



NORTHWEST GEORGIA'S
HISTORIC HIGH COUNTRY
TRAVEL REGION

Regional Tourism Representative
February 2009 Report

New Contact Info!

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GEORGIA TOURISM DIVISION NEWS

- **Tourism Grants** – All tourism grant programs are suspended at this time due to budget constraints. However, due to the extended legislative session this year, the FY10 Marketing Co-op **grant deadline has been extended to July 31st** in case funds are restored in the final budget.
- **GA Made GA Grown Products Web Registry** - the new web registry is now live at www.gamadegagrownproducts.org with more than 800 artscentric and agribusinesses registered. Qualified businesses and artisans can still register to list their entity on the site for free. Just go the website and register.
- **ExploreGeorgia.org Updates** – Development of the State's official tourism marketing website continues with improvements and features. The most recent changes include:
 - The Coupon upload is working, but only images can be uploaded, not pdf or other files.
 - Partner admin one sheet is now on the partner admin sign in page
 - Upon listing creation, users must now include the following:
 - Logo and/or image for search results
 - Summary
 - Description
 - New search functionality
 - More details are coming, but this broadly includes:
Quality scoring based on summary, description, special offers, logo inclusion, etc
(NOTE: this means that instead of listing appearing in order of the most recently updated, they will now appear in order of the most complete, so it's important that tourism partners complete their listings as much as possible, including the addition of events, special offers and photos.)
- **Georgia Travel Guides to Regional VICs** – if you are a designated Regional GA Visitors Information Center (RVIC), you should have received a shipment of 2009 Georgia Travel Guides. If you didn't, contact jcochran@georgia.org.
- **The Georgia Civil War Sesquicentennial** – the Governor's proposed budgets for FY09 and FY10 don't include funding for the Civil War Sesquicentennial; however the GA Civil War Commission continues to prepare and be ready to show off the state's rich Civil War heritage when called upon.
- **Save The Date: 2009 Techno Tourism Conference – New Location!** - Due to budget constraints, the Techno Tourism Conference **has been moved to Chattahoochee Technical College in Marietta**. The dates remain April 20 and 21. Hotel recommendations will follow shortly. Because the grant process is on hold, the requirement for attendance in order to receive funding is waived. However, the sessions will be filled with knowledge that can help to move Georgia tourism forward.

NW GA HISTORIC HIGH COUNTRY REGIONAL NEWS

- **Winter Chautauqua March 1 – 2, 2009 – REGISTRATION NOW OPEN.** Visit www.WinterChautauqua.com for details!
- **ABC television will broadcast a feature on Appalachia entitled: *A Hidden America: Children of the Mountains* this coming Friday, February 13th, at 10:00 P.M.** (eastern standard time) (Appalachian Regional Commission) ARC staff contributed a substantial amount of background information to the

producers of this ABC News 20/20 program, and it should be well worth watching. NOTE: all of the NW GA Historic High Country region is in the ARC region of Georgia. www.arc.gov

- **GA Civil War Heritage Trails Website Update** – a meeting was held Feb. 10th in Madison to plan for major improvements to the website www.gcwht.com. Many sites in northwest GA are on the Atlanta Campaign trail.
- **New Festival! Finster Fest – May 2-3 in Summerville** – details at www.paradisegardensgallery.com. If you are an artist who would like to have a booth, visit the website for an application (due March 1st)
- **New Bed and Breakfast! The Sage Cottage Inn, Adairsville** - Jim and Sharon Southerland know hospitality and have additional plans on the horizon including branded Sage Cottage food and gift items, as well as a new restaurant in Adairsville to be called The Sage Cottage Restaurant. The Inn has 5 rooms on 12.5 beautifully wooded acres. www.sagecottageinn.com
- **Welcome to Rebecca Bolton, the new Sales and Marketing Director** at the Northwest Georgia Trade and Convention Center in Dalton!

MEDIA, PUBLIC RELATIONS, TRAVEL SHOWS, MARKETING

- **Request for Packages** – the Tourism Division is looking for lodging/attraction packages to use in promoting travel to and within Georgia. If you haven't already submitted what your property, attraction or community offers to your regional rep, you can **send info to jcochran@georgia.org**. Packages need to include lodging and at least one attraction (meals optional.) No particular deadline, but sooner the better.
- **Group Travel Leads** – advertising leads are available from your regional tourism rep. They were sent to county contacts and some attractions who regularly target this market, but if you would like the leads and didn't receive them, contact jcochran@georgia.org.
- Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel magazine invites you to **nominate America's Coolest Small Towns** at <http://www.budgettravel.com/bt-srv/coolestsmalltowns/?wpisrc=newsletter> The town must have a population under 10,000 and on the upswing. **Voting began February 2nd.**
- **2009 GA On My Mind Days (GOMM) Promotion Dates at GA Visitor Information Centers VICs)** Mark your calendar for promoting your destination/attraction/lodging property/event at any of the VICs listed below. For more information and details, you may contact each VIC via email at (name of VIC)[@georgia.org](mailto:) (Example: ringgold@georgia.org) There is no cost to display!

March 27th – Columbus
April 3rd – Valdosta
April 16th – Sylvania
May 9th – Plains

May 15th – Kingsland
May 22nd – Lavonia
May 29th – Savannah
June 5th – Tallapoosa

June 19th – Ringgold
July 17th – Augusta
July 31st – West Point

- **Travel Marketing Trends*:**
 - Hurry up and relax: 53% of Americans took a vacation that was less than four days in 2008. Most were weekend trips with a Saturday night stay.
 - Going green: 41% of Americans would select an earth friendly travel product. 47% would pay more for green products, 53% would not.
 - Wait for it: As travel consumers hold out longer for competitive deals, the average booking window continues to shrink. Industry insiders say 7 days or less, ARES stats show 3 days or less.
 - Pop-up deals: Many hoteliers are creating urgency in the buying decision by using jack-in-the-box deals that pop-up and go away overnight.

**Source: 2008 National Leisure Travel Monitor*

OTHER

- **Coming Soon: Cemetery Grant Program, Round 2** - Applications for Round 2 of the Historic Cemetery Heritage Tourism Grant Program, funded in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, will soon be available on HPD's Web site at <http://www.gashpo.org/content/displaycontent.asp?txtDocument=426>. If you submitted an application for Round 1 and your project was not funded, please contact Carole Moore (if you have not already done so) if you wish to be considered in Round 2.

The purpose of the grant program is to assist local communities in promoting their historic cemeteries through heritage tourism. Eligible projects include research and documentation; interpretation and public information; advertising and marketing; or workshops and training. "Bricks and mortar" projects are not eligible for this program. The reimbursable grant funds are 50% state/50% local match and will be awarded on a competitive basis. The maximum grant award will be \$2,500; however, there is no minimum amount, and HPD encourages applications for small projects. **The anticipated deadline to submit applications will be mid-March with grant awards being announced in late April/early May 2009.**

For more information, please call or e-mail Grants Coordinator Carole Moore at 404-463-8434 or carole.moore@dnr.state.ga.us.

- **Save Our History 2009/2010 grant cycle announced** - The Save Our History Grant Program provides funding to history organizations that partner with schools on a local community preservation project. Since launching the Save Our History Grant Program in 2004, History, formerly known as The History Channel, has awarded over \$1 Million Dollars in grants to organizations and schools large and small, urban, suburban and rural, in the northern, southern, eastern, western and central United States. During the 2009/2010 school year, History will again award grants of up to \$10,000 to historical organizations to fund hands-on, experiential educational projects that teach students about their local history and actively engage them in its preservation. For guidelines and criteria, important dates, and to apply, please visit <http://www.history.com/content/saveourhistory/grant-program>. **Applications are due June 5, 2009.** Any questions can be directed to info@saveourhistory.com.
- **Arts Grant Opportunity** - The Southern Arts Federation with support from the National Endowment for the Arts is pleased to offer a limited number of **Economic Response Technical Assistance grants for non-profit** presenting organizations in our nine-state region.

In response to the current economic climate, **this special initiative encourages visual, media, performing, and literary arts presenting organizations to contract with an outside consultant for intensive work to focus on organizational stabilization and to strengthen an organization's infrastructure.** Examples of consultation activities funded by this Technical Assistance grant program include: updating a strategic plan, short and long term planning, fundraising, innovation or entrepreneurial efforts, building participation, and grantsmanship. Activities should focus on ways that the organization will respond to the current economic conditions for the long-term health and stability of the organization.

Applications must be postmarked 30 days prior to the project start date. **All services must be completed by June 30, 2009.** The maximum request is 50% of the consultant fee, up to \$2,500. Only non-profit presenting organizations in the Southern Arts Federation's nine-state region are eligible to apply. SAF's nine-state region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The guidelines and application form are available on the website. For more information, please contact Nikki Estes, Program Director - Presenting & Touring, at 404-874-7244 ext. 16 or nestes@southarts.org.

Contact Southern Visions
(404) 874-7244 ext. 28
email: jknight@southarts.org
www.southarts.org/southernvisions
Southern Visions is operated by the Southern Arts Federation

- **Read cultural heritage success stories** at <http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/stories.htm>

- **Of Interest:**

- **Minimum Wage Increase** - Effective July 24, 2009, the federal minimum wage will increase to \$7.25 per hour (reference: O.C.G.A. 34-4-3).
- **IRS Mileage Rates** (beginning January 1, 2009)
 - 55 cents per mile for business miles driven
 - 24 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
 - 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.For more info, click on <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rp-08-72.pdf>

COMING UP!

- Feb 16-18** **2009 Southeast Festivals and Events Conference, Knoxville – more info at www.georgiafestivals.org**
- Feb 19-20** **Southern Garden Heritage Conference - Athens - contact 706-542-1244 or garden@uga.edu**
- Mar 1-2** **Winter Chautauqua, Dalton www.winterchautauqua.com**
- Mar 9-11** **GACVB Winter Meeting, Jekyll Island www.gacvb.com**
- Mar 15-22** **Ag Week at the GA VICs – promo opportunity!**
- Apr 30** **GDEcD Co-op Marketing Grant Deadline**
- Apr 5-8** **Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) Fam in High Country region (itinerary set)**
- Apr 20-21** **Techno Tourism Conference,**