



SAVANNAH AREA
Tourism Leadership Council
Annual Report 2010

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

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Charlie Brazil, Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah

Vice President

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Jack Bussert, River Street Inn

At Large

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Kevin McPherson, Belford's Seafood & Steaks
Rod Musselman, Hilton Savannah DeSoto
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Charlie Brown (2006-2007)
Mark Dana (2009), Prince-Bush-Smith Hotels
Shelly Fox (1998-2000), Retired
Marcie Hill (2004-2005), City Market
Sandy Hollander (2002-2003), 45 Bistro
Jody McIntyre (2007-2008), Savannah Marriott Riverfront
Rod Musselman (2000-2002), Hilton Savannah DeSoto
Michael Plummer (2005-2006), Yates Astro
Mark Spadoni (2003-2004), Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa

TOURISM LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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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 220 member businesses. The TLC enjoys a diverse membership, including lodging properties, restaurants, food and beverage distributors, caterers, tour companies, museums, retail shops, printers, banks, non-profit associations, law offices, and many other companies who are touched by the tourism industry.

With a staff of three, the non-profit professional association continually strives to provide members with resources to strengthen their businesses. These resources include networking opportunities for industry professionals, advocacy efforts on behalf of the industry, educational seminars and training for industry employees, workforce development initiatives, 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

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 and culinary careers each year.

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

- Maria Lancaster and Ryan McMaken, *Savannah Music Festival*
- Ecotourism panel: Terry Robertson, *TR Companies, LLC*, Joyce Murless, *Wilderness Southeast, Inc.*, Jo Claire Hickson, *Coastal Georgia Greenway, Inc.*
- Lise Sundrila, *Savannah Development & Renewal Authority*
- Healthy Savannah Partners: Paula Kreissler, *Wound Care Clinic - ESU, Inc.*, Amy Hughes, *Hughes Public Affairs*, Diana Morrison, *Advertising Specialty Services*
- Benjamin Wilder, *Greater Savannah Sports Council*
- Shawn McBurney, *American Hotel & Lodging Association*
- Steven High, *Telfair Museum of Art*
- Willie Lovett, *Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department (SCMPD)*
- Chantel R. Morton, *Better Hometown Program, City of Tybee*

After hours socials are always widely received by the membership and offer an alternative to the monthly informational luncheons. Each social brought at least 50 professionals together for a good time:

- **July** - *Ruth's Chris Steakhouse*
- **August** - *45 Bistro*
- **September** - *Old Fort Jackson*
 - Sponsored by *Key to Savannah*
- **October** - *Moon River Brewing Company*

Despite the economic downturn, the TLC maintained its membership base and also grew considerably with new members, especially from the surrounding Savannah area. Those who joined for the first time this year are:

1. 24e
2. Andrew Low House
3. Azalea Inn
4. Azelle Photography
5. Café Zeum
6. Coastal Cleaning and Removal Services, LLC
7. Coastal Entertainment
8. Cosmos Mariner Productions
9. Del Sol Savannah
10. Embassy Suites Savannah Airport
11. Green Palm Inn
12. Hampton Inn & Suites Midtown Savannah
13. Lovin' Spoons, LLC
14. Oceanfront Cottage Rentals, LLC
15. Oglethorpe Tours
16. Plantation Carriage Co.
17. Presidents' Quarters
18. River Street Market Place
19. Ruth's Chris Steak House
20. Savannah Cams
21. Savannah Fun Tours
22. Sea and Breeze Hotel
23. Segway of Savannah
24. Signature Flight
25. Spring Hill Suites Savannah Airport
26. Spring Hill Suites Savannah I-95 South
27. Starland Dining Group (Starland Café)
28. Sweet Water Spa
29. The Fairways at Savannah Quarters, LLC
30. The Vacation Station
31. Title Max (TMX Finance, LLC)
32. Towneplace Suites Savannah Airport
33. Tybee Wedding Chapel
34. United Webworks Inc.
35. Zeigler House Inn, LLC

Education & Workforce Development

The TLC continues to seek ways to best serve its membership. This year, we continued to build on educational opportunities internally and externally. Seminars and training opportunities that were presented to the membership this year included “Mastering Online Reviews and Reputation Management” and “Don’t let the Bed Bugs Bite.” The TLC continued to serve the industry through the Mobility Front Line Training program, with Savannah Tech instructors. To date, more than 190 people have gone through the program. The classes, which are FREE to all industry employees, featured a classroom presentation on how to get around in Savannah, highlighting the **‘dot’** system and included a tour on the **‘dot’** Express Shuttle. Development of the program this year began on a video component in order to help better spread the information.

The TLC continues to partner with Savannahjobs.com with its jobs posting website, jobsinsavannah.com. A great benefit to membership is the free job posting each month to assist in staff recruitment efforts. Also, TLC members have the option to post additional jobs at a significant discount through this website.

The Tourism Leadership Council continued to partner with Savannah Technical College and Woodville Tompkins Technical & Career Institute. Involvement on the advisory boards of each school’s hospitality program and being a liaison between the educational institutions and the industry continued.

Through the support of raffle monies raised at monthly luncheons and fundraisers throughout the year, the TLC was able to award scholarships to students pursuing higher education in culinary and hospitality careers. Three \$1,000 scholarships were awarded at the 12th Annual Tourism and Awards & Scholarship Dinner in February to students enrolled in University of South Carolina – Beaufort, Georgia Southern University and Savannah Technical College.

Fundraisers

The TLC's three fundraising events 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!

In February, the TLC hosted its 12th Annual Tourism Awards & Scholarship Dinner at the *Hilton Savannah DeSoto*. Several awards were presented and scholarships were administered to three students pursuing careers in the hospitality industry at local area schools. The John P. Rousakis Community Champion Award went to Steve Green of *Stephen Green Properties, Inc.* The Herb & Franklin Traub Visionary Award was presented to Stratton and Mary Leopold of *Leopold's Ice Cream*. Jody McIntyre of the *Savannah Marriott Riverfront* took home the TLC Member of the Year Award. Service Star and Leader Awards went to Maybelle Monroe of the *Hyatt Regency Savannah* and Kathy Massey of *Savor Savannah Catering by SMG*. The event net about \$12,000.

The 12th Annual TLC Golf Tournament, presented by *Comcast*, took place on June 10, 2010 at The Club at Savannah Harbor. The tournament was slightly different than normal and the more than 100 players took advantage of the Executive Short Course. With the June heat, players and volunteers enjoyed refreshing beverages and snacks throughout play. Our post-tournament reception was catered by *The Olde Pink House*, *Paul Kennedy Catering*, and *Belford's Savannah Seafood & Steaks* and golfers were awarded great prizes after a fun day on the course. Through the support of team entries and sponsorships, the tournament was able to net more than \$16,000.

The TLC's 10th Annual Taste of Savannah® – A Savory Sail Through Savannah, took place Thursday, November 18, 2010 in the Savannah International Trade & Convention Center's Ballroom. Twenty-two restaurants and caterers served samples of their favorite menu items to more than 800 guests and competed for awards presented by *SYSCO*. Guests also danced the night away with live entertainment by the Swingin' Medallions! The event net more than \$24,000 this year.

Savannah – A Southern Journey

The Tourism Leadership Council produced the second edition of the *Savannah – A Southern Journey* coffee table book as our fourth fundraiser this year. The book is intended to serve as a guide to visitors and is placed in more than 5,000 guest rooms in the Savannah area. The 2011 *Savannah – A Southern Journey* book was designed and developed throughout 2010 and completed in November. The book included 16 additional pages over the previous year and was upgraded from a paperback cover to a hard cover this year. Expected net income for the organization through this project is \$60,000.

Advocacy & Community Involvement

Legislative and governmental affairs were given a high priority this year. The TLC worked hard to create a greater awareness both to and for the industry in the legislative arena. Our role as an advocate for the tourism and hospitality industry was given much more shape and focus this year.

The TLC hosted a "Welcome Home" thank you reception for our Chatham County state legislators in May. We encouraged the industry to become involved with the process and through outreach and education, we registered people to vote, gave them serious tourism issues to consider and took people to the polls during the primary elections in June.

In August, the Tourism Leadership Council hosted the first ever gubernatorial forum on tourism in partnership with the Tourism Development Alliance of Georgia, Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce.

The momentum of the TLC continues to grow strong by working together on projects with other community organizations. The TLC represented the industry on various task forces, committees and events including:

- Cruise Ship Exploratory Committee
- Savannah Development & Renewal Authority (SDRA)
- Junior League of Savannah
- South of DeRenne Association (SODA)
- Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Visit Savannah
- Pooler Chamber of Commerce
- Savannah Riverfront
- Savannah Downtown Business Association
- Westside Business Network
- Hospitality Advisory Committee at Savannah Tech & Woodville Tompkins
- St. Patrick's Day Festival Committee

We represented the tourism industry on issues from the assessment of the Cruise Ship Study to the Smoke Free ordinance from St. Patrick's Day to the I-16 flyover and redevelopment of MLK/Montgomery Street from Bar Cards to cultural tourism efforts. We ensure that we have a seat at the table if it affects our industry and its more than 20,000 employees.

The TLC welcomed new businesses to Savannah by speaking at ribbon cutting ceremonies for the following 9 new businesses this year:

- *The Mirage*
- *Hanna Leigh A Maternity Boutique*
- *La'Berry Frozen Yogurt Café*
- *Broughton & Bull*
- *ThincSavannah*
- *The Hunt Club Clothiers*
- *Savannah Bee Company – River Street*
- *Savannah Bee Company – Wilmington Island*
- *The Grateful Hound*

The TLC supported the community with charitable donations throughout the year as well. The TLC Community Happenings email blast showcased charity events to the tourism and hospitality community and generous support was provided for a canned food drive for America's Second Harvest at a TLC membership luncheon. Contributions were also made to the following: Hollywood Ron Higgins Memorial Fund, The Liver and Pancreatic Foundation, The Cancer Alliance and All Walks of Life (AWOL). TLC Good Samaritan Fund paid out \$250 to assist individual TLC members in need this year.

2010 TLC HIGHLIGHTS – MONTH BY MONTH

January

- Savannah Chatham Day in Atlanta – bronze sponsorship
- Attended Tourism Day in Atlanta
- Luncheon – Vic’s on the River – Savannah Music Festival, Maria Lancaster, Marketing & Development Director, and Ryan McMaken, Communications & Production Director, “Tapping into Arts and Culture.”

February

- 10th Annual Tourism Awards & Scholarship Dinner – Hilton Savannah DeSoto – net income \$12,764

March

- Created new staff position for TLC – Marketing & Member Services Manager
- Luncheon – Holiday Inn and Suites Pooler – Terry Robertson, Principal, TR Companies, LLC; Joyce Murless, Executive Director of Wilderness Southeast, Inc. and Jo Claire Hickson, Executive Director of Coastal Georgia greenway, Inc. – “Savannah Nature & Ecotourism Awareness.”

April

- Hired two new employees, Leigh Anne DiVito and Jaclyn Schott
- Luncheon – Savannah Marriott Riverfront – Lise Sundrila, Executive Director of Savannah Development & Renewal Authority(SDRA) – “Rediscovering Downtown and Recapturing the Local Market/Downtown Savannah Brand & Marketing Program.”

May

- Hosted a welcome home/thank you reception for the Chatham County State legislators – The Mulberry Inn
- Luncheon – Hyatt Regency Savannah – Healthy Savannah Partners: Paula Kreissler, Wound Care Clinic – ESU, Inc., Amy Hughes, Hughes Public Affairs, Diana Morrison, Advertising Specialty Services – “Making Savannah Healthy...At Home, At Work, At Play.”

June

- Educated members on tourism specific issues and gubernatorial candidates’ perspectives on them
- Hosted a voter registration drive at member businesses throughout Savannah
- Hosted a Mobility Front Line Training class at the Savannah Marriott Riverfront
- Partnered with local B&B owners to bring in Jay Karen, President of Innkeepers International, for a seminar “Mastering Online Reviews and Reputation Management”
- 12th Annual TLC Golf Tournament – The Club at Savannah Harbor – net income \$16,354
- Hosted New Member Orientation
- Luncheon – The Club at Savannah Harbor, Benjamin Wilder, Director of the Greater Savannah Sports Council, “Sports Tourism Speeding up in Savannah.”

July

- Took member business employees to the polls and encouraged voting in the primaries
- TLC Membership Social – Ruth’s Chris Steak House
- Luncheon – Hampton Inn and Suites Midtown, Shawn McBurney , Senior Vice President of Governmental Affairs-American Hotel & Lodging Association, “Update on federal issues affecting the tourism industry.”

August

- Hosted the first ever Gubernatorial forum on tourism with the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Development Alliance of Georgia (TDAG).

- TLC Membership Social – 45 Bistro
- Luncheon – Telfair Museum/Jepson Center, Steven High, Director of the Telfair Museum of Art, “Tourism and Authenticity.”

September

- Participated in Governor’s Conference on Tourism in Athens, GA
- M. Barrow spoke about TLC at Landings Rotary Club
- TLC Membership Social – Old Fort Jackson
- Luncheon – The Olde Pink House, Chief Willie Lovett, Chief of Police, Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department(SCMPD), “Q&A with police Chief Willie Lovett.

October

- Partnered with Visit Savannah and hosted Yates Astro to present a seminar “Don’t Let the Bed Bugs Bite”
- M. Barrow spoke about TLC at DBA Membership luncheon
- M. Barrow spoke about tourism to high school students at Savannah Tech Explorer Post program
- TLC Membership Social - Moon River Brewing Company
- Luncheon – The Crab Shack, Chantel R. Morton, Better Hometown Program Coordinator, City of Tybee, “Economic Development within the context of Historic Preservation: A collaborative effort.

November

- Taste of Savannah – over 1000 attendees and net income \$24,205
- Completed the 2011 *Savannah: A Southern Journey* book – expected net income \$60,000
- Gained exposure through a booth at the DBA Celebration of Service luncheon
- Gained exposure through a NuBarter Trade Show Booth in Pooler
- Luncheon – Belford’s Savannah Seafood and Steaks, TLC Membership Forum, “Where We Are and Where We Are Going.”

December

- Joint Holiday Party with Visit Savannah – Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum catered by Paul Kennedy, proceeds contributed to All Walks of Life (AWOL).
- TLC Board Retreat – Hampton Inn and Suites Midtown

2010 TOURISM LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

24e
45 Bistro
AAA Parking
Accommodations for All, LLC.
Adventure Radio Group
Advertising Specialty Services
AlphaGraphics
American Diabetes Association
American Red Cross
America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia
Andrew Low House
Atlantic Bank & Trust
Avia Hotel
Azalea Inn
Azelle Photography B.
Matthews Eatery
Baymont Inn
Belford's Seafood & Steaks
Best Western Promenade
bighouse graphix
Blowin Smoke BBQ
Blue Focus Media
Boar's Head Grill & Tavern
Broughton & Bull
Café Zeum
City Market
City of Savannah Tourism & Film Services
Classic Party Rentals
Coastal Cleaning and Removal Services, LLC
Coastal Entertainment
Coastal Heritage Society
Coastal Insurance Partners
Cobblestone Connections
Comfort Suites Historic District
Community Health Mission
Cosmos Mariner Productions
Country Inn & Suites - Savannah Airport
Courtyard By Marriott
Savannah Historic District
Creative Catering
Darby Bank
Del Sol Savannah
Desoto Beach Bed & Breakfast
Desoto Beach Hotel
Doubletree Hotel Historic Savannah
Doug Andrews Law Office
Downtown Business Association
Dresser-Palmer House
East Bay Inn
Elegant Gifts
Eliza Thompson House
Embassy Suites Savannah Airport
Empire Distributors, Inc.
Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Savannah I-95
Fiddler's Crab House
First City Club
Four Points by Sheraton
Historic Savannah
Four Seasons Travel
Fox, Shelly
Garden City Convention & Visitors Bureau
Garibaldi's Café
Gaysavannah.com
Georgia Department of Economic Development
Georgia Power
Go Mini's Savannah Mobile Storage
Greater Savannah Travel
Green Palm Inn
Hampton Inn & Suites
Midtown Savannah
Hampton Inn Historic District
Hampton Inn Savannah North
Hancock Askew & Co., LLP
Hilton Garden Inn-Midtown
Hilton Garden Inn-Savannah Historic District
Hilton Savannah DeSoto
Historic Savannah Carriage Tours
Historic Savannah Foundation
Holiday Inn & Suites
Holiday Inn-Express
Hostess City Celebrations
HostSouth
Houben, Marie
HunterMaclean
Hyatt Regency Savannah
Inn at Ellis Square
Island Communications
Island Communications
Jazz'd Tapas Bar
Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace
Kehoe House
Kelly Tours, Inc.
KeytoSavannah.com
Landmark Inn
Leopold's Ice Cream
Levy Jewelers
Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf
Living Social
Louis C. Mathews Seafood
Lovin' Spoons, LLC
Mansion on Forsyth Park
Marshall House
Memorial Health
Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum
Monroe Marketing
Moon River Brewing Company
Moon River Productions
NeSmith Gift Advertising
NuBarter
Ocean Plaza Beach Resort
Oceanfront Cottage Rentals, LLC
Official Guides of Savannah
Oglethorpe Inn & Suites
Oglethorpe Tours
Old Savannah Tours
Old Town Trolley Tours
Olde Harbour Inn
Omega Graphics Direct
Paradigm Marketing
Paul Kennedy Catering
Plantation Carriage Co.
Planters Inn
Presidents' Quarters
PresWorks
ProActive Control Systems, Inc.
Randy Thompson
Photography
Residence Inn by Marriott
Savannah Downtown
Resort Maps
Resort Services, Inc.
River Horse Internet Marketing
River Street Inn
River Street Market Place
River Street Riverboat Company

River Street Sweets
Romantic Weddings of Savannah
Roussell's Garden B&B
Ruth's Chris Steak House
Sabre Technologies, Inc.
Sapphire Grill Restaurant
Savannah Book Festival
Savannah Cams
Savannah Candy Kitchen
Savannah Civic Center
Savannah Coca Cola
Savannah Development & Renewal Authority
Savannah Distributing Company
Savannah Fun Tours
Savannah Int'l Trade & Convention Ctr
Savannah Magazine
Savannah Marriott
Riverfront
Savannah Morning News
Savannah Music Festival
Savannah River House
Savannah Riverfront
Savannah SandGnats
Savannah Special Events by Ranco
Savannah Technical College
Savannah Theatre
Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport
Savannahjobs.com
Savannahmenu.com, Inc.
Savor Savannah Catering by SMG
Sea and Breeze Hotel
Secret of the Islands
Segway of Savannah
Shannon Vineyards
Sherrill & Company

Shrimp Factory
Siefker, Vicki
Sixth Sense Savannah Ghost Tours
Southern Elegance Staffing, Inc.
Spectrum
Printing/Marketing Service
Spring Hill Suites Savannah Airport
Spring Hill Suites Savannah I-95 South
Springhill Suites Savannah Historic District
SpringHill Suites-Savannah Midtown
Stage Front Presentation Systems
Starland Dining Group (Starland Café)
Staybridge Suites Historic Savannah
Sticky Fingers Rib House
Sweet Water Spa
Swept Away Trailways/Gray Line Savannah
Sysco Jacksonville, Inc.
Tapas by Anna
Tech Rentals, Inc.
Telfair Museum of Art
The AT&T Real Yellow Pages
The Bohemian Hotel
Savannah Riverfront
The Coastal Bank
The Crab Shack
The Fairways at Savannah Quarters, LLC
The Gastonian
The Lady & Sons
The Mulberry Inn

The Olde Pink House Restaurant
The Pirates' House Restaurant
The Savannah Bank
The Savannah Walks Inc.
Thunderbird Inn
Title Max (TMX Finance, LLC)
Tour Services, LLC
Towneplace Suites
Savannah Airport
TRAVELHOST of Savannah & Hilton Head/Beaufort
Tubby's Thunderbolt
Tybee Island Marine Science Center
Tybee Tourism Council
Tybee Vacation Rentals
Tybee Wedding Chapel
Uncle Bubba's Oyster House
United Community Bank
United Distributors, Inc.
United Way - Coastal Empire
United Webworks Inc.
USA Today
USCB - Hospitality Management Program
Veterans Council of Chatham County
Vic's on the River
Visit Savannah
Wentworth Printing
Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa
Wild Wing Café
William D. Cannady, CPA, PC
Yates Astro
Zeigler House Inn, LLC