

SOUTHEAST TOURISM SOCIETY HONORS INDUSTRY'S 'SHINING EXAMPLES'

ATLANTA, Ga. (Sept. 11, 2009) – Southeast Tourism Society honored the best and brightest in the tourism industry at its annual Shining Example Awards banquet.

"Shining Example Awards highlight some of the best work in travel and tourism, and winners truly set examples that others in the industry can follow," said STS president and CEO Bill Hardman. "Showcasing great work is important because tourism is the largest, second-largest or third-largest industry in every Southeastern state."

Shining Example Awards, presented since 1985, are in 13 categories:

Travel Attraction of the Year - Snow Mountain at Stone Mountain Park

CVB of the Year (budget under \$100,000) - Decatur-Morgan County CVB – Decatur, Ala.

CVB of the Year (budget over \$100,000) – Tunica CVB – Tunica, Miss.

Regional Organization of the Year - Southern & Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association

Top 20 Event / Festival of the Year (attendance under 100,000) - Trail of Honor – Jackson, Miss.

Festival of the Year (attendance over 100,000) - Virginia Beach Neptune Festival – Virginia Beach, Va.

Internet Excellence - Pensacola Bay Area CVB – Pensacola, Fla.

Governmental Tourism Leadership Award - Mayor John Rhodes – Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Visual Excellence - Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB – Montgomery, Ala.

Tourism for Tomorrow - Tennessee Dept. of Tourist Development

Rising Star Award - Neal McCoy, Tupelo CVB – Tupelo, Miss.

A complement to the Shining Example Awards is presentation of the **Dorothy Hardman Award Spirit of STS Award** that recognizes an STS member's dedication to the Society. The 2009 recipient is Larry Halpern of Positive Energy.

Southeast Tourism Society board chairman, Leon Downey, recognized John Hudak, Madden Media, with the **Chairman of the Board Award** for outstanding service to the Society and the board.

The 2009 Shining Example Awards program was part of the 26th annual fall meeting of STS. It was held at the Grand Hyatt Atlanta in Buckhead in Atlanta, Ga.

Founded in 1983, the Southeast Tourism Society is dedicated to the promotion and development of tourism to its member states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. The membership includes state travel offices, attractions, hotels, motels, resorts, convention and visitors bureaus, airlines, bus companies, car rental agencies, newspapers, magazines and other travel-related organizations.

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Neville Y. Bhada
Neville@southeasttourism.org
404-364-9847