

TOURISM LEADERS FROM ACROSS SOUTHEAST TO FOCUS ON ECONOMY AT MONTGOMERY MEETING

Southeast Tourism Society draws travel industry professionals from 12 states

ATLANTA, Ga. (March 17, 2009)—Promoting tourism in the Southeast in the current economy is the focus of a meeting of Southeast Tourism Society (STS) in Montgomery from March 23-25. Approximately 225 tourism professionals are registered.

Among the speakers are Roger Dow, president of the U.S. Travel Association, and Dr. David Bronner, chief executive officer of Retirement Systems of Alabama.

STS is a 12-state professional association headquartered in Atlanta. Its stretches from Virginia to Florida to Louisiana, and tourism is one of the top three industries in each member state.

“The economy is affecting tourism businesses, and the STS meeting in Montgomery provides time to examine its affects and to share ideas about dealing with it. Tourism’s goal is to prosper in the face of adversity and to bolster the economies of our member states,” said STS President Bill Hardman.

The Southeast States Chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association (SETTRA) will meet concurrently with STS, and its members will present a number of research papers.

In a show of support for Montgomery tourism, more than 30 meeting attendees will participate in a “voluntourism” project at the Montgomery Zoo on March 23.

“STS has a tradition of volunteering in our meeting locations. Last year, we did a major roadside cleanup in Asheville, N.C. Other work sites have been the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, the Creole Nature Trail in Southwest Louisiana and the Beauvoir historic home in Biloxi,” said STS Chairman Leon Downey, who also is executive director of the tourism department in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Among the speakers:

+ David Bohan, chairman of BOHAN Advertising | Marketing in Nashville, on “The New Normal.”

+ Suzanne Cook, senior vice president of research at the U.S. Travel Association, on "The Economic Outlook for 2009."

+ Jeffrey Eslinger, senior research manager of D.K. Shifflet and Associates, on "The Power of Promotion."

+ John Hudak, partner and publisher at Madden Media in Tucson, Ariz., on "Managing Change."

+ Roger Miles, president of Miles Media in Sarasota, Fla., on "You Get What You Ask For in Media Buying."

"Between STS and SETTRA, some of the sharpest minds in the travel industry will be in Montgomery for three days," said Lee Sentell, director of the Alabama Tourism Department.

The meeting is at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel. The STS Marketing College will acknowledge its most recent graduates on March 25, presenting them certification as Travel Marketing Professionals.

About Southeast Tourism Society (STS)

Founded in 1983, the Southeast Tourism Society (www.southeasttourism.org) is dedicated to the promotion and development of tourism in its member states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Its headquarters are in Atlanta. The membership includes state travel offices, attractions, hotels, motels, resorts, convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, travel media and other travel-related organizations.

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