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NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL TOURISM REPORT November 2009

TOURISM DIVISION UPDATE

- **The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) has named Kevin Langston the Deputy Commissioner of the state's tourism division. In this role he will spearhead the state's work to grow the tourism industry in Georgia.**

Mr. Langston's new role will take effect December 1 upon the retirement of Charlie Gatlin, current Deputy Commissioner for Tourism and Marketing, who has served the state for 24 years. Mr. Gatlin began his career with the department as Director of Marketing in the business recruitment division, and has held many vital positions within the agency, including Projects Team Leader, Chief of Staff and Deputy Commissioner for business recruitment. Mr. Gatlin is also executive director of the Georgia Allies.

In addition, Greg Torre has been named Division Director of the Marketing and Communications division for the department. Mr. Torre will be responsible for the strategies, execution and results of GDEcD's marketing and communications initiatives, including the Global Georgia international marketing program, the Georgia Dream Pass, Georgia.org and exploregeorgia.org.

- Many thanks go to Mary Boland with the Rabun County CVB, The Dillard House, all the sponsors and participants of the recent **Agri Tourism Conference**. There will be two additional Conferences. If you know of anyone who might be interested in going,
 - Check out details for the next conference in Middle Georgia on December 2 and 3, 2009 at Oakhurst Farm ~ 19888 GA Hwy 219, West Point, GA.
 - The southern workshop/conference will be held in the **spring of 2010, dates to be determined, workshop will be held in Valdosta.**
- The press release for the Co-Op Marketing Grants will be forthcoming. Congrats to all those who received a grant. I will be in touch with those who did not to review their grant application and make suggestions for next year. For the most part, many did not receive funds due to the reduction of money from 1 million to \$500K.
- **Product Development Grants** – Congratulations to recipients. Award notices have gone out. Press Release to come out soon.
- **Group Travel:**
 - **The Georgia Tourism Division will again be participating as sponsors of the National Tour Association (NTA) Annual Marketplace and the American Bus Association (ABA) Annual Marketplace.** This sponsorship provides us with a booth on the marketplace floor where we will maximize our exposure in this market. Georgia's theme for this year's marketplace is *Civil War-Sesquicentennial Commemoration*. We will distribute Georgia items, Sesquicentennial and Civil War itineraries, and giveaways commemorating Georgia's role in the war at the booth. Please contact Katie Baasen via email for more information or to participate, kbaasen@georgia.org.
 - Co-ops are available for state partners: Kudzu Sponsorship - NTA: \$500 and ABA: \$350 Peach Sponsorship - NTA: \$750 and ABA: \$650
 - **GEORGIA VIC: Group Leads from GA VICs for September** – I have already sent this to those folks on my Group Leads List. If you have not gotten them and would like the, let me know

- Katie Baasen's **Group Tour Boot Camp** is scheduled to take place December 3-4, 2009 in Macon. Registration information and course descriptions will be available in early November. We have some exciting things planned - so get ready!
- GDEcD is organizing a **Family Reunion Seminar** for state tourism partners in January 2010. This seminar will cover the family reunion market including characteristics, trends, and how you can break into this growing segment. Registration information including date and location coming soon.
- **Georgia Tourism Brochure Room** – If you are participating in the Brochure Room on exploregeorgia.org you should now be receiving invoices for your mailings and you can also view your inventory online. If you have questions or if you would like to participate in the Brochure Room contact: Peggy Smith at psmith@georgia.org or 404.962.4147.
- The 2008 Tourism Economic Impact Numbers – (preliminary data) is available under “Industry Research” on MarketGeorgia.org- or click on the link below for more info.
www.georgia.org/Georgialndustries/Tourism/Pages/IndustryResearch.aspx

Contact us now to secure your highlighted presence on special page in the Official Georgia State Travel Guide listing your mobile Travel Guide link. Learn about your opportunities on the Georgia Mobile Travel Guide by visiting www.gamobiletravelguide.com, or call us to discuss your options. Print Deadline: **November 9th, 2009** ACT NOW to include your ad and link to your mobile website www.gamobiletravelguide.com.

Increase your sales opportunities. Connect with 61.7 million Georgia Visitors.
For more info, contact: **Franci Edgerly** |President & CEO | ITI Marketing, Inc.:
www.iti-marketing.com | www.Meetings2Go.mobi | www.Vacations2Discover.com
www.Destinations2discover.com | P: +1 912-267-1558 | F: +1 912-267-6025| E: franci@iti-marketing.com

- www.ExploreGeorgia.org:
I wanted to make sure that you all know about the FREE opportunity that you have to post Special Offers and Packages on Exploregeorgia.org. Both Special Offers and Packages are featured on a prominent tab on the top of the home page of www.exploregeorgia.org

Here's an example of that page - www.exploregeorgia.org/SpecialOffers. Both Special Offers and Packages rotate on this page to show consumers all that are listed.

Make sure that you are taking full advantage of this FREE opportunity to show the consumer your Special Offers and Packages.

- Enter your Special Offers on your partner page and they automatically go into the rotation (if you need help entering them please don't hesitate to contact me).
- For Packages, enter them as a special offer and then let me know right away that you have entered a Package so that I can take the necessary steps to get your Package listed on the above tab.

Again this is a FREE opportunity. There really is NO reason for you to not take advantage of it. You can create any offer that you want...you can have it on the site for any time period that you want. Have a slow weekend coming up...post a special offer, what have you got to lose other than business? **If you have already posted a PACKAGE, please let me know so I can have Vickie pull it out of Special Offers as Packages get highlighted more prominently.**

SURVEYS, MARKETING, TRAVEL & INDUSTRY TRENDS

- Request from Judy Renfroe: I am looking for a simple Economic Impact of Festivals and Events model. I have tried to decipher the one on GDEcD's web site but without my quantitative mathematical degree from Georgia Tech...I'm lost. Does anyone have formula/model that is understandable? I am working on a project for a city and all of their events are free to the public-so no entrance fee. I am trying to determine the EI based on vendor

sales, street traffic, etc. Please help if you can. You can reach Judy at judyrenfroe@gmail.com or 770.579.8264. Judy E. Renfroe, 1450 Brentwood Way, Marietta, GA 30067

- **Study: U.S. Cultural and Heritage Travel Popular** – A recent study reveals that 78 percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, translating to 118.3 million adults each year. With cultural and heritage travelers spending an average of \$994 per trip, they contribute more than \$192 billion annually to the U.S. economy. The study is the first to segment cultural and/or heritage travelers, showing the diverse groups that exist within this broader category of traveler. The segmentation analysis uncovered five different types of cultural and heritage travelers: Passionate, Well-rounded, Aspirational, Self-Guided, and Keeping it Light. Three segments – Passionate, Well-rounded, and Self-guided – were more serious about their travels and said that cultural and heritage activities had a greater impact on their destination choice. Together, these three segments represent 40 percent of all leisure travelers and contribute nearly \$124 billion to the U.S. economy. The study was conducted by Mandala Research for the U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism (USCHT) Marketing Council, in conjunction with the U.S. Dept. of Commerce. To find out more about the study and about cultural heritage tourism, visit <http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org>.
- **Paying Closer Attention to Expense Accounts** – In his “On the Road” column for The New York Times, Joe Sharkey tells of Vince Vitti, a stickler about expense accounts and author of “Travology: Managing Travel Thru the Great Recession.” You should get to know him, Sharkey writes — or, at least, learn more about his thinking. As business travel slowly comes back, expense accounts are being more carefully scrutinized. To find out more, visit <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/27/business/27road.html?ref=business>.
- **Travelhorizons Survey Predicts Swine Flu Could Hit Travel Hard** – The October 2009 travel horizons survey, co-authored by Ypartnership and the U.S. Travel Association, reports that swine flu could have a significant impact on travel. The U.S. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention is reporting the H1N1 virus is now “widespread” in 46 of 50 states. Numerous schools have been closed and public events canceled as a result. Among respondents who intend to take a leisure trip during the next six months (from now through the end of April 2010), over one third would be “very/extremely likely” to alter their travel plans should their intended destination experience a widespread outbreak of the H1N1 virus. When asked how they would change their travel plans, nearly half (45 percent) said they would postpone their trip until the outbreak subsided, one-third stated they would visit a different destination, and three out of 10 (31 percent) said they would cancel their trip. To find out more, visit <http://www.travelpulse.com/Resources/Editorial.aspx?n=62640>.
- **Facebook Becoming Big Friend Of Small Businesses** - Firms are building fan bases on Facebook, the social networking Web site, and using it to connect with customers. Charles Nelson, president of Sprinkles Cupcakes, the Beverly Hills baker to the stars, doesn't have a Facebook profile. Nelson, who works seven days a week, has no time for chatting online with Facebook friends. But Nelson is logged on to Facebook all the time. That's because more than 70,000 people have declared themselves fans of Sprinkles' Facebook page. Each day on the Web site, Sprinkles announces a secret word, such as “ganache” or “bunny,” and the first 25 or 50 people to show up at any of its five stores and whisper that word get a free cupcake. Facebook is not just for friends anymore. The free social networking site -- blocked in many workplaces as a potential time-waster -- is increasingly becoming an inexpensive marketing tool for small businesses. To find out more, visit <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-facebook-smallbiz27-2009oct27,0,7371262.story>.
- **NBTA Report Predicts Increase in U.S. Business Travel** – The National Business Travel Association (NBTA) has released its 2010 U.S. Business Travel Buyers' Cost Forecast. The average hotel rate this year is forecast to be \$136 and the NBTA projects that will continue to drop by 2 to 8 percent next year. Air travel will stay roughly the same for 2010, ranging from 2 percent below to 3 percent above this year's fares and car rental rates will dip slightly, by 1 percent to 3 percent. With air travel and car rental costs expected to remain nearly flat and hotel rates expected to decline, businesses expect to travel more. That growth in travel is expected to lead to increases in travel expenditures. To find out more, visit <http://www.travelpulse.com/Resources/Editorial.aspx?n=62463>.
- **Business Travelers Take to Their Bikes** - Experts say is a growing number of business travelers bicycle while on assignment. Hotels often offer bicycle rentals and some business travelers are even bringing along their own bike. Many American cities have created bike paths and lanes, improved markings on streets and installed bicycle traffic lights. Reasons for biking popularity include health, lack of good public transportation, cost savings to the company due to not renting a car thus eliminating gas prices, and bypassing rush
- **Survey: Associations Incorporating Social Media into Events** – Eighty-three percent of associations currently are using one or more digital tools to market and execute their events, although most are not yet using those tools to their full potential, according to a new survey from Champion Exposition Services, a San Francisco-based event and tradeshow marketing firm. The survey, which asked associations about their use and adoption of social

media tools, found that 91 percent plan to use one or more digital tools in the next 12 months, and that 66 percent plan to incorporate more digital tools and experiences into future events. To find out more, visit http://www.mimegasite.com/mimegasite/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1004032698.

- **Rising U.S. Gasoline Prices May Hurt Recovery** - Americans are paying more for gasoline than they did last year as the holidays approached – billions of dollars that could instead go to books, clothes and toys. U.S. gas averaged nearly \$2.70 a gallon last week, the highest price of the year – adding bad news to an already fragile economy and making it even less likely that people will spend their way out of the recession. Gas prices are rising even as Americans drive much less than they did before the recession hit. A weak dollar is making fuel more expensive. And prices will probably stay high because oil companies have become much more conservative about producing fuel after getting burned by the dramatic fall in energy prices last year. To find out more, visit the [Dallas News](#).
- **American Express Clients Expect China to Lead Business Travel Recovery** – American Express Business Travel has announced the findings of two surveys which offered separate yet similar predictions on the health and future of business travel heading into 2010. The findings indicate that clients expect China will lead business travel recovery. Further, investment by global companies and local companies in China should increase over the next 12 months. To find out more, visit [Business Wire](#).
- **H1N1 Flu Spreading Changes in Behavior** – Everywhere, the cry is the same: Wash your hands. Cover your mouth. Use your sleeve. On the street, the handshake is being supplanted by the fist dap and the elbow bump. Some companies are going out of their way to encourage ill workers to stay home with some even re-thinking their sick day policy. Airlines — aware that some travelers would rather fly sick than pay more — are following long-standing policies to keep manifestly sick people off flights but also giving them a break. To find out more, visit http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-10-29-flu_N.htm.
- **Business Travel Survey Finds H1N1 Not Hurting Much** – A recent survey by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives reports said that despite Pres. Obama's declaration of a national emergency to deal with the rapid spread of swine flu, the vast majority of the companies aren't canceling meetings or business trips because of it. In the survey, 91 percent of those responding said they were not holding off on planning meetings or conferences. Even more telling, 96 percent said business travelers had not asked to hold off heading out on trips during the flu season. To find out more, visit <http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/wingingit/66019968.html> and http://www.acte.org/resources/press_release.php?id=437.

OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF

- **Death To Ad Equivalency Reports!** By Joe Ciarallo on Oct 30, 2009 11:38 AM
Have you ever had to compile an ad equivalency report? Do you even know what one is? It's pretty simple, actually. An ad equivalency report attempts to compare the value a brand received from a PR campaign - media coverage, etc. - with the value the brand could have received spending the same money on advertising. Not only do they not work, they can be misleading, many PR measurement experts say.

"...with the rise of social media, AVEs have little meaning when the value of the most traditional media is dropping daily, and the power of individual blogs, many of which don't accept advertising, is growing exponentially," wrote Katie Paine in a Ragan.com op-ed today (<http://tiny.cc/P4OKo>).

Paine has been in the measurement game for a while and is happy to announce that the Institute for Public Relations' Measurement Commission recently voted 19 to 2 to 'reject AVEs (ad value equivalency), the concept and the practice.'

www.mediabistro.com/pmewser/measurement/death_to_ad_equivalency_reports_141790.asp
- **Museum Store Association** - www.museumdistrict.com – has some very good info in their free newsletter. You may want to subscribe. MSA is a nonprofit, international association organized to advance the success of cultural commerce and of the professionals engaged in it. By encouraging high standards of professional competence and conduct, MSA helps retail professionals at cultural institutions better serve their organizations and the public.
- **CVBs Work Hard to Create Community Awareness** – Although much of their marketing is aimed at attracting visitors from outside their local areas, many convention and visitors bureaus also consider it important to promote to local residents. Such efforts generally have two goals: first, solidifying local support for CVBs by making people aware of what they do and how tourism contributes to the local economy, and second, encouraging people to visit local attractions and restaurants and to use local accommodations for visiting family and friends. CVBs use a

variety of methods to reach out to the local community. They sponsor events or have booths at local festivals, write columns for local publications, appear on local television and radio shows, speak to local organizations, send out print and e-mail newsletters, conduct hospitality training, serve on local committees and boards, and sponsor contests. To find out more, visit <http://www.grouptravelleader.com/Article.aspx?id=229>.

- **Some Hotels Serve Up Free Phone Calls** – Business travelers who rely on cellphones to avoid exorbitant charges for using hotel room phones may want to reconsider. An increasing number of hotels provide free local calls, and some provide free long-distance calls within the USA. That's a big switch for many hotel chains that profited from charging guests to use the hotel's land-line phones before cellphones and Internet communication became widespread. USA Today surveyed 82 hotel brands and found that about 70 percent offer free local calls in at least some hotels. Nearly half offer free local calls in all hotels. Some hotels give free phone service only to members of their frequent-guest programs. To find out more, visit http://www.usatoday.com/travel/hotels/2009-10-19-charge-phones-hotels_N.htm.
- **Flip-Flop Set Takes Up Slack at Hotels** - Faced with a big decline in the business travelers who once filled its beds, the staid InterContinental West Miami has been forced to pursue vacationers with new vigor. That has meant livening up a spacious pool that used to be empty except for the occasional executive swimming morning laps. The trend isn't one to cheer about for hotels that have catered to corporate clients: Leisure travelers spend less on lodging than do executives traveling on expense accounts. And leisure travelers can't be counted on to fill up rooms during the week. But the poolside clatter reflects a broader trend under way across the country in the hotel industry, with vacationers benefiting from corporate America's stinginess when it comes to travel in a rocky economy. With business hotels losing their white-collar customers, the flip-flop set is moving in. To find out more, visit the Chicago Tribune by going to www.chicagotribune.com/business/chi-tc-biz-trav-hotels-1001-1011oct19_0,1982177.story.

- **How to Survive and Thrive in Today's Economy**



The recent recession is having a big impact on many sectors of the cultural and heritage tourism industry. In response to this challenge, the **National Endowment for the Arts** has provided a Chairman's Extraordinary Action Grant to the **Heritage Tourism Program at the National Trust for Historic Preservation** to create a new online survival toolkit on "*How to Survive and Thrive in Today's Economy.*"

As part of this effort the Heritage Tourism Program will seek out and share creative strategies that cultural and heritage attractions are using to survive and thrive in a down economy. The creation of this toolkit offers a pivotal opportunity to provide urgently needed assistance to the key fields that make up the cultural and heritage tourism industry including the arts, preservation, tourism, museums, humanities, and other related fields. While impacts of the economic downturn will be noted, the focus of the toolkit will be on positive solutions and timely resources to address today's challenges. The Heritage Tourism Program will be surveying cultural and heritage organizations and attractions this fall as the first step towards creating this toolkit.

- To respond to the online survey, go <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e2lhjgupg0ie34yh/a012ig1kxowm7/questions>
- or for more information, contact the **Heritage Tourism Program** at cht@nthp.org .

- **ARTICLES**

- Volunteer Vacations: Making a getaway a way to help others
- What is RSS?
- Gender and Age Consumption Differs in Evolving Media Usage Patterns
- Advertising Value Equivalency: Interesting article: www.instituteforpr.org/files/uploads/2003_AVE.pdf
- Positioning Your Hotel For The 2010 Marketplace
- 10 Tips for Using Microsoft PowerPoint
- Do you know the difference between a JPEG and a GIF?
- Beware of Spyware
- Netspeak: The New Slang
- Digital Dialogue: Pulse Rate: Assess your social media channels regularly Public Relations Tactics
- Top 10 forecasts for global travel in 2010

- **REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH:**

Another wine tasting opportunity! Sautee Nacoochee Vineyards has opened a new tasting room in White County. 98 Nacoochee Way, Sautee, Nacoochee, GA 30571. 706-878-1056 www.sauteenacoocheewinery.com

- **MEDIA INFO/REQUESTS/ADVERTISING:**

- **Experiential Travel Leads Needed** – Canadian freelance writer Ilona Kauremszky seeks info on experiential travel related to cooking schools, language classes, golf and cycling for a major quarterly. She also need to interview people who have participated in these theme-vacations. Send leads to ilonaktravels@yahoo.com. **Deadline: Nov. 9.**
 - **Best Family Destinations** – FamilyTravelForum.com is producing a new guidebook called "The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Best Family Destinations" for the best-selling Penguin series. It plans to cover 150 North American destinations only, and want to hear about the top 3 picks in your region. The best family destination may be a beach, unusual museum, amusement park, historical site, great city, natural wonder. Include why it's the best, what makes it special enough to be in the book, and where to contact to learn more. Contact Editor Kyle McCarthy by e-mail only at ftf@familytravelforum.com. **Deadline: Nov. 23.**
 - **Meeting News in Smaller Cities** – Small Market Meetings, a monthly national newspaper for meeting planners, is seeking meeting-related news from second-tier and smaller cities for its January issue. News can include new, renovated or expanded hotels, meeting facilities and off-site venues; special deals aimed at meetings; and innovative ideas concerning use of technology, team-building or other meeting-related programming. Contact editor Vickie Mitchell by e-mail only at vmitchell@smallmarketmeetings.com. **Deadline: Nov. 23.**
- **GRANTS:**
 - **In search of funding for cultural heritage tourism? Go to** <http://nthpgrants.blogspot.com> 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 (www.grants.gov/). 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 www.culturalheritagetourism.org/resources/funding.htm
 - **JOB OPENINGS:**
 - The Office of University Relations at North Georgia College & State University is currently accepting applications for the position of communications and event coordinator. If you are interested in the position, please visit <http://apache.northgeorgia.edu/adminsrv/hr/Jobs.htm> for details and an online application. All applications should be submitted online through the HR department. Please feel free to share this information with others who may be qualified for and interested in the position.
 - Gainesville City Government looking for a TOURISM AND FACILITIES SALES MANAGER. Contact me for job description and info on how to apply.
 - Georgia Canopy Tours is recruiting an Assistant Course Manager for its zipline outdoor tree top adventure in Lula, Hall County, Georgia. NGCT is seeking mature, reliable, responsible, flexible, 21+ individuals with valid driver's license, with the ability to manage employees and course participants. A strong commitment to preserving the environment, course safety, policies and procedures is required. Excellent verbal, written and computer skills, including telephone etiquette are required.
 - Experience in nature/eco-tourism/adventure sports and risk management a plus. Tobacco-free lifestyle preferred. We are looking for team players, who are self-motivated, enjoy the outdoors and have the ability to handle difficult people situations. If you are interested in the Assistant Course Manager position, please complete and return the attached Employment Application via email to LWatkins@mckennalong.com or fax to: Leah Watkins at (404) 527-4198. Interviews will be held Friday-Sunday November 20-22, 2009. Salary \$30K + bonuses. NGCT is an equal opportunity employer.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Go to www.marketgeorgia.org and click on **Travel Industry Events**. Contact me if you would like to submit a tourism industry event (meeting, conference, etc.)

STS Top 20 Events Nominations:

To be considered, an event must have an attendance of at least 1,000 and be in its third year of existence. There is a \$10.00 entry fee required per event. Top 20 Events strongly encourages entrants to support nominations by providing supporting material such as photos, posters, brochures, press releases, news clippings and/or volunteer programs. To find out more, visit www.southeasttourism.org/top20/.

November 9 "Effective Fundraising Planning" seminar www.FoxTheatreInstitute.org Fox Theatre Institute asks you to save the date! EFFECTIVE FUNDRAISING PLANNING presented by Lisa Duck Kennedy Monday, November 9, 2009 from 10am-4pm at the Fox Theatre, Egyptian Ballroom, 660 Peachtree

Street, Atlanta, GA. For more information, contact Carmie McDonald at carmie.mcdonald@foxtheatre.org. Check out their website www.foxtheatreinstitute.org.

- November 18 NEGMTA Board & General Membership Meeting - Cateechee Waterfall Grille, Hartwell
- December 9 Northeast Georgia Mountains Regional Travel Association Meeting, Babyland General Hospital, Cleveland, GA www.GeorgiaMountains.org
- 2010**
- January 8 STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for July, August, & September 2010. For nomination forms and more info, go to http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html.
- January 25-26 Joy Walstrum from the Tourism Development Alliance of Georgia will present "Tourism Grassroots 101" on January 25th (location to be announced) and Tourism Day at the Capitol will be held on January 26th.
- March 13- ITB Berlin (<http://southeasttourism.org/programs/external.html>) Let STS put your destination in front of the German-language media using resources you already have.
- March 22-24 STS Spring Meeting (www.southeasttourism.org/spring) "Refresh, Renew, Recharge" is our theme in Nashville. Join your friends to learn new marketing methods
- March 23 SE TTRA Symposium (<http://settra.org>) This one-day seminar in Nashville explores research methods and tourism.
- March 25-26 The History and Heritage Tourism: Discovering Georgia's Community Landmarks will take place March 25-26, 2010 in Warm Springs, GA. For more information, click here.
- April 9, '10 STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for October, November, & December. For nomination forms and more info, go to http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html.
- July 16, '10 STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for January, February & March 2011. For nomination forms and more info, go to http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html
- July 25-30 STS Marketing College (www.southeasttourism.org/education) - The grand-daddy of all tourism education programs (One week of education will have you energized to tackle new projects)
- Aug 30-Sept 1 Georgia Governor's Conference on Tourism in Athens, GA