



**Georgia Dept of Economic Development
Northeast Georgia Mountains Travel Region
September 2008 Report**

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Important Notes:

- You can read previous reports by going to www.marketgeorgia.org and clicking on Monthly Regional Reports and clicking on Northeast Georgia Mountains.
- Peach Bytes is Georgia's e-newsletter for the tourism industry. If you don't currently receive this free monthly news info, sign up by sending an email to peachbyte@georgia.org. If you have outstanding news to share, please send it to the same email so we can share with the rest of Georgia's Tourism Industry. Be mindful that inclusion will depend on space.
- **www.ExploreGeorgia.org** – Make sure you are updating your information on the State tourism website. If you need assistance with how to register or navigate the partner admin pages, please contact Cheryl Smith, Regional Tourism Rep, csmith@georgia.org 770-535-5757.

GEORGIA TOURISM DIVISION NEWS/ACTIVITIES

- **Governor's Conference on Tourism**
 - *Tourism Marketing Presentation* by Kevin Langston & Fred Huff can be read by going to www.marketgeorgia.org and clicking on **Industry Presentations** and clicking on [2008 Governor's Conference - Marketing Powerpoint](#)
 - **Tourism Awards:**
 - **Paul Broun Award for Marketing Initiatives** - Elizabeth Harvill- Vidalia CVB Agri-tourism
 - **Larry Allen Award for Excellence in Tourism** - Peter Bowden- Columbus CVB
 - **The Award for Creative Expression** - Marietta CVB- Hip to be Square
 - **Lifetime Achievement Award** - Spurgeon Richardson- Atlanta CVB
 - **Private Industry** - Trent Mercer- Streeter Printing
 - **Partner Agency** - Clarks Hill Partnership of GA: Columbia, Lincoln, McDuffie. Warren & Wilkes Counties
 - **Product Development** - The Welcome Center of Forsyth/Monroe County
 - **Legislative** - Rep. Ron Stephens
 - **GACVB- Tom Kilgore Award** = Judy Renfroe- formerly of the Cobb CVB
 - For detailed info on the **Georgia Tourism Cooperative Research Program**, go to <http://web.georgia.org/content/GeorgiaTourism/Georgia%20Tourism%20Co-op%20Research%20Program.pdf>
- **Tourism Grants reminder:** The next round of **Tourism Product Development Grants** will launch on November 3rd, with the deadline for submittal on December 31st. Grants will be awarded in mid-January and projects must be completed by June 29th 2009. Maximum grant amounts will remain at \$10,000 requiring a dollar for dollar local match.
- **Tourism Development Alliance of Georgia 2008 Policy Platform**
 - TDAG supports legislation to preserve hotel tax for its original intent of Destination marketing at the local level
 - Increase funding for the tourism division of the GA Dept of E.D. to advertise, market and promote Georgia as a tourism destination
 - Incentives for Tourism Development
 - Comprehensive Study of the School Calendar and its impact on education, family environments, work force development, tourism and the economy
 - Develop a nationally recognized hospitality curriculum for Georgia's technical schools
- **Updated County by County Tourism Economic Impact numbers** are available at www.MarketGeorgia.org, click on Industry Research. There is other info of interest at that link as well so check it out!

- **News & Updates on Sales & Marketing:**
 - **Snowbird Extravaganza – Lakeland, FL, January 27 - 28, 2009. Registration Deadline:** November 1, 2008 and **Cancellation Deadline:** November 8, 2008. Let me know if you would like the information sheet on this show.
 - I have a list of the Auto Travel Supervisors from each of the offices we visited on our AAA Blitz in August. Let me know if you would like a copy.

- **Military Travel Shows** – Contact me if you would like info on the following shows: Moody AFB, Ft Rucker, Fort Benning and Albany Marine Base.

- **Media/Publication Requests**
 - I'm compiling a list of music festivals in the region. Please send me any that you have...include name of event, short description, location, phone number and website address.
 - I'm looking for info on any interesting stories that the Main Street or Better Hometown programs have to tell
 - Weekly Press Releases from the Georgia Tourism Division will be posted to www.georgia.org after the release is sent to the media. They can be found on the homepage and travel page of www.georgia.org. We are working on creating a direct link from www.exploregeorgia.org to the press release page on www.georgia.org. At this time, www.ExploreGeorgia.org does not have the capability to support press releases, so we are going with a link.

- **Georgia Visitor Information Centers:**
 - Rita Hughes - "We'd like to extend an invitation to all Travel Regions to host a promotional day at the Columbus VIC. Please discuss at your next association meeting and contact us with a prospective date. Several Plantation Trace partners hosted a successful day on July 25th! ***PRESIDENTIAL PATHWAYS HAS OCT 17TH SCHEDULED FOR THEIR DAY! Give us a call or email if interested in hosting a promotion! **A few things to keep in mind:**
 - We have limited inside space however we can accommodate four 2ft x 4ft tables or card tables.
 - Lots of outside space available (please provide tent, tables, & chairs).....we have covered picnic tables for use.
 - Wed, Th, Fr, & Sa are usually busier days, (pending season & military graduations)
 - We'll try to help determine the busier days of the season.

We look forward to hearing from your regions soon! Thanks! Rita Hughes, Manager, Georgia Visitor Center, 1751 Williams Rd., Columbus, GA 31904 P: 706-649-7455 F: 706-649-1291
rhughes@georgia.org
 - Pat Pierson writes, "Soon the Holiday Season will be here! And with that in mind, I want to invite you to participate in the "2008 Georgia for the Holidays" promotion at the **Georgia Visitor Information Center – Lavonia/I-85 South** In the past we have had each participant have their own day. This year, since our traffic is down because of gas prices, things will be a little different. I would like as many participants I can get from Nov. 21st – Nov. 30th. (except for Thanksgiving Day – we are closed) These are our busiest days! Of course, if these dates are not good for you we will set up another date. Times for the events will be from 10am – 2pm. This is a great opportunity to let the visitors know what is going on in your area for the Holiday Season! Please contact me, Pat Pierson at (706)356-4019 or email ppierson@georgia.org to let me know what day you would like to come." **(PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN TABLE)**
 - **GA Music Featured at VICs** – Music by Georgia artists now greet visitors at 9 of the 11 GA Visitor Information Centers (VICs). This new program highlights the state's rich musical heritage and makes for a very warm welcome to Georgia. The two VICs in northwest Georgia are Tallapoosa on I-20 and Ringgold on I-75.
 - **GA VICs receive Award** - At this year's ESTO award ceremony, Georgia received the 2008 Mercury Award in recognition of our Canadian Visitor Recognition program created by the GA Visitors Information Centers which introduces Canadian travelers to Georgia. Congratulations!

NE GA MTNS TOURISM INDUSTRY NEWS

- Two BRAG events:
 - **SAWNEE MOUNTAIN CENTURY CHALLENGE:** The Kiwanis Club of Cumming & Forsyth County invites all cyclists to ride the Sawnee Mountain Challenge, Saturday, October 18, 2008. The ride will

benefit The Kiwanis Youth Programs & other charities. Various mileage options available. For more information, email Felkerfe@aol.com, 770-815-5714, or visit www.cummingkiwanis.org.

- **Tour De Tugaloo:** Tour the Tugaloo River, Saturday, November 1, 2008, and experience nature at its finest! Terrain is flat to hilly with beautiful vistas, three choices of loops, oodles of wildlife and fabulous fall colors. Metric Century (62 miles), 41.5, 20.5, or 5 mile options. For more information visit www.tourdetugaloo.com.



- **The Northeast Georgia History Center** has a new Rack Card – Contact Glen Kyle at 770-297-5900 if you would like a supply.
- **New Lodging Properties:**
 - The Hilton Garden Inn opened in Gainesville
 - The Lodge at Tallulah Falls opened in Tallulah Falls
- **Hospitality Highway** was awarded the Southeast Tourism Society's Shining Example Award. **Congratulations!**
- The **Southern Highroads Association** is pleased to announce they have launched a new site design for the Southern Highroads Trail website. Please take a look: <http://www.southernhighroads.org>. They are working hard to increase their search engine rankings and are already seeing great results - but they are not done yet! They expect a significant increase in national exposure to the most unique part of the country, which will enhance not only the entire Southern Highroads region, but your business as well!
- The October issue of **Southern Living** magazine features a wonderful article on Rabun County's Patricia Kyritys Howell. The article was called: *Lessons From the Earth: Patricia Howell harvests healing herbs in North Georgia*, by Allison Barnes. **(I can send you a copy if you like)** The photos were taken last October at the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center in Mountain City.
- The Mountain Stewards completed another 200 ft of trail on the **Amicalola Access Trail** today extending the trail now to 2,100 ft. along the Amicalola River. There remains another 200 ft to be completed when \$3,000 dollars are donated for the work. The Mountain Stewards paid for the new section. This trail has become one of the most used trails in North GA. We continue to get emails and letters from persons with handicap children and adults who are very appreciative of the trail. One grandmother told us she brings her handicapped grandson from Atlanta periodically to take him along the trail. On Thursday, September 18th, they installed new Kiosks at the two entrances for the trail which will complete the trail until further funding is found.
- A four-part series **APPALACHIA: A History of Mountains and People** and our trailer is now on www.youtube.com wanted to be sure you got to see it and share it with anyone who might be interested: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNxziqRTzjQ. This prime time broadcast will put Appalachia on center stage for four consecutive weeks and will be seen by 10-15 million viewers. The producers are exploring ways to link the Tourism website with the film as it would be seen not just in the initial broadcast but every time anyone plays the DVD anywhere and any time the series is rebroadcast in perpetuity. They also have great potential for reaching foreign tourists when the series is sold to markets outside the US. I have shared their comments with Kevin to see what he thinks GDEcD can do to take advantage of this opportunity.
- See the **new signs in Dahlonega & Lumpkin County** ----->



MEDIA REQUESTS, GRANTS, WORKSHOPS, ETC

- **Media Requests/Opportunities:**
 - The Georgia Municipal Associations prints a monthly newsletter called *Georgia Cities* that is distributed to Georgia's 502 municipal governments. Their website is www.gmanet.com. The back page features Fairs & Festivals all across Georgia. To place a Fairs & Festivals listing, contact Amy Henderson at ahenderson@gmanet.com.
 - Blue Ridge County Magazine writes: We'll be producing our January/February 2009 issue starting the end of this month, including our annual farmer's almanac and travel guide, and are seeking regional events for the entire 2009 year -- festivals, exhibits, workshops and other special events as far ahead as you have

them scheduled. We welcome high-resolution photos for consideration (.jpg or .tif format, minimum file size 2 MB). Please send events and photos to cmadisett@leisurepublishing.com by October 13.

For each event, include wherever possible:

- Name of event
- Specific date(s)
- Brief description
- Specific location of event
- Contact phone number for readers
- Website

- **Tidbits from Randall Travel Marketing:**

- **.mobi**—Check out www.mobweb.mobi to see how to convert your website into a cell phone friendly format. Check out Philadelphia.city.mobi as an example. Lets visitors access your website from their cell phones!
- **Travel with Pets** - 61% of Americans pet owners take the pet when they travel. 6% of pet owners have obtained a pet passport. 44% of all travelers think hotels should be more pet friendly. 24% of pet owners would like hotels to offer pet-sitting, 17% would like hotels to have a kennel. **Source: TripAdvisor**
- **Restaurant Trends** - Consumers visit an average of 207 restaurants each year. Here are the stats: Income less than \$45,000 = 35% of all customers, Income \$45,000-\$75,000 = 25% of all customers & Income over \$75,000 = 39% of all customers **Source: Nation's Restaurant News**
- **Delaycast.com** - As airlines continue to delay/change flights, this website helps travelers predict air travel delays.

- **Articles (Let me know if you'd like a copy)**

- Halloween morphing into its own season

- **Events Media Network, Inc.**, the largest aggregator and web site of event information and attraction information in North America feature this information in our web site, eventcrazy.com as well supply this information throughout the web on sites such as The Weather Channel - weather.com, Hilton.com, Adelphia, Charter, Atlantic Broadband, Knology and many, many others. In addition to our database of over 150,000 events, venues and attractions, we also have a "Featured Region" section where we give interesting facts, names of local restaurants and other local information that would encourage people to visit your area and put your area in the best possible light.

Currently we do not feature this information with photos other than in the featured region section. Beginning in mid-October, we would like to include a photo or series of photos to go along with the information as well as to permanently attach the photos to attractions, venues and events in your area where appropriate.

I am contacting you to see if we can bring together information from your state that would be included along with our other information. If you or anyone you know could assist me in this process, I would greatly appreciate it.

We have two options, one that you can email photos directly to me at my email address or I can retrieve them directly from your designated site. Whatever option works best for you is fine with us. Is there a place where I can retrieve them? Of course we would provide the necessary photo credits with any photographs that we include with the information online.

Feel free to contact me through this email address or call me at 609-953-9511 should you have any questions or require any additional information. Thank you very much for your time. **Contact Megan Clark, Editorial Information Analyst, mclark@eventsmedia.com**

- JackRabbit Systems was a vendor at the Governor's Conference on Tourism - JRS offers high-traffic, local websites and destination portals a suite of travel applications designed to enhance service and information access for website visitors and travelers. JRS offers a highly versatile booking engine that permits users to book directly with the hotel, bypassing more expensive GDS and ADS channels. In addition, JRS offers mapping, calendar, and travel directory services that allow visitors to your portal to identify not only what activities and events are available in your geographic area, but also how to get there. A custom travel guide of attractions and points of interest selected by the visitor to your site is automatically emailed to the visitor further broadening your site's travel relevance. JRS derives its income from clicks generated when visitors land on the website of the hotel available through your portal. JRS shares the revenue with you directly establishing a win-win-win for JRS, your business, and the traveler. Our customer base includes the New Mexico Lodging Association; Sun Valley, ID; Park City, UT; Santa Barbara, CA; and additional

CVBs and Chambers of Commerce sites. To learn more about JackRabbit Systems and how we can add value to your portal, visit our website at www.jackrabbitsystems.com or call 1.866.766.9466 and ask for sales.

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- **HPD receives federal grant for Community Landmark Heritage Tourism Initiative** - On September 29, 2008 Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett, and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Chairman John L Nau III announced the second round of Preserve America grants for 2008 that includes 44 projects in 24 states totaling over \$4.3 million. A list of projects is online at www.doi.gov/news/08_News_Releases/092908a.html Applications for the 2009 grants open October 1. www.nps.gov/history/hps/hpg/PreserveAmerica/index.htm

Preserve America is a White House initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy the nation's cultural and natural heritage. The Preserve America grant program, which began in 2006, is administered by the Department of the Interior's National Park Service in partnership with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The competitive matching grants fund Preserve America Communities, State Historic Preservation Offices, and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices to support their preservation efforts through heritage tourism, education and historic preservation planning.

HPD (Georgia's State Historic Preservation Office) was awarded \$128,560 for Georgia's Community Landmark Heritage Tourism initiative. Funds will assist HPD to develop a statewide conference on preservation and heritage tourism, and two publications to assist communities in heritage tourism and local landmark preservation efforts. HPD will make \$80,000 of the federal grant available to Preserve America communities in Georgia interested in applying for matching grants to carry out their own community landmark preservation or heritage tourism projects. More information about this grant will be forthcoming. If you have any questions please contact Karen Anderson-Cordova at Karen.Anderson-Cordova@dnr.state.ga.us or 404-651-6461.

Georgia currently has 22 communities that have received Preserve America status designation. More information on Preserve America can be found at www.PreserveAmerica.gov

- **State awards Historic Cemetery Heritage Tourism Grants for cemetery projects**
HPD is pleased to announce that six grants, totaling \$8,000, have been awarded to heritage tourism cemetery projects located across the state. HPD partnered with the Tourism Division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDED) to offer this special matching grant program for historic cemeteries. It was in response to the increasing interest Georgians have in the preservation and promotion of the historic cemeteries located within their communities. Thirty-six applications requesting almost \$80,000 were received. It is anticipated that there will be a second round of grant awards after the first of the year. The Historic Cemetery Heritage Tourism Program is funded by GDEcD and administered by HPD.

The award recipients are:

- \$1,600-Fitzgerald City Cemetery in Ben Hill Co. for a history/survey
- \$1,500-Riverside Cemetery in Macon, Bibb Co. for a K-12 heritage education program
- \$1,500-West Hill Cemetery in Dalton, Whitfield Co. for tour development, a brochure and signage
- \$1,450-Newton County Cemeteries for a countywide driving tour brochure
- \$1,000-Clay County Cemeteries for a countywide survey and condition assessment report
- \$ 950-Hillcrest Cemetery in East Point, Fulton Co. for a heritage festival

For more information about the cemetery grant program, contact Carole Moore at carole.moore@dnr.state.ga.us or 404-463-8434

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SAVE THE DATE

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.)

- October 10** **STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for April, May & June 2009.** For nomination forms and more info, go to http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html.
- November 5-6** **2008 Agritourism Conference 2008 Agritourism Conference**
HAS BEEN POSTPONED DUE TO SCHEDULING CONFLICTS
- November 13-14** **Historic Cemetery Conference in Washington, GA** ~ Come learn about best practices of historic cemetery care, heritage tourism, cemetery landscapes and funding sources. More info to come...
- January 9, 2009** **STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for July, August & September 2009.** For nomination forms and more info, go to http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html.
- January 27, 2009** **Tourism Day at the Capitol from 8am-2pm, Atlanta, GA**
- January 27-28, '09** **Snowbird Extravaganza, Lakeland, Florida**
- April 10, 2009** **STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for October, November & December 2009.** For nomination forms and more info, go to http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html.
- July 10, 2009** **STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for January, February & March 2010.** For nomination forms and more info, go to http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html.
- October 9, 2009** **STS Top 20 Events Nomination Deadline for April, May & June 2010.** For nomination forms and more info, go to http://southeasttourism.org/top_20_events.html.
- January 8, 2010** **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.
- April 9, 2010** **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, 2010** **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.