

NEWS RELEASE



*Where the Sun Rises
on the Smokies*

HAYWOOD COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

CONTACT: Scotty Medford Ellis
Executive Director
(828) 452-0152
hctda@smokeymountains.net

HAYWOOD COUNTY TDA RECOGNIZED FOR CREATIVE MARKETING EFFORTS

American Advertising Federation of Knoxville Bestows Four Awards for 2007 Campaign

HAYWOOD COUNTY, N.C. (February 29, 2008)—The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority and its advertising agency, The Tombras Group, received four ADDY® Awards this week for its creative campaigns to market and promote the county's tourism industry during 2007.

The honors—presented by the American Advertising Federation (AAF) of Knoxville—included two gold awards in the “Collateral Material” and “Special Event Material” categories for its Media Familiarization Tour campaign (aimed to make national and regional media aware of Haywood County as a vacation destination and to host various press members for a two-day tour of the county). The campaign consisted of an innovative three-dimensional invitation, which included a mini digital camera, photo album and media kit—all branded with the TDA's logo and *Where the Sun Rises on the Smokies* slogan. All gold awards are automatically entered into the regional competition.

The TDA/Tombras partnership also garnered top honors, a silver award, in the “Interactive Media” category for its Web site, www.smokeymountains.net. The final award, a bronze, came in recognition of a key print advertisement.

“We are proud to receive such recognition, especially in these diverse categories,” said Jay Sokolow, The Tombras Group account manager who works closely with the TDA in developing and implementing marketing strategies.

The Knoxville ADDY® Awards is the first tier of the three-tiered National ADDY® Awards (local, regional and national), the advertising industry's largest recognition of creative excellence. The AAF is the oldest national advertising trade association, representing 50,000 advertising professionals through a national network of 200 local chapters.

“It's nice to be validated by highly credentialed judges and this top advertising industry organization,” Sokolow said. “But for us, as nice as awards are, the most important thing is getting results.”

-MORE-

Scotty Medford Ellis, executive director of the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority, agreed, adding that results are essential in the tourism industry when it comes to marketing. “And this partnership with The Tombras Group has certainly produced the positive results we want from our advertising and promotion program.”

Occupancy tax collections—a key statistic in measuring tourism growth—have consistently increased (in some monthly comparisons, dramatically so) since the TDA Board of Directors hired Knoxville-based The Tombras Group and instituted an aggressive marketing plan during the 2004-05 fiscal year. The following year (2005-06), occupancy tax dollars increased 8 percent and the 2007-08 increase stands at 15 percent as of December.

The TDA Board of Directors unanimously voted at its February 27 meeting to renew its contract with The Tombras Group for another three years.

“We are excited to have the opportunity to continue working with the Haywood County TDA to market and promote such a wonderful destination,” Sokolow said.

Continuity is an important aspect of branding, Ellis said. “Renewing this well-functioning and successful partnership is crucial to ensuring that we build on the momentum we’ve created over the last several years.”

-###-