



GEORGIA TOURISM DIVISION NEWS/ACTIVITIES

- **Georgia Visitor Information Centers**
 - *The Georgia Visitor Information Center @ Ringgold & Tourism Partners* will present a day of fun, food, free give a-ways and entertainment! Area Hotels/Motels and Attractions will have special promotions, displays, refreshments and hotdogs. Please join us on Friday May 9th, 2008, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. The Ringgold VIC on I-75 South, GA/TN line. *Georgia On My Mind Day* is a great event to showcase your property. All booths will be located outside. Please bring your own table, chair & promotional items. You may also want to bring a tent if available. Please RSVP by May 1 by Phone: 706-937-4211 - Fax: 706-937-2850 Email: Ringgold@georgia.org
- Articles...let me know if you would like a copy of the following articles:
 - Savvy farmers open the gate to agritourism (USA Today 4-17-08)
 - Hotel chefs embrace local, organic food trend (USA Today 4-17-08)
- The **Techno Tourism Conference** in Athens was again an informative forum of current technology resources geared to tourism promotion to the techno savvy visitor. If you attended the conference and are interested in making an application, go to www.MarketGeorgia.org and click on E-Challenge Grant for info and instructions
- **Advertising to promote www.ExploreGeorgia.org**: The ads are running on cable TV in major DMAs throughout GA including Atlanta, Albany, Macon, Columbus, Savannah, and Augusta from 6am until midnight beginning April, 15th through end of June. The ads will show on channels including TBS, Food Network, HGTV, E!, Discovery, Golf, Travel - no major networks - total investment in TV and radio \$650,000. We also have radio spots on the Braves Radio Network and GNN.
- **The Georgia Tourism Foundation invites you to attend the *Creative Economies Initiative Train-the-Trainer Workshop* in Macon on May 14, 2008, at Central Georgia Technical College Auditorium (Building H).** The Workshop is scheduled from 10:00am to 3:00pm.

As a regional leader, you are an important conduit for local businesses and art-centrics in your community. This is an opportunity to stay up-to-date on new efforts to promote *Georgia Made Georgia Grown Products*. The goal of this workshop is to bring local instructor teams together to create customized business development programs, and introduce you to resource partners.

Resource entities that have programs, staff and expertise in various areas of business development will be on hand to discuss how regional teams can work with them. The agenda will focus on what it takes to create local business development workshops and networking, and explore guidelines for business-to-business Holiday networking between art-centric businesses and corporate partners.

Please let us know that you will be with us on MAY 14 for the *CEI Train the Trainer Workshop*. The cost is \$15 which covers lunch and materials. Lunch will be catered by Honey Baked Ham. To RSVP, please email Gilda Watters at gwatters@georgia.org or Camille Ronay at camille@events2000.com. We look forward to seeing you in Macon at Central Georgia Technical College Auditorium (Building H) at 10:00am Wednesday, May 14.

- On May 6th, Emmis publishing attended the MAGS (Magazine Association of the Southeast) Award banquet at the Ritz Carlton in Buckhead and it was announced that the **2008 Georgia Travel Guide won a gold award (the highest award) for Best Single Issue!** AND the Korean Travel Guide won a Bronze award for Best Single Issue! There were over 480 entries from magazines around the south including some that are national. Emmis publishing took home over twenty-four awards, including 7 that were for the custom division two of which were gold and 5 additional awards that range from bronze to silver.

NE GA MTNS TOURISM INDUSTRY NEWS

- **Whitewater Rafting** season has begun! Make sure to refer guests and visitors to our three outfitters on the Chattooga River – Nantahala Outdoor Center, Wildwater Ltd and Southeastern Expeditions.
- The **Fred Hamilton Rhododendron Gardens** at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds are in bloom. The dogwoods and azaleas are in full bloom and the Rhododendrons are starting to bloom. Lake Chatuge is full and beautiful as well!
- The **Dahlonega Farmers Market** begins on Saturday, May 3. It will be held every Tuesday and Saturday in beautiful Hancock Park, at the corner of North Park Street and Warwick Street. There is abundant free parking. The local farmers begin setting up their products around 7 a.m., and you can shop the super selection until 3 p.m. or until the daily inventories are sold. There is no better source for quality produce, locally grown and fresh picked from the garden. Buy direct from your local farmers and get great prices for the best produce in the region. Shoppers will also find delicious jams, jellies, honey, dried flowers, and garden seeds.

Each week, shoppers will see new products available at the market. Because all of the items are locally grown, the products are seasonal. Shoppers may talk with the farmers and inquire about the schedule of availability for specific products in each growing season. Treat yourself and your family to the best quality, low prices, and good selection, and feel good about supporting our local farmer/growers. Bring along the kids and grand kids for a nice produce shopping experience and linger in Hancock Park. Make it a romantic morning out--bring along your spouse and enjoy downtown Dahlonega's extensive dining opportunities and linger for some great shopping at the amazing retail stores in the downtown area. Downtown Dahlonega has it all.

The **Downtown Dahlonega Farmers Market** is sponsored by the City of Dahlonega's Better Hometown Program and Downtown Development Authority. Contact Joel Cordle, 706-864-6133.

- **New Event in Comer** – Faeryfest (May) ~ Contact Tina McCullough at (706) 783-4665 or bluebellgallery@windstream.net for more information.
- **Elvis Tribute Show leaves Remember When Theatre in Helen:** With a very heavy heart, we bid you a fond farewell as we are no longer affiliated with the Remember When Theatre in any form or fashion. We are in the process of trying to secure another theatre/location and will notify you once that has been accomplished. In the meantime, please spread the word that we are available for private parties, corporate events, weddings, birthday parties, reunions, grand openings to whatever the occasion calls for. I am working on a new website and hoping to have it up and running by the end of April. On behalf of myself, Lisa, Cheryl & Roger Andrews, Patricia Garland and Sam Swafford and all those who were part of this journey during our tenure. Mark Pitt ~ Elvis Tribute Show Please feel free to contact me anytime at 678-714-4778 or e-mail markpitt@aol.com
- **New--- Anidawehi Plantation Wellness Center**, located inside the Forrest Hills Resort near the ancient site of a Cherokee village, opened in spring 2008 as a place for self-healing and spiritual renewal. Perched within the Blue Ridge Mountains, Anidawehi is surrounded by 140 acres of wilderness. The name Anidawehi is inspired from the Native American belief that our mind, body and spirit have the ability to heal themselves. Anidawehi Plantation has embraced these traditions in its unique wellness programs. Five programs are offered in internal cleansing, healthy eating, weight management, age defiance and psychological well-being. Integrated into these programs are life-coaching, spa therapy and yoga classes. Guests also have full access to Forrest Hills' amenities,

such as horseback riding, a three-mile jogging/biking trail, and hiking. For more information, visit www.anidawehi.com or call (706) 864-3818.

- **News from Dawson County:** The new "Welcome to Dawson County" signs on both sides of Georgia 400 entering the county now allow local businesses and residents to beckon a hearty "Welcome" to visitors directly from one of the most heavily-traveled major highways in the region. The recently-erected signs, rendered in natural wood, are in character for a destination known for outdoor experiences, small-town hospitality and motorsports legacy. Soon to be accented with shrubs and plants installed and maintained through the volunteer efforts of the Keep Dawson Beautiful committee, the signs were also installed to take advantage of the "Hospitality Highway" designation of Georgia 400, which bisects the county and serves as a main transportation corridor for visitors and residents alike.
- The **Old Clarkesville Mill** (located at 683 Grant Street, Suite U, Clarkesville, Georgia 30523) will have a **Weekend Community Market** every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Contact Vickie Wineland at 706-839-1583.
- **Note from Kimberlee Graham of Chestatee Wildlife Preserve (www.chestateewildlife.com).** An easy way to help this organization or any other cause you care about is through a new Yahoo!-powered search engine and online shopping mall called GoodSearch.com. The more people who use this site, the more money will go to those in need. So please spread the word to your friends and family. Here's the web site — <http://www.goodsearch.com>. You can also read about GoodSearch in the NY Times, Oprah Magazine, CNN, ABC News and the Wall Street Journal.
- **Key Ingredients to visit Dahlonega:** Info on the Georgia tour of "Key Ingredients: America by Food." It's a traveling Smithsonian exhibit, brought to the state by the Georgia Humanities Council. It will travel through rural Georgia, opening in Vienna on June 28. "It's based on the theme of cooking traditions and features the places and events people gather for food -- festivals, holidays." It has been traveling throughout the U.S. since 2003 and will visit 150 rural U.S. cities. There are nine kiosks in the exhibit, which is mostly photographs and text, she said. As the exhibit travels to the various communities, it will pull in information from that area. i.e. if Ellijay does a great traditional Thanksgiving, then they'll add elements of that to the display. The Smithsonian exhibit will also go to LaFayette, Ellijay, Hapeville, Thomson, **Dahlonega**, Kingsland, Tifton, Vidalia, Waynesboro, Indian Springs/Flovilla and Buchanan. Go to www.keyingredients.org/000_venues/000_venues_01.asp for [complete](#) schedule.
- Great news! **Turner's Corner Restaurant** is planning to reopen on May 15, 2008, with the original menu. The new owners are from Macon.
- **Grapes & Hops in Flowery Branch:** "Dining in The Dark" Australian Wine Dinner Sunday, May 18th 5:00pm Come join the most unique and exciting dining you will ever experience in your life! "Dining in the Dark" concept started in Japan and has traveled around the world to Los Angeles, New York, and now Flowery Branch! We did the first one ever in Atlanta and had such an overwhelming response to do more! You will discover a dining experience by being blindfolded which enhances and heightens your sense of taste and smell for a culinary experience like you have never had before! Special guest, Juliana Shields will be hosting the event and represents one of the biggest and best Australian wine portfolios in the United States! Chef Timmy Lee will be preparing a 4-course dinner along with 4 perfectly paired wines from Australia. \$55.00 pp RSVP required This will book up fast so make reservations! Call 770-965-9145 or email: michelle@grapesandhopsbarandbistro.com
- **Update on North Georgia Arts Tour:** Many, but not all, artists who are participating in the brochure/website project have also volunteered to be demonstrating artists during the North Georgia Arts Tour, June 20th - 29th. All artists participating in the tour will be featured in a pamphlet that will be a companion piece to the tour map/brochure. The pamphlet will list the tour artists as well as when and where they will be demonstrating.

If you would like to demonstrate during the tour contact a participating business or call the Georgia Heritage Center and give them your contact information, art form and the days you will be available (706-754-5989). You will be matched with a business in need of artists during the tour.

The website for the NorthGeorgia Arts Tour is also under construction and new features are being added daily. ALL BUSINESSES MUST FILL OUT AN ONLINE APPLICATION at artstour.org If you have not done so and are a former tour participant or would like to join the tour, contact me at ghca2@alltel.net and I will provide the link to the application.

If you've already signed up, your business will show up on the artstour.org website very shortly. Thanks to all who are being patient and understanding as we work through these issues and keep things moving forward. Those who are not patient and understanding will be put in charge of next year's events. If you have questions about either the brochure project or the arts tour, please contact me by e-mail at ghca2@alltel.net.

- **New Artists Brochure/Website:**

GHCA in Tallulah Falls is greatly pleased at the number of artists participating in the brochure/website and are looking forward to putting out a high quality publication that will be suitable for year-round distribution. The brochure will serve as an artists directory, supported by the website, which will allow a more in-depth description of the participants and their art creating a presence on the web for many artists as well as linking to existing websites. The cost for participation is \$30. Of course they hope that the participating artists will become GHCA members, (It's just \$25 a year) but membership is not required.

They hope to have the artists brochure ready for distribution by the time of the arts tour but if it becomes necessary they will push that date forward a few weeks. The good news is that this will allow a little extra time for artists who are just learning about the project to join too. If you or an artist you know have not signed up yet, it's not too late.

If you are new to the project or have only submitted a paper application, please be aware that ALL APPLICANTS MUST FILL OUT AN ONLINE APPLICATION AT www.GeorgiaArtists.org. Follow the purple links beginning with "artists signup form" on the top left corner of the home page. All of the artists who have used the form assure us that it is very easy. If you cannot complete the online form yourself, please let me know. Please understand that this is a huge project involving well over 100 artists and I cannot write artists statements or gather information from existing websites. As you fill in the online application you will be prompted to upload your photos. If you do not have photos yet, they can be added at a later time. If you came to the center and had photos for your webpage done by Richard Smith, we will upload your photos for you. All participants will be sent a link to make changes or corrections to their webpage and upload new photos.

MEDIA REQUESTS, GRANTS, WORKSHOPS, ETC

- **Media Requests:**

The TimesTo all concerned: The Times will publish our annual Splash summer leisure guide on May 25. It will include stories on recreation in and around Lake Lanier during the summer months, as well as calendar events throughout Northeast Georgia from Memorial Day weekend through the end of August. Please submit your event information, story ideas and photos to myself or Tasha Autry, tautry@gainesvilletimes.com, by May 5 so we can include a comprehensive list of events in this year's edition. We appreciate your help, as always, and welcome your ideas and feedback on how to make our magazines better each year.

- **Artists Info from Jaymi Hampton – Georgia Heritage Center for the Arts:** “Recently I found this site, www.georgiaartexchange.org and I submitted information about our events. They published everything I sent them. They also do a featured artist and I ask if GHCA could submit artists to be featured. They e-mailed me this morning and said please do. I would like for you to go to the site and see if you would like for us to submit your name, bio and pics. Since I am sending this out on our full mailing list if you are not an artist you might want to check out the site and give us feedback on

your impression. To me it seems like another avenue that we can promote Georgia Artists. If you know of other sites we might be interested in let us know. Just another way to fulfill our mission.”

- The **Rhythms of the South Regional International Showcase** plans to reformat and redesign the look of the show as well as expand the exhibitor and buyer base. To encompass new global business opportunities for the hospitality industry, the Rhythms of the South Alliance - comprised of Atlanta, Nashville and New Orleans - has committed to building an expanded marketplace and intends to reintroduce the show in 2009.

The annual travel tradeshow promotes the Southeastern U.S. as a tourism destination to more than 100 international tour operators and media. For six years, Rhythms of the South has featured Southern destinations as a regional experience for international travelers, showcasing the unique culture and lifestyle of the South. The show's current format provides an intimate, one-on-one buyer-to-supplier sales opportunity. The host city rotates annually between the Alliance partner cities, drawing an average of more than one hundred buyers matched with the same number of suppliers from between 20 and 30 countries. Exhibits feature destinations and attractions from throughout the South, showcasing the diversity of the region from its magnificent oceans in the South to the majesty of the Appalachian Mountains in the North.

The experience is brought together for international travelers using Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport (HJIA), the world's busiest and most accessible airport, and Delta Air Lines' encompassing schedule throughout the region with connections to more than 80 international destinations in fifty countries.

According to Butch Spyridon, president of the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau and current chairperson for the Rhythms of the South Alliance, “At the time the show was introduced, 20 percent of Delta Air Lines' schedule was targeted at international markets. Today, more than 40 percent of their schedule operates flights from HJIA to 80 destinations in 50 countries throughout the world. Our region's major international airline hub, Hartsfield-Jackson International airport, reported a 12 percent increase in international airline traffic for 2007 over 2006, serving 9.2 million international visitors entering and exiting our region.”

The Alliance will meet with the airline industry and hospitality industry associations throughout the region in 2008 to solicit input and participation in the expanded format of the show. The new show format is expected to be announced in early 2009.

For more information, please contact: Bill Howard, ACVB, Vice President, Marketing 404.521.6634 bhoward@atlanta.net

- **Grants:**
 - The SFY 2009 cycle for the **Georgia Heritage Grant Program** is just beginning. Eligible applicants include local governments and non-profit organizations (excluding church/sectarian organizations) for historic properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the Georgia Register of Historic Places. Eligible activities include predevelopment projects such as preservation plans, feasibility studies or historic structure reports and development projects for actual "bricks and mortar" work. The amount appropriated this year for the 60%/40% reimbursable grant program is expected to be approximately \$100,000, with the addition of funds from the sale of preservation license plates.

Applications are available on HPD's Web site at <http://hpd.dnr.state.ga.us/content/displaycontent.asp?txtDocument=38>.
If you would like to receive a paper application in the mail or have questions, please contact Grants Coordinator Carole Moore at 404-463-8434 or carole.moore@dnr.state.ga.us. Applications must be postmarked on or before July 13, 2008.
 - The National Wildlife Refuge System and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation offer a Preserve America Grant program and have announced the latest winners. The

competitive grants (\$10,000 - \$15,000) help fund national wildlife refuge interpretive and education projects focusing on history and historic sites and how they contribute to conservation and understanding of natural resources. Service archaeologist Eugene Marino said the grant program has been in place for two years, and a call for applications for next year's round likely will occur in August 2008.

http://www.nfwf.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Browse_All_Programs&CONTENTID=6417&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm. The SPRING 2008 edition of **Cultural Heritage Tourism News** is now available for viewing on the Cultural Heritage Tourism website; also available via PDF download: www.culturalheritagetourism.org & www.culturalheritagetourism.org/documents/CHTNewsSpring08.pdf.

The current edition includes articles on:

- 25th Annual National Tourism Week
 - NEW Civic Tourism Book Released, Second Civic Tourism Conference
 - Research Yields Important Information on Visits to History Museums & Historic Sites
 - The Geotourism Challenge
 - American Bus Association Seeks Nominations
 - Cultural and Heritage Tourism Alliance Conference Set for November
 - Federal Formula Grant Initiative for Museums Underway
 - Secretary Kempthorne selects New U.S. World Heritage Tentative List
 - Washington *Buzz*... NPS, Preserve America, Dozen Distinctive Destinations, NEA
 - Scanning the States...California, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Oregon
- **ARC and NEA Announce Second Round of Grants Competition to Promote Gateway Communities:** WASHINGTON, The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announced the second round of their grants competition program this week to promote natural and cultural heritage tourism development in Appalachia's gateway communities.

The Appalachian Gateway Initiative: Natural and Cultural Heritage Tourism Development project is part of ARC's overall effort to promote asset-based economic development in the Region. This project will aid gateway communities -- towns that border national and state parks and forests -- to balance the need for economic growth with the desire to protect natural ecosystems, landscapes, and cultural heritage. The initiative will also emphasize the inclusion of the arts.

Nonprofit organizations, local governments, public educational institutions, and local and regional development organizations located in or near a gateway community are eligible to apply for the grants. Communities must also be located in an ARC distressed or transitional county.

ARC is contributing \$100,000 and NEA is contributing \$30,000 to the grants competition. Gateway communities can request funding for cultural heritage tourism planning workshops, tourism assessments, or tourism project implementation. Technical assistance will be provided by The Conservation Fund (TCF) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) Heritage Tourism Program.

For additional information, please contact Kris Hoellen at The Conservation Fund, 304-876-7462, khoellen@conservationfund.org, or Molly Theobald at the Appalachian Regional Commission, (202) 884-7767, mtheobald@arc.gov.

An application form (Request for Proposal) and other details about the grants competition are available at ARC's web site: <http://www.arc.gov>. Applications are due by June 6, 2008 and winners will be announced on June 27, 2008.

- **2009 Top 100 (Events) Nominations Begin:** Nominations are officially open for the 2009 Top 100 Events in North America. Now in its 27th year, ABA's Top 100 Events in North America recognizes the best motorcoach-friendly events for the coming year. Don't miss your chance to showcase the top

group tour events in your area. After the publication of the 2008 Top 100 Events ABA surveyed our operators and asked "Do you use the Top 100 booklet in planning your tours/charters?" . The answer - 70% of the operators who responded said YES! In addition to the operators' feedback, ABA has recorded nearly 300 main-stream media hits since September 2007 - helping you promote your destination.

Don't miss out on reaching the operators who can bring your destination group business. Our online nominating process is easier than ever to use. We've taken members' suggestions and incorporated them into our new online process. Take a look at some of the features that will make the process of collecting information for the events easier for you to manage.

Read more information on ABA's [Top 100 nomination process](#) [1]. Questions? Check out our Frequency Asked Questions, call ABA at 800-283-2877 or email Top100@buses.org

[2]. Please fill out the attached form and return to:

Katie Baasen
Senior Sales Manager - Tourism Division
Georgia Department of Economic Development
75 Fifth Street NW, Ste 1200, Atlanta, GA 30308
404-962-4080 & 404-962-4093 (F)

These are due no later than **May 14**. The winners will be announced in September.

For 2008 the Georgia event that "made the cut" was the Thomasville Rose Festival. For 2007, The Kingsland Catfish Festival was the lone state event. Please submit your events – Georgia has had multiple events in the top 100 before, why not again?

- **Tidbits from Randall Travel Marketing:**
 - Aloha Airlines and Skybus joined ATA in bankruptcy recently. Alitalia is also on the brink of bankruptcy. RTM expects to see this trend continue throughout 2008 due to rising fuel costs and weak management plans. Mostly affected will be smaller, regional carriers. (Source: Airline Weekly)
 - The U.S. economy lost 80,000 jobs in March, with housing and manufacturing sectors hit hardest. 5.1% unemployment is the highest since 2005. The rate was 4.4% in March 2007. The highest it has been since 2000 was 6.3% in June of 2003. 25 years ago, it reached 10.4% in 1983. (Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor)
 - Asked about their behavior over the last 90 days, 35% of Americans are eating fewer meals at restaurants in order to accommodate higher gas prices and economic uncertainty.
 - Stay-at-home vacations may increase this summer as concerns about the economy grow. However, there are no solid predictions or data upon which to base any forecasting. Most likely, the net result will be shorter trips, people choosing to stay closer to home and spend a little less.
 - Currently there are more than 180 million members of Myspace.com and Facebook.com. By comparison, the entire U.S. population is 300 million.

- **The Arts Development Council of Georgia (ADCG)** will offer the first in a series of classes on the business of art Saturday, May 10th at the Athens campus of Athens Technical College. The two session class, entitled *Price and Promotion*, will be held from 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., will give pointers on pricing, promotion, press releases, and other business techniques related to the production and sale of art and handcrafts. "This is an ideal opportunity for those artists who wish to make the leap from creating to selling their work." Donna O'Kelley Butler, ADCG vice-chairperson, said. "It will also give refreshing pointers to experienced artists, as well."

The class will be lead by Lee Nelson, the creator and presenter of *The Entrepreneurial Artist*, and co-owner of *The Point of Art* Gallery, Union Point, and Jan Whyllson, an artist, writer, performer and current manager of the *Genuine Georgia Gallery* in historic Greensboro. Both are on the Board of

Directors of the Arts Development Council of Georgia, a non-profit organization that promotes the arts through business, economic development and education.

Class tuition for each workshop will be \$10.00 for Arts Development Council members and \$20.00 for nonmembers. Membership registration forms are available by accessing the organization's website at www.adcg.org. Workshop registration is limited and tuition must be prepaid by check or money order by May 3rd. Contact Donna O'Kelley Butler at 706-559-4841 or storyteller826@bellsouth.net for more information.

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.)

- May 10-18** **National Tourism Week:** "Discover Great American Traditions" is the theme for the 25th annual National Tourism Week, to be held May 10-18. The theme encourages travel to American locales and highlights the role that tourism plays in discovering the icons of a destination.
- May 14** **Northeast Georgia Regional Travel Association Membership Meeting**
Georgia Mountain Fair, Hiawassee
- June 11** **Northeast Georgia Regional Travel Association Membership Meeting**
Nantahala Outdoor Center
- July 9** **Northeast Georgia Regional Travel Association Membership Meeting**
Dahlonge STS
- August 13** **Northeast Georgia Regional Travel Association Membership Meeting**
North Georgia Tech - Blairsville Campus
- September 10-12** **Georgia Governor's Conference On Tourism**
Presented By The Georgia Department Of Economic Development, Georgia Association Of Convention & Visitors Bureaus, And The Tourism Development Alliance Of Georgia.
Albany, GA
- September (TBD)** **Northeast Georgia Regional Travel Association Membership & Legislative Meeting**
Rabun County
- October 8** **Northeast Georgia Regional Travel Association Membership Meeting**
Blackbear Resort, Helen
- November 12** **Northeast Georgia Regional Travel Association Membership Meeting**
Toccoa