



**Plantation Trace Regional Representative Update
December 2010
News from the State:**

- Gov.-elect Nathan Deal announced Chris Cumiskey as his choice for commissioner of the Georgia Department of Economic Development, and he'll reappoint the leaders of numerous Georgia departments.
- **The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) has awarded \$119,984 in tourism product development grants to 12 tourism entities across the state.** The Tourism Division, through the new Tourism Product Development Grant program, seeks to financially support tourism development activities at the local level in both urban and rural areas.
- **FLAVOR OF GEORGIA FOOD PRODUCT CONTEST REGISTRATION OPEN**
Entries are now being accepted for the 2011 Flavor of Georgia contest, conducted by the University of Georgia Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development (CAED). The annual contest will be held at the Georgia Freight Depot in downtown Atlanta. Winners are chosen in seven categories: confections; dairy products; jams, jellies and sauces; meat products; snack foods; barbecue and hot sauces; and other products. A grand champion is selected from all of the category winners. Savannah Bee Company won the 2010 Flavor of Georgia food product contest for its Grill Honey served on melted brie with raspberries. SBC's honey earned the grand prize. The contest is only a starting point for many winners, said Sharon Kane, CAED economist and contest director. "Most of last year's contestants, 80 percent, saw an increase in their sales and business contacts following the contest," The winners will be announced during Ga Ag Day March 22, 2011. Online registration will run through Feb. 18, 2011 at www.flavorofgeorgia.caes.uga.edu For more info, call 706-542-9809 or e-mail spkane@uga.edu Judges look for market-ready foods, either commercially available or prototypes, from across the state. Entries are judged on flavor, best use of Georgia ingredients, Georgia theme, unique/innovative qualities, commercial appeal and originality.
- **AAA Great Vacations Expo - Columbus, OH - January 21 - 23, 2011** - Did you know that Ohioans spend more than \$1.5 billion on vacation travel/ accommodations annually? We look forward to sharing information about Georgia with attendees. In 2010, 12,900 travelers attended the expo. GDEcD is offering tourism partners an opportunity to co-op for this event. Contact Pam Kruseck at pkruseck@georgia.org for co-op information.
- **Southern Women's Show - Savannah, GA - February 4 - 6, 2011** - The Southern Women's Show attracts more than 12,000 women over the three-day period. This consumer show offers women travel information, beauty tips, cooking, fashion, health & well-being, shopping, giveaways and much more! To learn more about the Southern Women's Show, visit www.southernshows.com. Please contact Pam Kruseck via pkruseck@georgia.org for co-op information.
- Pam Kruseck and Nija Torrence attended the **National Tour Association (NTA)** Convention in Montreal, Canada from November 13 - 17. The Tourism division had a booth in the Convention Mall. The Georgia team also had successful appointments with tour operators. The 2011 event will take December 5- 9 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

- Pam Kruseck attended the **AAA Superbowl of Knowledge in Charlotte, NC-** November 19 - 20. Pam launched the Georgia Specialist Program and met with AAA Carolinas Travel Counselors. More than 200 AAA South Travel Counselors are part of our Specialist Program. We look forward to working with AAA Carolinas to add more Georgia Specialists to the team, so they can better promote Georgia to their AAA membership.
- Joseph Walker and Kevin Langston traveled to Brazil to participate in Georgia events with the country's largest international tour operator. **The Georgia Tourism Division joined forces with Marsans to launch Georgia product to nearly 300 travel agents** including the president of ABAV (an association representing all travel agencies in Brazil) in Rio de Janeiro on November 3 and Sao Paulo on November 4. The Deputy Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, tourism executives and business development dignitaries were in attendance. Intense training of Georgia product with Brazilian agents is set to begin in December 2010 and January 2011.
- Joseph Walker met with leading tour operators in Italy and France from November 8 - 13, 2010. Joseph participated in Showcase USA - Italy 2010 in Venice from November 11 - 13 and the America's Forum in Paris, France on November 15.
- Joseph Walker and Stella Xu attended the China International Travel Mart (CITM) from November 18-21, 2010 in Shanghai. The Atlanta CVB, Brunswick & Golden Isles CVB and Visit Savannah partnered with GDEcD and provided brochures for distribution at the show. In addition, Columbus State University and Best Friends Travel, an Atlanta Chinese receptive, participated in the event with GDEcD. More than 100,000 people including tourism industry representatives and consumers were in attendance. The Georgia Tourism division has had much success in the Chinese market including participating in two Chinese sales missions, hosting two Chinese tour operator FAM tours in Georgia, participating in more than 20 tourism related tradeshow/promotional seminars in China and sending quarterly newsletters to more than 200 Chinese tour operators. As a result of the increase in marketing to Chinese tour operators over the past two years, this year for the first time, four Chinese outbound tour operators will feature Georgia product in their catalogs.
- **Georgia Visitor Information Centers:** Year-to-date The Georgia VIC's have assisted 2,107,665 visitors and made 5,224 reservations. Visitation is up 7%.
 - **Hotel Trends YTD:**
 - Hotel/ Motel occupancy is up 6.8% statewide
 - Room rates (ADR) in Georgia is down -3.7%
 - Statewide, RevPAR is up 2.8%
 - Georgia room revenues are up 5.1%
 - Room Demand is up 9.2%
 - Room Supply is up 2.3%
- **Please start updating your ExploreGeorgia.org Calendar of Events listing for 2011 and if you have any events that will take place in Jan, Feb, and March of 2012 please list those dates as well. For instructions on listing attractions as well as events go to this link for our partner instructions pdf.**
<http://www.georgia.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Industries/Tourism/Explore%20Georgia/ExploreGeorgia%20Partner%20Admin%20Instructions%20-Sept%2009.pdf>
- **29th Annual Travel South Showcase in Atlanta-** Feb.22-24, 2011. Showcase is the only regional tourism marketplace for the southern USA. Hundreds of tourism partners have begun planning to host over 600 tour operators, journalists and southern suppliers. For more info email Brittney Gray bgray@georgia.org
- The **Georgia Civil War website** (www.gacivilwar.org) has been launched. If you have an attraction/ event that you would like included - please enter the information as you do all other listings on exploregeorgia.org Remember to add the keyword "civilwarlandingpage" (no spaces) so that the info will be posted on the new Civil War website as well as exploregeorgia.org

- **Explore Georgia Updates:** Please post new or update your current “Special Offers” on onexploregorgia.org. If you have any immediate coupons or events, please send to Stefanie Paupeck, spaupeck@georgia.org, for our Twitter page. GDEcD has launched Explore Georgia's Ultimate Georgia Vacation Contest. We are giving away several 7-day Georgia vacation packages-see details at: www.exploregeorgia.org/georgia-vacation. To enter to win people need to sign up to use Explore Georgia's free Trip Planner and create their dream Georgia vacation. Once they save their trip idea they will be entered to win our contest. This is just one example of how we are increasing unique visits to the website. We will be doing these sweepstakes every quarter so please let me know if you wish to be involved in the future. We are driving traffic to this landing page through massive online advertising.

Plantation Trace News

Albany-Thomasville: Albany's Flint RiverQuarium was the “Must Do” and Thomasville's Pebble Hill Plantation was the “Must See” in the December issue of Destinations to Discover. <http://georgia.destinations2discover.com/>.

Miller – Berrien: These counties have been awarded funding from the GDEcD Tourism Product Development Grant.

Tourism Day 2011 has been scheduled! Save the date for January 25, 2011at the Capitol in Atlanta.

Save the Date! - Winter Chautauqua Tourism Conference – March 6-7, 2011 – Cartersville, GA

Travel South Showcase – Feb. 22 – 24, 2011 in Atlanta. This trade show targets tour operators for group travel (motorcoach). Opportunities abound for delegates, volunteers and sponsors. For more information, visit www.TravelSouthUSA.org/showcase11

2011 Military Travel Shows: Ft. Rucker March 9, Albany MCLB March 16, Robbins AFB March 17 and Moody AFB March 18

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