



Plantation Trace Regional Representative Update July 2010

News from the State:

- **New GDEcD Commissioner** – Heidi Green has been appointed as Commissioner of GA Dept of Economic Development starting July 1st. Heidi was formerly Deputy Commissioner of GDEcD's Global Commerce Division.
- Bill Thompson has resigned his position as Deputy Commissioner of the Film, Music and Digital Entertainment Division. Former Division Director Greg Torre will once again assume the role on an interim basis (while retaining his position as Division Director of the Marketing and Communications Division), and current project manager Lee Thomas is being promoted to Director of the Film unit.
- As the eyes of the nation remain focused on the **oil spill along the Gulf Coast**, experts continue to believe it is unlikely that Georgia will be directly affected by the damage. Still, given the remote possibility that extreme weather could change the spill's path - and the real impact oil is already having on our neighbors in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana - we want to keep you informed about how the State of Georgia and its partners are monitoring the crisis and responding. *Kevin Langston, Deputy Commissioner of the Georgia Tourism division, sent a letter to Georgia's tourism industry on Monday, June 21.* To read Kevin Langston's letter in its entirety, <http://www.georgia.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Industries/Tourism/Kevin%20Langston/Kevin%20Langston%20letter.pdf>
- Explore Georgia's Ultimate Georgia Vacation Contest - We are giving away a 7-day Georgia vacation package via ExploreGeorgia.org. 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 Ultimate Georgia Vacation Contest. Click on the link to see the contest-landing page. www.exploregeorgia.org/georgia-vacation NOTE: This contest is one example of how we are increasing unique visits to the website; this contest will be promoted through massive online advertising.
- **Tourism Product Development Grant:**
Applications will be posted on marketgeorgia.org in late August or September
Deadline for submission: Sept. 30, 2010
Grants will be announced in October
Project completion by April 2011
More details to come but there will still be an emphasis on job creation.
- Georgia Travel Guide Advertising rates reduced for the 2011 publication! I would like to encourage our partners to post "special offers" on the exploregeorgia.org website, as the Tourism Division will be heavily marketing these special offers. For more information on rates please contact Jill Teter at jill-teter@comcast.net
- **The Georgia Traveler team is looking for the Top 10 Most Romantic Destinations in Georgia.** Your selections will determine the rank in a Georgia Traveler Special Presentation. Tell them about *your* favorite romantic get-a-ways on www.facebook.com or email gatraveler@gpb.org

- If you have an event that you would like published in the Southern Distinction calendar of events please email your event information to calendar@SouthernDistinction.com
- The Georgia Tourism Division of GDEcD will again be participating as sponsors for the **National Tour Association Annual Marketplace** (November 13-17, 2010) and the **American Bus Association Annual Marketplace** (January 9-13, 2011). This sponsorship provides us with a booth on the marketplace floor where we will maximize our exposure into this market to all those who are present and give the state more opportunity to sell our product at the marketplace. To make this a huge success, we are asking for co-sponsorship through monetary donations. As a co-sponsor, your company is afforded a unique opportunity to highlight your Georgia product to hundreds of tourism professionals at these NTA and ABA conferences. The two levels are: Kudzu Sponsorship (NTA/ABA: \$750) or Peach Sponsorship (NTA/ABA: \$1000). The fee covers both tradeshow - we have done them separately in the past, but are trying to help stretch marketing dollars if possible. If you have any questions or need any clarification on this opportunity, please feel free to contact Katie Baasen at 404-962-4080, or kbaasen@georgia.org.
- The **Governor's Conference on Tourism** will take place in Athens from August 30-September 1, 2010. The **Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus** and the **Tourism Development Alliance of Georgia** have once again joined forces to present one unified tourism industry conference. The Georgia Tourism Conference is recognized as a must attend event for the tourism industry. Join professionals from DMOs, hotels, attractions, tour & travel and supplier companies as we **'Band Together'**. For more info visit: www.georgiagtc.com
- The Georgia Department of Economic Development is again participating with the **Motor coach Associations** of GA, AL, VA, FL, SC, NC, and South Central states in the GAS CARD sponsorship at the Annual Marketplaces for these organizations. We do a drawing for two operators to receive a \$500 gas card with the promotion "your business is good business for Georgia." We are offering a sponsor coop with this program for our state partners. For more info, please contact Katie Baasen at kbaasen@georgia.org.
- The Georgia Tourism division will be hosting a **Techno-Tourism Workshop** on Monday, August 30th- in advance of the 2010 Governor's Conference on Tourism. The workshop will be jam packed with tips, trends and information to help your organization stay ahead of the competition. Visit www.georgiagtc.com to learn more about this workshop and to register for the **2010 Georgia Governor's Conference** in Athens.
- **The Georgia Humanities Council is gearing up for another Smithsonian Institute Exhibit that will travel around Georgia in 2012-** The new exhibit, New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music will begin touring around Georgia in April 2012. The deadline for submitting applications to host the exhibit in your community is, September 15, 2010- go to www.georgiahumanities.org for more information.
- **Social Marketing Opportunities-** Georgia Tourism currently has 4,923 friends on Facebook and 8,024 Twitter followers- Please send Stefanie Paupeck any special coupons or press releases so that she can post them. Her email is spaueck@georgia.org.
- When sending news releases to media bcc your media contacts. Media do not need to see who else is receiving the news. It makes them less likely to run this story if they think everyone else is running it.
- 11 steps to building an effective blogger outreach list
<http://www.arikhanson.com/2010/07/21/11-steps-to-building-an-effective-blogger-outreach-list/>
- From the Lake Park VIC:
May visitation was up 10.54% w/177,399 visitors.

June visitation up 8.52% w/217,399 visitors.
We are already about 7,000 visitors up for July compared to July 2009 and still have a week left.

Plantation Trace News

Albany: Flint RiverQuarium announces August Beat the Heat promotion

Every Sunday in August Flint RiverQuarium guests will receive \$5 admission to the Flint RiverQuarium. Tickets can be upgraded to include a movie at the Imagination Theater for an additional \$1. These prices cannot be combined with any other discounts. The Flint RiverQuarium is open from 1-5 pm on Sunday.

Bainbridge: The newly developed Bainbridge/Decatur County CVB is currently working on collecting and inventorying tourist attractions in the Bainbridge/Decatur area. One of the most interesting finds to me is that Miriam Hopkins, a Broadway, film and TV star from the 1920s-1950s is buried in Oak City Cemetery? Born in Savannah in 1902, but she grew up close to Bainbridge. The actress was nominated for an Oscar, Golden Globe and has a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Miriam Hopkins was Margaret Mitchell's first choice to play Scarlett O'Hara in the film version of "Gone with the Wind". She also turned down the part of Ellie Andrews in "It Happened One Night" (she thought it was just a silly comedy). Claudette Colbert won a Best Actress Oscar for her performance as Ellie.

Dawson: The Dawson/Terrell County Chamber of Commerce is in the process of developing a new tourism brochure. We should be looking for this piece of collateral to be in VIC's within the next few months.

Quitman: Susan Peacock held a workshop with the tourism team from Brooks County on identifying their attractions and working on a slogan for the brochure. Lots of ideas and suggestions but nothing nailed down. The Brooks County Tourism Committee is now officially called **Destination Brooks**. We are for now an independent organization of volunteers that will be working with local government and other community organizations to move our tourism strategy forward. We have decided to form committees to more efficiently carry out our plans. These committees are: Cultural Tourism, Architectural Heritage (aka Historic Preservation), Tourism Planning & Policy, and Marketing. We are hoping to bring our Downtown Development committee on board in the coming weeks. We are in talks with our local Development Authority to head up that group. Follow us on our new blog: <http://qbctourism.wordpress.com/>

Tifton: Agrirama has a new name; it is now **Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College**. As of July 1, 2010, it became part of the ABAC Campus and will be managed and promoted through the college's administration office. Remaining events for this year that have been canceled include the Halloween Carnival and Victorian Christmas.

Thomasville: Summer in Thomasville ~ Girlfriends Getaway Package: This irresistible package for two includes a one-night hotel stay in any one of nine participating properties; two tickets for tours of historic Pebble Hill Plantation; two one-hour facials or massages at Metta Day Spa in Downtown Thomasville; and \$50 Downtown Dollars to spend! To book your getaway, contact the Thomasville Visitors Center at 229-228-7977 or toll free at 866-577-3600 (reference the Girlfriends Getaway Package). Visit www.thomasvillega.com for details! *Offer valid through August 31, 2010.*

Valdosta: The city continues its yearlong celebration of Valdosta's 150th Birthday. Valdosta will be burring a time capsule in Drexel Park to be opened on Valdosta's 200th birthday in the year 2060.

Save the Date

Aug 30-Sept 1, 2010: Georgia Governor's Conference on Tourism in Athens. Registration for the conference is already available on line at <http://www.georgiagtc.com/registration.html>

October 19-21, 2010: Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition in Moultrie: We will be sending out sign up sheets for volunteers September 1, 2010.

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