



Georgia Dept of Economic Development  
Northeast Georgia Mountains Travel Region  
January 2008 Report

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## **GEORGIA TOURISM DIVISION NEWS/ACTIVITIES**

- **Creative Economies Initiative:** Georgia's Handmade Survey is now live & on line. As I understand it, anyone may use this link to take the survey. The last four Town Hall meeting attendees will be invited to take this survey, but it is definitely NOT limited to those who attend Town Halls. If you know anyone who would like to offer input to the Creative Economies Initiative, please forward this link: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e280vrwgfb8kbgon/start>. Please contact Camille Ronay with any questions or comments. Camille Ronay, Georgia Made Georgia Grown, [www.georgiamadegeorgiagrown.com](http://www.georgiamadegeorgiagrown.com), Georgia Art By the Mile, 706/342-8225 ofc, 706/473-3198 cell
- \* [www.ExploreGeorgia.org](http://www.ExploreGeorgia.org) ~ Team, just wanted to give you a heads up that the new [www.ExploreGeorgia.org](http://www.ExploreGeorgia.org) website is now online in beta format. This site is built specifically for travel consumers, rather than the business audience. Our existing tourism website at Georgia.org is still online too, and will be available until we fully launch the new site in April. However, we have put up the new site early to give us some time to work out the kinks, to gauge how consumers use the site, and to start getting it registered on the search engines.

The new site is built around travel experiences. Do you want to go "Back to Nature" or do you prefer "the Arts" or "Shopping"? You'll find ideas for Georgia experiences in all these categories and more. You'll also find several new features, like an itinerary planner called GaTE where you can assemble your own itinerary with attractions, lodging and events, then save it and email it to friends. All of the design and features are based on extensive consumer and industry research.

Special thanks to Becky Basset and the tourism regional reps, and Fred and his team in Marketing and at Spunlogic for all of their ongoing hard work putting this site together. If you have an opportunity, please check it out. We would welcome your feedback!

- **The Georgia On My Mind Days** are a great opportunity to promote your property/business. To find out the 2008 schedule, go to [www.marketgeorgia.org](http://www.marketgeorgia.org), Click on **Georgia on My Mind Days**.
- **Regional Visitor Information Centers Update:** Penny Smith ([psmith2@georgia.org](mailto:psmith2@georgia.org)) is the contact for the RVIC program. She has been busy updating the forms due to some changes that have been made to the program.
  - If any RVIC need Travel guides, please contact your Sister Center (State VIC). At this point we will not be shipping any of our publications. We are going to be looking at the cost, to determine whether or not we can continue to ship them.
  - The deadline for RVIC renewal application is April 1st.
  - The training hours have changed. Only the full time manager is required to do the training hours, and the amount of hours has been changed to six hours per year. It is your choice to choose from the list of requirements where you do your training hours. Part time employees are not required to do training hours. This is on all levels of funding.
  - Contact me for copies of all the updated forms with changes to the program. The old forms have not been updated on the states web site. I will let you know as soon as the changes have been made.
  - If you have applied for first time status, let me know. I need a copy of your application to get to Penny for her to do a quick review of it.

- **Media Inquiries, Requests & Results:**
  - Stefanie Paupeck wanted to pass along a great opportunity to our tourism partners. **Southern E-Zine** is an e-newsletter that is rapidly growing and gaining readership. I have been exchanging emails with the Editor and she has commented that she has received limited information from Georgia. They are looking for proactive email press releases, packages, news, etc. from the state, the state park system, fish and wildlife, CVBs and resorts. Please send to [editor@southerntravelnews.com](mailto:editor@southerntravelnews.com). **Do not send press kits, brochures or details of past coverage.** They need email news/event/what's new/hotel updates. It has to be what's new, what's hot, what's coming up, etc. **Southern E-ZINE NEWSLETTER TO FOLLOW.**
  - Kevin Wierzbicki wrote the following article, mostly about Dahlonega but it also incorporates some of the stuff he did on TMM FAM earlier in 2007: [www.rocknworld.com/roadtrip/07/negeorgia/index.shtml](http://www.rocknworld.com/roadtrip/07/negeorgia/index.shtml)  
[www.travelwriters.com/kevinw](http://www.travelwriters.com/kevinw)  
[www.myspace.com/kevinwierzbicki](http://www.myspace.com/kevinwierzbicki)
- **Contact me if you are interested in Canadian Visitor Counts at Georgia Visitor Center: Year 2007 & for the month of January.**

## **NE GA MTNS TOURISM INDUSTRY NEWS**

- By popular demand we have "simplified" the email forms for Winter Chautauqua... Also we have a WEBSITE! [www.winterchautauqua.com](http://www.winterchautauqua.com)

Seminar info, schedule, housing and MOST IMPORTANT – Registration for CREDIT CARD and CHECK payments are available here. We would appreciate it if each of you would share this information with your tourism community contacts. Registration payments will be handled in the following manner:  
Forms and payments mailed to Towns County Chamber will be handled by Dale and her staff. Email payments will be forwarded to Gainesville Hall CVB and will be handled by Stacey and her staff. Both teams will coordinate registration lists for nametags etc.
- The 2007 Southern Living Readers' Choice Awards are published in the January 2008 issue of *Southern Living*. Readers of *Southern Living* were asked to choose the best places to eat, shop and stay across the South. After tallying a landslide of more than 47,000 ballots, winners were proclaimed in 15 categories. **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DILLARD HOUSE for receiving the *Southern Living* 2007 Readers' Choice Award – third place - Best Southern Family Restaurant!** The online version is here: [www.southernliving.com/southern/travel/travel\\_south/slideshow/0,14243,1693457-1,00.html](http://www.southernliving.com/southern/travel/travel_south/slideshow/0,14243,1693457-1,00.html). Rabun County's legendary Dillard House is a hallmark in true Southern hospitality. Please congratulate the Dillard family on this well deserved recognition, and help us to spread the good news!
- **News from Union County:**
  - At a reception on January 9th, Blairsville's Mayor Jim Conley & Downtown Development Authority Board Chairman Kay Jones were presented with a Better Hometown plaque from Georgia Dept of Community Affairs.
  - News about the gospel festival being planned for May 30 & 31 ... it's official name is "Mountain Gospel Convention" and concurrently there will be an Arts Festival on the Square.
  - Sherry Morrison & Linda Dennison have leased the space in the Rogers Building for a co-op art gallery opening in April. They've been able to apply for an Arts Grant to market the event.
- The William E. and Sarah Dillard Powell House, located on Boxwood Terrace in Dillard, in Rabun County, was listed in the National Register on January 2, 2008. The William E. and Sarah Dillard Powell House is significant to Rabun County as one of its early boarding houses associated with the

resort era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The house's architecture reflects its transformation from a single-family farmhouse to a much larger accommodation for seasonal boarders and tourists. It is also associated with two prominent local families-the Dillardards and the Powells, early settlers in the area.

- The Georgia Archives has created a way for Georgians to help preserve the history of the state through a program called Virtual Georgia. Anyone with photographs related to Georgia, may nominate pictures to be included in the archives permanent collection. Pictures are nominated by being uploaded to the Virtual Georgia website. The program is slated to last through March 1, 2008. For more information, visit the Virtual Georgia Web page at <http://content.sos.state.ga.us/cdm4/vrg.php>

- **Key Ingredients Museums on MainStreets Project: [www.keyingredients.org](http://www.keyingredients.org)**  
**2008 – 2009 TOUR (GEORGIA)**

[Georgia Humanities Council](#), 50 Hurt Plaza, SE, Room 595, Atlanta, GA 30303-2915

Contact: [Arden Williams](#)

Tour Itinerary:

- June 28 - August 10, 2008  
[Dooly County Historic Preservation Society](#) in cooperation with the [Southwest Georgia Business Development Center](#)  
1150 Industrial Drive  
Vienna, GA 31092
- August 16 - September 28, 2008  
[Cherokee Regional Library](#)  
305 South Duke Street  
LaFayette, GA 30728
- October 4 - November 16, 2008  
[Gilmer County Public Library](#)  
103 Dalton Street  
Ellijay, GA 30540
- November 22, 2008 - January 4, 2009  
[Hapeville Historical Society](#)  
620 S. Central Avenue  
Hapeville, GA 30354
- January 10 - February 22, 2009  
McDuffie County Museum  
111 Railroad Street  
Thomson, GA 30824
- **February 28 - April 11, 2009**  
[Appalachian Studies Center](#)  
219 Dunlap Hall  
North Georgia College and State University  
Dahlonega, GA 30597

**Update from Ann McCleary:** As you may know, our research team has hit the road this month! Thanks to Mary Ann in Thomson and Elaine in Waynesboro, we have collected stories and recipes and visited several valued local restaurants! Thanks to you both for your work in setting up these trips! Kristi and I are being joined by Katie Hicks, another graduate student in our program, which has allowed us to do up to three interviews at a time. As Elaine can tell you, that worked for us in Waynesboro! We have already learned quite a bit from our interviews and travels, and we look forward to visiting everyone else before mid-March.

As we visit your community, we really, really need RECIPES! We are collecting **recipes AND the stories that go with them** to add to our statewide website. We will also be incorporating some of these in our 24-page catalog on Georgia foodways that will travel the state with the exhibit.

Please encourage people in your community to share their recipes and stories with us. For more information, please contact either Kristi or me. Kristi has a form that she can send you for that

purpose. At some point, we may send out a "call" for certain recipes. We are developing a list of must-have recipes, and we may need your help in collecting recipes for these foods.

Sometimes, restaurant-owners are a bit hesitant to share their "specialty" recipes, but we are reminding them that putting a recipe from their restaurant on the website will be an excellent way to promote their business! So if you could talk with some of your local restaurants and collect a recipe and its story, we would be very appreciative.

Also, we will be incorporating contemporary and historic photographs into the catalog and website. We are taking photographs of restaurants and other food-related resources in the communities we visit. But we would love to know if your community has any collections of historical photographs which might be useful to us. Please let us know if you do, and we will try to schedule time in our visit to your community to see these photos.

Thanks to all of you for helping to set up the plans for our travel. This week, we will be in LaFayette and Hapeville, and next week in Vidalia. If you have any questions about what we're doing, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## **MEDIA REQUESTS, GRANTS, WORKSHOPS, ETC**

- \* The AJC is asking their readers to share their best cheap winter getaway in Georgia. It is a blog, so be sure to check back and see what people are saying. I included a few of the comments that have already been posted below. [http://www.ajc.com/blogs/content/shared-blogs/ajc/travel/entries/2008/02/06/take\\_the\\_midwin.html](http://www.ajc.com/blogs/content/shared-blogs/ajc/travel/entries/2008/02/06/take_the_midwin.html)
- **Articles (Call me if you are interested in a copy of any of these):**
  - Promoting tourism through virtual worlds
  - Trends in Adventure Travel
- **Grants:**
  - Inspire the youth in your community to become the preservationists of tomorrow. Museums, historic sites, historical societies, preservation organizations, libraries, and archives are invited to partner with a local school or youth group and apply for funding to help preserve the history of their communities. Each year, The History Channel awards grants of up to \$10,000 to organizations across the country that partner with schools or youth groups on community preservation projects that engage students in learning about, documenting and preserving the history of their communities. The 2008/2009 Grant Cycle will kick off in January 2008, when the grant application is posted online at [http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content\\_type=Minisite\\_Generic&content\\_type\\_id=51650&display\\_order=3&mini\\_id=51103](http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content_type=Minisite_Generic&content_type_id=51650&display_order=3&mini_id=51103)  
Applications will be due in June of 2008. In the interim, questions about the program can be directed to [info@saveourhistory.com](mailto:info@saveourhistory.com).
- **Agri Tourism:** I thought you might be interested in checking this Agri Tourism website out. It may give you some ideas on how to enhance your tourism efforts. [www.agriturismo.com/englich.htm](http://www.agriturismo.com/englich.htm)
- **News from The Southern Literary Trail:** We can greet the holidays by celebrating the following communities and landmarks, representing Southern fiction writers of literary and historic significance during the Twentieth Century, who have confirmed their participation in the Southern Literary Trail. Georgia sites include (sites in Mississippi & Alabama are part of the Trail as well):
  - COLUMBUS and the Carson McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians at CSU for CARSON McCULLERS.
  - MILLEDGEVILLE and Andalusia Farm for FLANNERY O'CONNOR and ALICE WALKER.
  - SAVANNAH and the O'Connor Childhood Home for Flannery O'Connor.
  - CLAYTON and the Lillian E. Smith Center for the Creative Arts for LILLIAN SMITH.
  - MORELAND and the Erskine Caldwell Birthplace for ERSKINE CALDWELL.
  - ATLANTA, Wren's Nest and the Margaret Mitchell House for JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS and MARGARET MITCHELL.

In summary, our confirmed cities along the SLT from west to east are Clarksdale, Greenville, Jackson, Oxford, Columbus (Ms.), Hartselle, Demopolis, Monroeville, Mobile, Montgomery, Tuskegee, Columbus (Ga.), Atlanta, Clayton, Moreland, Milledgeville, and Savannah. The celebrated writers are Tennessee Williams, Walker Percy, Shelby Foote, William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Richard Wright, Margaret Walker Alexander, William Bradford Huie, Lillian Hellman, Truman Capote, Harper Lee, William March, Eugene Walter, Albert Murray, Zelda & Scott Fitzgerald, Ralph Ellison, Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor, Alice Walker, Lillian Smith, Erskine Caldwell, Joel Chandler Harris and Margaret Mitchell.

Please share this e-mail with any colleagues and alert me of omissions from the list. (I must admit that our list dazzles me...so forgive and understand any oversights.) We will begin work soon on grant applications for a universal Trail brochure. Please begin to consider your programs for our target month of March 2009. I will go back through my e-mails and materials to determine my text and photo needs for the forthcoming website.

Congratulations to everyone! I would like to extend special thanks to Susan Perry of the Alabama Humanities Foundation for getting this project so resiliently back on track. Our great writers deserve this southeastern celebration.

William Gantt Office 205.297.8849

- **Randall Travel Marketing's Top 10 Travel & Tourism Trends for 2007-2008:**
  - **Continued growth in 2007**
  - **Time Poverty** = more to do + less time to do it
  - **Fragile consumer confidence** will affect travel decisions
  - **Traveler frustration** with hassles, inconvenience and poor service
  - **Internet:** #1 Source of travel planning and purchasing
  - **Geotourism:** increased traveler demand for destinations that protect the authenticity and geographic character of place
  - **Business travel:** reluctant growth and cost containment
  - **Generational shifts:** Retiring Boomers, GenX enters peak earning years, GenY and "MGeneration" becoming more defined
  - **More demand** by all travel segments for "orientation and facilitation" - evolving to more of a "concierge service on demand"
  - **Dawning of New Travel Era:** Reinvention of existing/aging tourism infrastructure to meet the needs of changing generational groups, demographic shifts and the new culture of "Transumers"

**Additional Tidbits:**

- According to TNS Retail Forward, total holiday 2007 sales (including on-line, mass retailers, home goods, etc.) grew 3.4% over 2006. On-line and catalog sales were up 10.2%, home goods were up 1.7%, mass retailers experienced a decline.
  - The number of international flights departing the U.S. will reach 1,790 per day in 2008, up 4.7% from a year earlier, according to OAGback Aviation Solutions.
- Notice to all **Georgia Traditional Artists** & their supporters the Georgia Council for the Arts presents *Traditional Artists Roster*.

The Traditional Artists Roster is an adjudicated listing of qualified Georgia traditional artists. These traditions must be grounded in history and tied to a specific culture that is resident in Georgia, and is a traditional expression of a culture maintained and communicated between groups of people who share a common thread. Individual Georgia artists and/or artist groups in all traditional arts disciplines are eligible to apply. The Traditional Artists Rosters purpose is to increase visibility and booking opportunities for Georgia's traditional artists. GCA promotes and markets the Traditional Artists Roster publication and provides grant support to hire GCA-certified traditional artists. Guidelines & Applications: [www.gaarts.org/programs\\_traditionalarts.asp](http://www.gaarts.org/programs_traditionalarts.asp) ~ **Application Deadline is March 3, 2008.** For more information contact:

Brandy Klopp, *Traditional Arts Manager*  
Georgia Council for the Arts  
260 14th Street, Suite 401, Atlanta GA 32318  
404-685-794  
[www.gaarts.org](http://www.gaarts.org)

- Georgia DOT is conducting Public Information Open House Meetings concerning proposed improvement scenarios for the SR 400 corridor and the SR 365 corridor. These proposed improvements address safety, congestion, mobility, and economic development potential along the corridors. These meetings are designed as a drop-in open house.

SR 365 Meeting  
March 4, 2007 @ 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
Lula Elementary School  
6130 Chattahoochee Street, Lula, GA 30554

SR 400 Meeting  
March 6, 2008 @ 5 p.m.-7 p.m.  
Black's Mill Elementary School  
1860 Dawson Forest Road, East, Dawsonville, GA 30534

Additional study info can be received from GDOT project manager, Jason Crane at 404-656-5360 or [jcrane@dot.state.ga.us](mailto:jcrane@dot.state.ga.us) [www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/plan-prog/planning/studies/SR400-SR365/index.shtml](http://www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/plan-prog/planning/studies/SR400-SR365/index.shtml)

- \* Check out Google Maps as a way to get more exposure. Go to [www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?continue=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Flocal%2Fadd%2FbusinessCenter%3Fgl%3Dus%26hl%3Den-US&service=lbc&hl=en-US&gl=US](http://www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?continue=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Flocal%2Fadd%2FbusinessCenter%3Fgl%3Dus%26hl%3Den-US&service=lbc&hl=en-US&gl=US) and submit your business.
- \* **Governor Perdue Announces Filing of the Landowners Protection Act:** ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue announced today that legislation has been filed that will limit liability for landowners who open their property to hunters and agri-tourists. Senate Bill 449, known as the Landowners Protection Act of 2008, is being carried by Senator Bill Heath, one of the Governor's Floor Leaders in the Senate.

"Georgia is a prime destination for hunters and tourists who want to enjoy our land and farms," said Governor Sonny Perdue. "This legislation will prevent liability concerns from discouraging landowners welcoming guests onto their property."

The proposal will protect landowners who allow individuals to hunt on their property from being sued for accidents arising during a hunt. Likewise, landowners operating an agri-tourism attraction would not be held liable for accidents or injuries that may occur on the visit. Property owners will continue to be held responsible for gross negligence, and they will be liable if they deliberately put people in danger. Governor Perdue announced the legislation during the Georgia Farm Bureau's annual legislative luncheon.

"We want to encourage landowners to open their hunting property and farms to visitors to enjoy Georgia's natural beauty as an agricultural and sportsman's paradise," said Senator Bill Heath. "The Georgia General Assembly is working to protect landowners and, again, stand up for the rights of private property owners."

## **SAVE THE DATE**

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

- March 1-5**            **Travel South Trade Show**, Biloxi, MS
- March 9&10**        **Winter Chautauqua – Gainesville, GA – Georgia Mountains Center**
- April 14**            **TechnoTourism Conference – Athens, GA – Classic Center**
- April 21-27**        **Tour de Georgia** ~ Go to [www.tourdegeorgia.com](http://www.tourdegeorgia.com) to find out the news...Lt  
Governor Casey Cagle will serve as Chairman of the event.
- May 1-3**            **Travel Media Marketplace (TMM) will be in Augusta.** The RFP for TMM bids for  
2009 and 2010 will go out soon.