jbrown@helenga.org.
- 🍌 **The Toccoa Downtown Historic District**, roughly bounded by Alexander Street on the west, Currahee Street on the south, Hill Street on the east, and Savannah Street on the north, in Toccoa, Stephens County was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 6, 2011. The City of Toccoa sponsored the nomination and a consultant prepared the nomination materials.
- 🍌 **Jamie Longstreet Paterson**, General Longstreet's granddaughter and his nearest living relative has suffered complications following gall bladder surgery. Jamie is a great lady and a friend and inspiration to us. Please include her in your prayers
- 🍌 **Jack and the Dustbowl** was filmed in Banks County this past summer and was recently screened at 12Stone Church in Lawrenceville.
- 🍌 **Dahlonega is producing a Pad Map** – Contact Jay Markwalter (jay@dahlonega.org) if you want to advertise on it. They are great ways to help visitors find things to see and do.
- 🍌 **Georgia Outdoor Recreational Pass** - Effective January 1, 2012, a Georgia Outdoor Recreational Pass (GORP) is required to use 32 properties managed by Wildlife Resources Division. (In all, Wildlife Resources manages more than 100 properties. GORP affects only one-third of the wildlife areas statewide.) **Dawson Forest & Wilson Shoals WMA are the only ones in Northeast Georgia that require the GORP.**
- 🍌 **Yonah Mountain Vineyards** took two Gold, one Double Gold and Best of Class, one Silver and two Bronze medals at the 2011 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition (SFCWC), the most awards of any East Coast winery. Read more on the Visit Northeast Georgia Mountains Facebook page.

PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING, CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND OTHER INFO

- 🍌 Perhaps some of you would be interested in this contest through the Department of Agriculture: www.agr.georgia.gov/flavor-of-ga-contest-now-accepting-entries.aspx. Deadline is early February. Please share with anyone you feel might be interested.
- 🍌 Check this website out: www.hicksville.com Very creative. Move your mouse around on the home page to see the links)
- 🍌 **Mark Mattson of TravelTools in Philadelphia says...**If you pay extra for mobile apps, your web dev is either gouging you or doesn't know what he or she is doing. Apps are so simple to build within a modern web framework, they should be free for DMOs.
- 🍌 The U.S. economy is expected to continue modest growth in 2012, says the [January issue of the U.S. Travel Outlook](http://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/january2012_public.html). (www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/january2012_public.html) While some uncertainty remains, recent economic data has outperformed expectations. The housing market is showing slight gains, and the labor market appears to be strengthening. Employment in the travel industry rose by 7,000 in December and accounted for seven percent of jobs created last year.

The U.S. Travel Association expects about a 1.5 percent increase in domestic travel in 2012, while international travel to the U.S. is expected to increase by over 3 percent. Hotel demand is expected to slow in 2012, though ADR is expected to pick up to about an increase of 4 percent over 2011. Business travel is forecasted to do well this year. According to Deloitte, 85 percent of business travelers surveyed expect to take the same number or more trips in 2012 than in 2011. Nearly half of the younger (18-29-year-olds) say they prefer their favorite hotel brand even if the location isn't the most convenient. They also prefer working in more social settings such as the lobby or common areas.





Leisure travel is expected to grow about 1.5 percent this year, led by auto travel. The Hotel Interactive Trend Watch 2012 notes people are traveling just as much, but by car and children are determining the travel agenda. These markets are the ones to tap. Traveling sports teams and even spelling bees are giving parents reasons to book rooms. Most travelers, however, expect to spend about the same as this year. According to a new research study by the Atmosphere Research Group, pricing pressure is frustrating many leisure travelers.

Robert Rauch, president of a San Diego-based hospitality management company, has compiled and released his list of Top 10 hospitality industry trends for 2012. Many of the trends are related to technology changes. Rauch predicts that online bookings will continue to grow modestly and there will be more mobile bookings and research. Google, according to Rauch, is projecting that mobile will overtake PCs as the most common Web-based device by 2013. Social media will continue to transform connections with travelers. Says Rauch, by 2016 half of the travel industry will be using social media as a way of generating revenue and bookings.

Marketing trend reports are common, especially at the beginning of the year, reports American Express Open Forum, but Landor brand strategy consultants have spelled out the most relevant for the coming year. The popularity of abstract brands will force marketers to become better storytellers, says Landor, and don't forget about the Boomers. There are 77 million of them in the U.S. and they control over half of discretionary spending and eighty percent of leisure travel. Another trend to follow is the ever-increasing use of photos online. Over 90 billion images have been uploaded to Facebook, says Landor. 2012 will see more and more marketers expressing their brands by regularly sharing photos electronically. As well, new applications such as Pinterest and Instagram are easily allowing photography to be used in powerful ways. To read the full article, click [here](http://landor.com/#/talk/articles-publications/articles/landor's-2012-trends-forecast-market-trends-and-their-impact-on-brands/). (<http://landor.com/#/talk/articles-publications/articles/landor's-2012-trends-forecast-market-trends-and-their-impact-on-brands/>)

What about QR codes? Quick-response codes are everywhere these days, but [are people using them?](#) Not really, says Ad Age Digital. The codes are a great idea in theory, but only 5 percent of Americans who own mobile phones actually use them. People are confused about how to scan them, there is little uniformity among the applications that read them, and many who have used them were disappointed by the usefulness of the information offered by them, or the fact that they were simply redirected to the company's website. This doesn't mean that marketers will stop using them, but companies need to make sure that the consumers they are targeting understand how to use them. For example, the Ad Age Digital report says, Macy's initiative last spring to educate consumers about its QR codes exceeded expectations and got much positive feedback. Use of the codes tripled after the companies national TV ad campaign educating consumers about the codes.

GRANTS & FUNDING SOURCES

-  **GRANT: America's Historical and Cultural Organizations** - Application Deadline: January 11, 2012
More info at www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/AHCO.htm
-  **In search of funding for cultural heritage tourism?** Click [here](#) for a blog that includes targeted list of federal grant opportunities for preservation and cultural heritage tourism projects culled from the comprehensive database of [federal grants](#). The National Trust for Historic Preservation's federal grants office maintains this blog which also includes a calendar of upcoming deadlines and useful tips to help you navigate through the federal grant application process. For more ideas check out the [funding section](#) of this website.
-  Administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, **Preservation Services Fund Grants** are awarded to nonprofit organizations and public agencies for preservation planning and education efforts. Grant awards range from \$500 to \$5,000. For more information, contact the Southern Office at 843-722-8552 or soro@nthp.org or visit the [National Trust website](#). Application deadlines are **February 1**, **June 1** and **October 1** each year.
-  **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.

http://georgiashpo.org/sites/uploads/hpd/pdf/Funding_Sources_for_HP_2010.pdf

- **FFY 2012 HPF grant cycle begins now!** Application packets for the next cycle of federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants are now available on HPD's website. HPF grants are available to Certified Local Governments (CLGs) interested in completing survey and planning or building/site-specific predevelopment projects.

Eligible survey and planning projects include:

- historic resources surveys
- National Register nominations
- design guidelines
- brochures
- website development
- heritage education materials
- workshops/conferences

Eligible predevelopment projects include:

- historic structure reports
- preservation plans
- architectural drawings and specifications

The postmark deadline is February 1, 2012, and grant awards will be announced in March 2012. Projects may begin in April 2012 and must be completed by September 30, 2013.

If you have questions about the application process, would like to discuss possible project ideas, or would like to receive an application in the mail or by email, please email Carole Moore, tax and grants coordinator, or call 404-651-5566.

SAVE THE DATE!

- 🍌 January 11, 2012 – **NE GA Mtns RTA Meeting** - Go to www.GeorgiaMountain.org to register
- 🍌 January 24, 2012 – Travel & Tourism Day at the Capitol – Atlanta, GA
Facebook event link: www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=170319146389771
 - Jan. 23rd – Educational session on how to work with your legislators.
 - Jan. 24th – Travel and Tourism Day – new format, so stay tuned for details!
- 🍌 February 8, 2012 – **NE GA Mtns RTA Meeting**
- 🍌 March 4-5, 2012 – Winter Chautauqua (Gainesville) For info & registration, go to www.winterchautauqua.com
- 🍌 March 19-21, 2012 - Join STS in Tunica, Miss. for the annual Spring Meeting. This year's theme, "Staying the Course," delivers strategies and tips not only for maintaining last year's gains, but also for growing them. STS also recognizes future Travel Marketing Professionals with a special luncheon. A voluntourism project, a golf outing and a special tennis roundup are also in the offing. For more info or to register, go to www.southeasttourism.net/SpringMeeting.cfm
- 🍌 Mar 31-Apr 1 - Weekend for Rivers, GRN's Annual Conference and River Celebration at the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell www.garivers.org
- 🍌 April 6, 2012 – **STS Top 20** Events deadline for events in October/November/December
- 🍌 April 11, 2012 – **NE GA Mtns RTA Meeting**
- 🍌 Apr 19-20 Statewide Preservation Conference – Roswell <http://georgiashpo.org>
- 🍌 July 6, 2012 – **STS Top 20** Events deadline for events in January/February/March
- 🍌 August 26-29 – Governor's Conference on Tourism - Atlanta Marriott Buckhead Hotel & Conference Center
- 🍌 October 5, 2012 – **STS Top 20** Events deadline for events in April/May/June
- 🍌 January 4, 2013 – **STS Top 20** Events deadline for events in July/August/September
- 🍌 April 5, 2013 - **STS Top 20** Events deadline for events in October/November/December