

tourism tidbits

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HAYWOOD COUNTY TDA AWARDS KEY LEADERS IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

Inaugural Luncheon Highlights Importance of Local Tourism & Travel Businesses, Organizations

The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority honored four key players in the tourism industry Thursday at its inaugural Tourism Awareness & Awards Luncheon at the Laurel Ridge Country Club.

The Front Line Ambassador Award—created “to recognize front line employees in the tourism and hospitality industry who exceed normal expectations and requirements to provide excellent service to Haywood County visitors and residents”—went to Dale Page of The Waynesville Inn Golf Resort & Spa. In his nomination, Page, a leader in the resort’s golf department, was described as a “perfect example of customized and dedicated service” who has “built relationships with our guests and locals to the point where guests are asking for him personally.”

The Event & Festival Award, which “recognizes an Event Coordinator, Planner or

Organization and acknowledges as outstanding event which generates substantial tourism for Haywood County,” was presented to Folkmoot USA. Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, Folkmoot is perennially named a Top 25 event by the Southeast Tourism Society. An economic impact study conducted in 2007 showed Folkmoot to have an annual impact of \$4 million on the local economy. “One of the unique aspects of this event,” wrote its nominator, “is that its reach is all over Haywood County with performances in venues across the county.” Folkmoot Executive Director Karen Babcock and Board President Scott McLeod, publisher of the Smoky Mountain News, accepted the award.

The Best of Class Business Award, which “recognizes an accommodation, attraction, restaurant, museum or retail business for leadership in the local tourism industry,” went to Cataloochee Ski Area as it approaches its 50th year of operation. One of the first ski resorts to open and the last to close in the Southeast each season, Cataloochee Ski Area boosts local tourism efforts in making the area

a year-round destination. “Over the past few years, more than a half-million sports enthusiasts have visited this resort,” its nominator wrote. “In the last three years this resort has contributed \$2.8 million in payroll to the local economy.” Tammy Brown, marketing director, accepted the award on behalf of Cataloochee Ski Area.

The Tourism Leadership Award was presented to Canton Town Manager Al Matthews, who played a major role in getting an occupancy tax bill passed in Raleigh in the 1980s and has continued to help the tourism industry in numerous ways ever since. “The vision, political skills and direct action of this savvy leader,” his nomination read, “opened the door for dollars, and he is a most important contributor to the significant status of our county-wide tourism industry today.”

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SEND US YOUR VIDEOS, GAIN EXPOSURE ON POPULAR VIDEO SITE



The HCTDA has launched a [YouTube Channel](#), and we want to include videos of your accommodation, attraction or restaurant. Capturing video is easier than ever, so send us a short (less than 3 minutes) clip. If you already have video content posted on YouTube, just e-mail us a link.

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PARTICIPATE IN HCTDA INITIATIVES

UPDATE LISTINGS ON SMOKEYMOUNTAINS.NET

As the travel season gets underway and more people are making plans for summer vacations, accommodations and restaurants should check their listings on www.smokeymountains.net and ensure that the information is correct and up-to-date. If there are any changes that need to be made, please contact us by calling 828-452-0152 or e-mail hctda@smokeymountains.net with the updated information.

GAIN ATTENTION WITH SWEEPSTAKES & THEMED DISCOUNT PACKAGES

Throughout the year, the HCTDA plans to offer various sweepstakes, which offer visitors to our Web site the chance to win a spectacular prize—a vacation in Haywood County—simply by filling out a form and entering online. This is a great way for us to promote Haywood County and attract attention from the media and public alike. But we need your participation. Anyone interested in offering free lodging, free meals, shopping deals, or tickets to attractions to be included in the prize package, please contact the HCTDA office. In return, you'll be included in all of our public/media relations efforts used to promote the sweepstakes, including direct links to your site from our Web site and social media posts. We are also looking for participants in our themed packages, which bundle special offers tied to a specific activities or themes. Our current Girlfriend Getaway (<http://www.getawayforgirlfriends.com>) is a good example of such a package.



'Hunker Up!': Berkeley Young Shares Insights, Offers Strategies at TDA's First Annual Luncheon

The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority hosted its first annual tourism luncheon on May 7 at the Laurel Ridge Country Club, and keynote speaker Berkeley Young, president of Charlotte-based Young Strategies, Inc., treated those in attendance to an illuminating presentation about how travel-related businesses and organizations can succeed even in a down economy—like the one much of the industry, and others, is currently facing.

Young touched on various topics during his presentation, from new travel trends and new audiences to recent research, ways to make it easy for potential travelers to choose your destination for a visit and how to compete in the 21st Century.

For those who were unable to attend and for those who would like to take another look, Young has made his presentation available through the HCTDA Web site. To download the PDF version of Young's PowerPoint presentation, visit the [IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS](#) page of the HCTDA Web site, or open the presentation directly by [clicking here](#).

HCTDA to Lead Blue Ridge Parkway 75th Anniversary Motorcade Parade in 2010

Throughout 2010 the Blue Ridge Parkway will be celebrating its 75th Anniversary. The Haywood County TDA will be the presenting sponsor of the motorcade parade set to take place from September 4 to September 10, 2010. The parade will start on the North and South ends of the Parkway and finish at Cumberland Knob during the Anniversary weekend. The parade will progress on and off the Parkway, in and out of communities via passing events at significant counties; cars used will represent various decades and years of the Parkway from the 1930s to 2009. The Blue Ridge Parkway is looking for you to make your event a Parkway 75th Anniversary Event. To learn more about the process and to view the application form for event endorsement, [click here](#). Connect with the Blue Ridge Parkway 75th Anniversary on [Facebook](#).



Are You Interested in a Social Media Workshop?

The HCTDA's Social Media Educational Seminar on May 12 proved to be quite informative for those in attendance, thanks to the two expert speakers (Sherida Buchanan of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, and David Jacobs of the Tombras Group) who shared their knowledge and tips. Download the handout from the seminar by [clicking here](#).

Depending on interest, the HCTDA is considering conducting a hands-on social media workshop on June 9, helping you get started in this new online venue. Please let us know asap if you would be interested in attending such a workshop. E-mail us at info@smokeymountains.net or call us at 828-452-0152.



HCTDA AWARDS DEDICATED LEADERS IN TOURISM INDUSTRY AT INAUGURAL LUNCHEON
 From left, Canton Town Manager Al Matthews (Tourism Leadership Award), Tammy Brown of Cataloochee Ski Area (Best of Class Business Award), Dale Page of The Waynesville Inn Golf Resort & Spa (Front Line Ambassador Award), and Folkmoot USA Board Member Rolf Kaufman and Executive Director Karen Babcock (Events & Festival Award) accept their awards on May 7.

Award Winners

(continued from Page 1)

The winners in each category were chosen by a panel of three judges, each ex-officio members of the HCTDA Board of Directors: Haywood County Commissioner Skeeter Curtis, Haywood County Finance Director Julie Davis, and Haywood County Economic Development Commission Executive Director Mark Clasby. The judges reviewed each nomination and chose winners based on established criteria.

Along with a delicious buffet lunch, attendees enjoyed an informative presentation by Berkeley Young of Young Strategies, a Charlotte-based company that specializes in research, planning and marketing strategy within the travel industry. From addressing how to thrive in a down economy to tips for success in the 21st century travel industry, Young touched on a wide range of relevant topics and useful information during his presentation.

"The luncheon was an overwhelming success," said Lynn Collins, executive director of the HCTDA.

"It's a great way to bring together our industry partners in person while also recognizing those who have done outstanding work in the tourism industry and for our community," she said. "The educational component and the networking opportunities will also help this event grow in future years."

Along with framed certificates, award recipients received gifts from sculptor Grace Cathy and potter Terry Painter.

British Travel Writers to Visit Haywood County in June

In coordination with the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development public relations department, the HCTDA will be hosting a group of British travel writers in early June.

The TDA has partnered with the N.C. Division of Tourism for media tours on numerous occasions in the past, including hosting a group of German writers last fall and a group of regional travel writers during the winter season.

The travel writers in June will focus on the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, as a result of its 75th anniversary and popularity, and write about the communities in close proximity to the park. Cataloochee Valley will surely be on the itinerary.

For those interested in participating in press tours in the future (a great opportunity for media exposure)—by offering to host travel writers at your accommodation, by comping breakfast, lunch or dinner at your restaurant, or by providing complimentary tickets to your attraction—please contact the HCTDA by e-mail or phone.



IMPORTANT DATES

MAY 20

Finance Committee Meeting

MAY 22

Opening of Ghost Town

MAY 27

Board of Directors
 Monthly Meeting

JUNE 16

Advertising Committee Meeting

JUNE 24

Board of Directors
 Monthly Meeting



*Where the Sun Rises
 on the Smokies*

STAFF

Lynn Collins, executive director

Sherry Warren, office manager

Ashley Rice, communications

Darren Miller, public & media relations

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