



# **Annual Report**

**July 2007 – December 2008**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The mission of the TLC is to provide a unified group with committed leadership pledged to promote, protect and serve the interests of the tourism and hospitality industries of the greater Savannah area.**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **President**

Jody McIntyre, Savannah Marriott Riverfront

### **Vice President**

Mark Dana, Prince-Bush-Smith Hotels

### **Secretary**

Sarah Lamar, HunterMaclean

### **Treasurer**

Charlie Brazil, Old Town Trolley Tours

### **At Large Member of the Executive Committee**

Jack Bussert, River Street Inn

Vicky Buck, VBuck Marketing, LLC.

Jim Cone, Georgia Power

Kristin Sanders Detwiler, Cobblestone Connections

Beth Double, The Olde Pink House

Patrick Graham, Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport

Steven High, Telfair Museum of Art

Paul Kennedy, Paul Kennedy Catering

Kevin McPherson, Belford's Seafood & Steaks

Gail NeSmith, NeSmith Gift Advertising

Jamie Parks, Savor Savannah Catering by SMG

Diane Rousakis, United Distributors, Inc.

Whip Triplett, North Point Hospitality Group, LLC

## **Past Presidents**

Charlie Brown (2006-2007), Old Savannah Tours

Shelly Fox (1998-2000), Retired

Marcie Hill (2004-2005), City Market

Sandy Hollander (2002-2003), 45 Bistro

Rod Musselman (2000-2002), Hilton Savannah DeSoto

Michael Plummer (2005-2006), Yates Astro

Mark Spadoni (2003-2004), Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa

## **History of the Organization**

In 1997, seven tourism and hospitality professionals had a vision to establish an organization that would support the local tourism industry with programs, scholarships and other projects. Thirty-seven businesses contributed \$1000 each to provide seed money for the organization, and the first TLC meeting was held in July 1998.

Since that time, the organization has grown to more than 200 member businesses. The TLC enjoys a diverse membership, including hotels/motels/bed and breakfasts, restaurants, food and beverage distributors, caterers, tour companies, retail shops, printers, law offices, and many other companies whose customers are in the tourism industry.

The non-profit professional association continually strives to provide our members with resources to strengthen their businesses. These resources include networking opportunities for industry professionals, educational seminars and training for industry employees, monthly luncheons with informative topics, a job-listing website and job fairs and an emergency fund available for members in times of crisis. The TLC is dedicated to leading the way for greater tourism in Savannah and strives to ensure that the needs of the local tourism industry are being addressed.

## **Membership Meetings**

Each month, about 120 business professionals gather at membership luncheons to network and listen to speakers discuss a variety of issues related to the tourism and hospitality industry. Not only does this offer our members an opportunity to network, but it also allows them opportunities to distribute promotional and marketing materials. Luncheon raffles help the TLC to raise funds for industry scholarships that are presented to students pursuing hospitality careers each year.

This past year we had a wonderful array of guest speakers:

- Rhett Mouchet, Melaver/Mouchet
- Dr. Joe Buck, Savannah/Chatham School Board President
- Charlie Gatlin, GA Deputy Commissioner of Tourism
- Tybee Mayor Jason Buelterman
- Lee Beckman, Georgia Port Authority
- Carey Ferrara, GA Department of Economic Development Regional Tourism Representative
- Marc Friday, Mobility Management Board
- Lise Sundrla, Savannah Development & Renewal Authority
- Michael Traynor, Savannah Morning News
- Judy McCorkle, Georgia Municipal Clerks and Finance Officers Association
- Michael Jordan, Coastal Heritage Society

The TLC also presented the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Celebration of Service luncheon along with Buy Local Savannah and the Downtown Business Association again this year. This year's keynote speaker was Robert Spector, bestselling author of The Nordstrom Way. Two service awards were also given out to local individuals who demonstrated exceptional service in our community.

The TLC hosted several New Member Orientations throughout the fiscal year to welcome and engage our newest members by educating them on how to get involved. Members of the membership committee and the Board of Directors took the time to share their experiences with the new members and answer questions.

After hours socials were held during 2007-08 to provide a time for members to network and communicate outside of the hectic work day. Each social brought at least 50 professionals together for a good time. Hosting locations included The Mulberry Inn, Wild Wing Café, Corleone's Trattoria and Crosswinds Golf Club.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Joint Holiday Reception with the Convention and Visitors' Bureau was held in December 2007 at the Savannah Marriott Riverfront. The two organizations decided to join forces to celebrate the tourism and hospitality industry's accomplishments of the past year and look forward to a new year together. In keeping with the spirit of holiday giving, the two organizations were able to donate \$500 each to the Bethesda Home for Boys and St. Mary's Home for Children.

The two organizations celebrated the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Joint Holiday Reception in December 2008 at the Jepson Center For the Arts with catering by Savor Savannah Catering by SMG. About 200 people attended and we were able to contribute about \$2000 to the Empty Stocking Fund, a program run by The Savannah Morning News to raise money for local families in need during the holidays.

## **Workforce Development**

This year, the TLC updated its jobsinsavannah.com website through a partnership with Savannahjobs.com. TLC members are able to post one free job posting each month on jobsinsavannah.com to assist in their recruitment efforts.

In January 2008, the TLC partnered with Savannah Technical College for their 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Hospitality Job Fair. It was a huge success with most of the 20 participating businesses able to fill open positions.

The Tourism Leadership Council worked closely with Savannah Technical College throughout the year to develop the curriculum for the new Hospitality Customer Service Provider Program. The new 10-week certificate program is expected to launch April 1, 2009.

In May 2008, the TLC launched its Mobility Front Line Training program and hosted 11 classes throughout the year. The classes (FREE to all industry employees), which feature a classroom presentation, a tour on a '**dot**' Express Shuttle and an online certification exam, educate professionals on the most efficient ways to get around Savannah. The Mobility Front Line Training Program features the new Downtown Transportation – '**dot**' – system and how it fits into the existing transportation options in the Historic and Convention Districts of Savannah. Supported by the Mobility Management Board and instructed by Savannah Tech, the TLC has already trained more than 130 people over the past year. The long-awaited streetcar made its debut in November 2008 as well. Members of the TLC were able to see and tour it following our November luncheon at the Roundhouse Railroad Museum.

At the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Tourism and Awards & Scholarship Dinner, the TLC was able to present three \$1,000 scholarships to students from area schools.

## **Fundraisers**

The TLC's three fundraisers provide financial support for the programs and activities of the organization each year. They also provide exposure opportunities for businesses and a fun time for everyone involved!

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual TLC Golf Tournament, presented by Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport, took place in November 2007 at The Club at Savannah Harbor. Thirty foursomes played, 30 businesses participated through hole sponsorships and an additional 9 supported the event with the GPS system hole sponsorship. The event grossed nearly \$30,000!

Because of our 18-month fiscal period this year (July 2007 - December 2008) the TLC also had its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament in October 2008. Presented by Comcast, this year's tournament committee executed some new ideas at the course. Instead of the format used in recent years of serving food on several tee boxes throughout the course, we opted to solicit restaurants to serve lunch to the players ahead of time under the tent by the Pro-Shop. Nine restaurants participated and it was a great success! The event was supported with 27 foursomes, 18 hole sponsors and 9 GPS sponsors. All in all, the event grossed nearly \$27,000!

The TLC's Eighth Annual Taste of Savannah™ – Saturday Night Fever, presented by Georgia Power and R&R Restaurant Supply, took place Saturday, February 2, 2008 at the Savannah International Trade & Convention Center. Because of the major growth of the event over the past several years, we moved it to the Exhibit Hall located on the ground level of the Trade Center. Thirty restaurants and caterers served samples of their favorite menu items to more than 1200 guests! Because everyone really embraced the theme, a costume contest took place and many guests sported their favorite 1970's Disco attire! The event grossed an all time high of more than \$64,000.

In May 2008, the TLC hosted its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Tourism Awards & Scholarship Dinner. In celebration of the ten year anniversary of TLC serving the industry, black tie attire was encouraged and the committee executed a very classy ambience throughout the evening. Held at the Hyatt Regency Savannah, several awards were presented and scholarship monies were distributed to three students pursuing careers in the hospitality industry at local area schools. The 2008 Community Champion Award went to Mark Spadoni, General Manager of the Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa. The Herb & Franklin Traub Visionary Award was presented to Howard Morrison, local Community Catalyst. Vicky Buck of VBuck Marketing, LLC took home the TLC Member of the Year Award. Service Star and Leader Awards went to Bruce Kimble from the Hilton Garden Inn - Midtown and Clevon Wright of the Hyatt Regency Savannah, respectively. The event was able to gross nearly \$38,000 and received high praise on its execution as the "most elegant" Annual Dinner to date.

## **Charitable Contributions**

The TLC contributed to many different organizations throughout the year. The Good Samaritan Fund was able to assist many individual TLC members as well with donations reaching \$1500 this year.

As a token of our appreciation, donations were made to the charity of each luncheon speaker's choice. This past year's beneficiaries included Good Will of the Coastal Empire, Greenbriar Children's Home, Park Place Outreach, United Way, American Cancer Society, United Methodist Church and the Coastal Heritage Society's Children's Museum Fund. The TLC participated in the Savannah Harbor Foundation's Trees for Life project again this year which contributed its proceeds to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The TLC hosted two blood drives this year, August of 2007 and November of 2008. Between the two, we were able to save about 75 lives. Two food drives were also conducted this year. During November of 2007, we had a peanut butter drive during a luncheon and were able to bring in 100 jars of peanut butter. In November 2008, we had a canned food drive and were able to assist America's Second Harvest with 753 pounds of food during the holiday season.

## Other Programs

The TLC continues to seek ways to best serve its membership. This year, we continued to build on educational opportunities internally and externally.

The Restaurant Council really soared with many courses offered throughout the year. Service That Sells, instructed by Dominic Moraco of Savannahmenu.com, was offered three times in the TLC office and was customized and taken to several member businesses as well. This training provides insightful and practical tips for food and beverage employees who want to set themselves apart by offering the best service possible. The TLC also offered the ServSafe Certified Food Service Manager Training, a program instructed by Jim Deal of ProActive Systems. This training enabled the TLC Restaurant Council to ensure F&B businesses had the opportunity to get the proper training they needed to serve their guests as each existing food service establishment needs to have on site at all times a Certified Food Service Manager (CFSM). This was a very successful program and also introduced several non-members to the TLC. Finally, the TLC hosted a basic wine service training conducted by Diane Rousakis with United Distributors, Inc.

As part of the TLC's ongoing quest to educate community leaders on the importance and value of the industry to the lives of the 20,000 local industry employees and their families, the TLC compiled and printed a "Tourism & Hospitality Career Success Stories" book. The book highlights the career paths of nearly 100 local tourism & hospitality industry leaders.

The momentum of the TLC continued to grow strong over the past 18 months and the TLC took big strides toward working together on projects with other community organizations. The TLC represented the industry on various task forces, committees and events including:

- Wayfinding and Directional Signage Steering Committee (ongoing)
- Savannah Tech Hospitality Program Advisory Committee (ongoing)
- Savannah Tech Culinary Program Advisory Committee (ongoing)
- Savannah Development and Renewal Authority – several task forces
- Savannah Tech Explorer Posts with High School students interested in tourism and hospitality (ongoing)
- GACVB/TDAG Joint Meeting – August 2007
- Fort Stewart Community Showcase – October 2007
- Savannah/Chatham Day – bronze sponsor – January 2008
- Governor's Conference on Tourism – September 2008
- AWWIN 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Women's Leadership Summit & Conference – presentation on tourism and hospitality industry and career opportunities – November 2008

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## **TOURISM LEADERSHIP COUNCIL STAFF**

Marti Barrow, Executive Director  
Kelly Tucker, Assistant Director

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## **TOURISM LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS (2007-08)**

45 Bistro	Hampton Inn Historic District	Savannah Candy Kitchen
AAA Auto Club South	Hampton Inn -Midtown	Savannah Civic Center
AAA Parking	Hampton Inn Savannah North	Savannah Coca Cola
Accommodations for All, LLC.	Hawthorn Suites - Savannah Airport	Savannah College of Art and Design
Adventure Radio Group	Hilton Garden Inn- Savannah Airport	Savannah Development & Renewal Authority
Advertising Specialty Services	Hilton Garden Inn-Midtown	Savannah Int'l Trade & Convention Ctr
American Diabetes Association	Hilton Garden Inn-Savannah Historic District	Savannah Magazine
American Express	Hilton Savannah DeSoto	Savannah Marriott Riverfront
American Red Cross	Historic Savannah Carriage Tours	Savannah Morning News
America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia	Historic Savannah Foundation	Savannah Movie Tours
Anderson Communications Group	Holiday Inn-Express	Savannah Music Festival
Atlanta Magazine	Hostess City Celebrations	Savannah Port Tours
Atlantic Waste Services	HunterMaclean	Savannah River House
B. Matthews Bakery Eatery	Hyatt Regency Savannah	Savannah SandGnats
BankSouth	Il Pasticcio Restaurant	Savannah Special Events by Ranco
Barbara Jean's Restaurant	Inn at Ellis Square	Savannah Technical College
Baymont Inn	Island Communications	Savannah Theatre
Belford's Seafood & Steaks	Jackson Printing	Savannah Waterfront Association
Bennigan's Grill & Tavern	Jazz'd Tapas Bar	Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport
Best Savannah Restaurants	Johnny Harris Banquet Center	Savannahjobs.com
Best Western Bradbury Suites	Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace	Savannahmenu.com, Inc.
Bistro Savannah	Kehoe House	Savh Passport, Savh Hist. Maps, Oglethorpe Publishing
Boar's Head Grill & Tavern	Kilwin's Chocolates & Ice Cream	Savor Savannah Catering by SMG
Casbah Moroccan Restaurant	Kirk Floyd Tours & Transportation	Sherrill & Company
Celia Dunn Realty	Kitchens on the Square	Shrimp Factory
Chili's Bar & Grill	Lamar Outdoor Advertising	Shumaker Services, Inc
City Market	Landmark Inn	Southern Elegance Staffing, Inc.
City of Sav'h Tourism & Film Services	Leopold's Ice Cream	Spectrum Printing/Marketing Service
CityComber, LLC	Levy Jewelers	Spirer Communications Inc.
Classic Party Rentals	Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf	Stage Front Presentation Systems
CNC, LLC.	Louis C. Mathews Seafood	Staybridge Suites Historic Savannah
Coastal Empire News, LLC	Mansion on Forsyth Park	Staybridge Suites-Savannah Airport
Coastal Heritage Society	Marshall House	Sticky Fingers Rib House
Cobblestone Connections	Memorial Health	Swept Away Coach and Tours
Comfort Suites Historic District	Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum	SYSCO Foods
Comfort Suites Savannah North	Monroe Marketing	Tech Rentals, Inc.
Corleone's Trattoria	Moon River Brewing Company	Telfair Museum of Art
Country Inn & Suites	Moon River Productions	The AT&T Real Yellow Pages
Country Inn & Suites-North	Mother Knows Best	The Club at Savannah Harbor
Courtyard By Marriott Savannah Historic District	Murphy's Law Irish Pub	The Coastal Bank
Creative Catering	National Distributing Co.	The Crab Shack
Crosswinds Golf Club	NeSmith Gift Advertising	The Gastonian
Darby Bank	Ocean Plaza Beach Resort	The Lady & Sons
Daufuskie Island Resort & Spa	Oglethorpe Inn & Suites	The Mulberry Inn
Derst Baking Company LLC	Old Savannah Tours	The New South Café and Catering
Destination Savannah	Old Town Trolley Tours	The Olde Pink House Restaurant
Doubletree Hotel Historic Savannah	Olde Harbour Inn	The Pirates' House Restaurant
Doug Andrews Law Office	One Eyed Lizzy's	The Promenade
Downtown Business Association	Outback Steakhouse Downtown	The Savannah Bank
Dresser-Palmer House	Oyster Bar- River Street	Thunderbird Inn
East Bay Inn	Oyster Bar-Wilmington Island	Tours by BJ
Elegant Gifts	Palmetto Dunes Golf/Greenwood Development	TRAVELHOST of Savannah & Hilton Head/Beaufort
Elite Coastal Properties, LLC	Pearl's Saltwater Grille	Tubby's Conch House
Eliza Thompson House	Planters Inn	Tubby's Thunderbolt
EM Security & Armored Car Sves Inc.	Presentation Services Audio Visual	Tybee Island Historical Society, Inc.
eMarketSouth	PressWorks	Tybee Island Marine Science Center
Empire Distributors, Inc.	Pro-Graphics	Tybee Vacation Rentals
Exchange Tavern-Midtown	Puppet People	United Community Bank
Exchange Tavern-River Street	R&R Restaurant Supply	United Distributors, Inc.
Express Employment Professionals	Ramada Hotel & Suites Midtown	USA Today
Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Savannah I-95	Ranco Tents	USCB - Hospitality Management Program
Fiddler's Crab House	Randy Thompson Photography	Vbuck Marketing, LLC
First City Club	Resort Services, Inc.	Veterans Council of Chatham County
First City Events	Richmond Hill CVB	Vic's on the River
Four Points by Sheraton Historic Sav'h	River Horse Internet Marketing	Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa
Garden City Convention & Visitors Bureau	River Street Inn	Wild Wing Café
Garibaldi	River Street Riverboat Company	Wiley's Championship BBQ
General Growth Properties/Oglethorpe Mall	Roundhouse Railroad Museum	William D. Cannady, CPA, PC
Georgia Power	Roussell's Garden B&B	Wingate by Wyndham Savannah
Gray Line Savannah	Royal Restrooms, LLC	Yates Astro
Greater Savannah Travel	Sabre Technologies, Inc.	
Green Palm Inn Inc.	Sapphire Grill Restaurant	
	Savannah Area Convention & Visitors' Bureau	
	Savannah Book Festival	

