

# tourism tidbits

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## HOW TO MONITOR YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE IN 10 MINUTES A DAY

### TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, WITHOUT LETTING IT CONSUME ALL YOUR TIME

While a presence on social media outlets is a must for businesses and organizations in the 21st century, one of the main reasons that some continue to resist a full immersion into the online worlds of Facebook, Twitter and the like is time, or lack thereof.

Many small businesses feel like they cannot dedicate the necessary time to focus on social media marketing and networking because of limited staff and limited hours. And while it can seem like a full-time job maintaining, updating, interacting, and monitoring social media, there are ways to make the process more effective and, most importantly, efficient.

Here—from the team at [HubSpot](#)—are five free, easy steps you can take to get things started. Do each task in the morning when you start work, and you should be good to go.

**1) Check Twitter for chatter about your company (2 minutes):** Use tools like [TweetDeck](#) or [Twitter Search](#) to monitor conversations about your company in real-time. To check once a day, set up an RSS feed for a specific Twitter Search to go straight to your [Google Reader](#). Do this by clicking the little RSS icon after you complete a search. Now, ongoing search results will be sent to your reader.

**2) Scan Google Alerts (1.5 minutes):** Check your [Google Alerts](#) for your company name, products, executives or brand terms. To set this up, enter your search terms and select to receive updates as they happen or once daily. Now, when people blog about your products, an alert will be sent to your inbox. You can read the articles and respond right away!

**3) Check Facebook stats (1 minute):** Visit your [Company Page's](#) Facebook Insights. This can be found by clicking "more" under the page's main photo. Scan your fans and page views count. If you are a member of a group, check to see if any new discussions started.

**4) Answer Industry-related LinkedIn questions (3 minutes):** [Search for questions](#) on LinkedIn that you or members of your company can answer. You can set up an RSS feed for specific question categories to go to your Google Reader as well. When you find a relevant question, respond and include a link to your website.

**5) Use Google Reader to check Flickr, Delicious, Digg and others (2.5 minutes):** Also set up RSS feeds for searches on your company name and industry terms in other social media sites. Similar to monitoring LinkedIn and Twitter, your Reader will serve as a great place to centralize your other searches too!

Be sure to check out [HubSpot's blog](#), which offers a wealth of information about online marketing, from blogging and search engine optimization to social media (such as [this post](#) featuring six must-read case studies).

### LAST CHANCE: ADVERTISE IN THE 2010 VISITORS GUIDE

Time is running out to take advantage of an amazing advertising opportunity. Create interest in and generate leads for your business by placing an advertisement in the HCTDA's 2010 Visitors Guide, which will be more user-friendly than ever before, in both design and size. This year, advertisers will also benefit from the technologically advanced online electronic version. Contact the HCTDA office TODAY by e-mailing [hctda@smokeymountains.net](mailto:hctda@smokeymountains.net) or calling 828-452-0152.

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## ONLINE TRENDS

Video is particularly beneficial to travel companies not only because of the pictorial nature of tourism but also since over half of all travel arrangements are done via the Internet. Three out of four Internet users will watch videos online, with 60 percent of people making a purchasing decision after watching a promotional travel video.

An online survey of 400 marketing and media executives found that 67 percent identified online video as a primary focus of their 2009 digital marketing campaigns and budgets. So it's not surprising that travel marketers are using Web-based clips to lure potential tourists more than ever before.

Google Australia's Head of Travel, Claire Hatton, says, "Search engines are the first point consumers go to when they think about booking a holiday. People use it to dream, plan and purchase. There's still a role for brochures as people like to see the pricing and have something to hold but videos are going to be a much bigger trend."

—Courtesy of Jason Mallory, Redbone Entertainment, via Southeast Tourism Society

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE SOON

Be on the lookout in the coming week for a new sponsorship program offered by the HCTDA, which will mutually benefit the tourism agency and its partners. A wide variety of opportunities, to suit any budget, will be available.

## STS Marketing College Offered Useful Courses

BY ASHLEY RICE

I attended Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College from July 26-31 in Dahlonega, GA at the North Georgia College. The networking was amazing. The first-year class had a total of 99 students. All three classes combined had 300 students. Some of the courses offered were:

### Marketing vs. Advertising

This course highlighted the importance of creating marketing objectives, research and knowledge of our target audience. The discussion focused on developing a complete marketing campaign to accomplish the objectives as opposed to a series of ads. We discussed the importance of consistency in creative design in all aspects of a marketing campaign. I learned from the course that the key to a campaign is integration. Integrating different advertising mediums, markets, public relations, and interactive to reach our audience.

### License to Serve (Hospitality)

This course highlighted the importance of hospitality and customer service. We discussed the value of training, the need to create greater awareness about the impact of the service industry, responsibilities of service providers, key visitor expectations, addressing challenging customers, The team approach in serving, and tools to achieve a license to serve.

### Secrets of Travel Packaging Success

In this course I learned how to Identify the marketplace trends, current market forces and online purchasing behavior affecting consumer travel packaging. How to develop an understanding of the tools, techniques and components to create compelling travel packages, how to uncover the best package product types and target markets for consumers, and discovering successful package product models and their essential elements.

### Inquiry to Fulfillment to Conversion to Database

This course revealed the methods of processing inquiries, sending fulfillment information, tracking the conversion that results, and storing the data so that it can be used in the future. The key learning points were: the difference between inquiries and leads, the most effective methods of fulfilling inquiries, the most effective costs for fulfillment, how to track the conversion of your fulfilled inquiries, proper databasing methods for all inquiry data, and how long should you store inquiry data.

### Creating a Perfect Tourism Brochure

The key learning points covered in this course were the critical elements of an effective tourism brochure, the correct use of the brochure's top third, the importance of "must-sees" and attractors, learning how to use your unique "hook" to drive visitation, photos versus copy—what sells to the travel planner best, and the best layout for brochures.

## Public Relations Efforts Net Positive Coverage

A recent news release about mountain golf during the autumn season resulted in positive media coverage nearly immediately.

The release, along with scenic fall photos of several courses, was featured on the [North Carolina Golfers Guide](#) homepage and in the "News Wire" section of [WorldGolf.com](#). The release should garner more attention in the next weeks as well.

[Foliage.org](#) featured an extensive Q&A interview with Darren Miller about fall foliage in Haywood County, along with a link to the TDA's Web site.

PointsNorth magazine, based in Atlanta, is launching a new travel Web site, called [MountainCrossroads.com](#), highlighting mountain destinations in Eastern Tennessee, Northern Georgia and Western North Carolina. Dominated by photography and

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## Public Relations

informational captions, Haywood County will be featured prominently on the site.

Travel writer Alice Von Simpson will be visiting Haywood County on the weekend of September 26, staying two nights for a story about "southern sports" for a popular British tabloid newspaper called London Lite (which has a circulation of about 400,000). She will be enjoying fly-fishing and horseback riding, along with other activities, like hiking, that Haywood County has to offer.

## Study: Reduced Advertising During Recession Negatively Impacts Consumer Perception

More than 48% of U.S. adults believe that a lack of advertising by a retail store, bank or auto dealership during a recession indicates the business must be struggling. Likewise, a vast majority perceives businesses that continue to advertise as being competitive or committed to doing business.

The latest Ad-ology Research study, "Advertising's Impact in a Soft Economy," analyzes consumer perception about businesses that continue to advertise, and those that do not, in the current economy.

The study finds advertising appears to play a key role in consumers' view of how a business is doing, and by not advertising, businesses may be sending a warning signal to current and potential customers.

"It is critical to advertise in the current economic climate, to maintain long-term positive consumer perception of your brand," said C. Lee Smith, president and CEO of Ad-ology Research. "Advertising not only assures consumers of a business' reliability in a soft economy, but it can influence where and what

they buy, especially when the ads address concerns about value," Smith said.

—from Southeast Tourism Society

## Travel Promotion Act Passes U.S. Senate, House to Vote

The U.S. Senate today passed the "Travel Promotion Act" with strong bipartisan support, 79 to 19. The legislation creates a public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and better explain U.S. security policies. Once passed by the House of Representatives and enacted into law, the program is estimated to create 40,000 U.S. jobs, drive \$4 billion in new consumer spending according to Oxford Economics and reduce the federal budget deficit by \$425 million according to the Congressional Budget Office. Overseas visitors spend an average of \$4,500 per person, per trip in the United States.

The "Travel Promotion Act," introduced by Senators Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and John Ensign (R-NV) and co-sponsored by 51 Senators, is modeled after successful state-level programs and is funded through a matching program featuring up to \$100 million in private sector contributions and a \$10 fee on foreign travelers who do not pay \$131 for a visa to enter the United States. The fee is collected once every two years in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security's Electronic System for Travel Authorization. No money is provided by U.S. taxpayers.

Nearly identical legislation passed the House of Representatives in the last session, but did not receive a Senate vote before adjournment. A new House companion bill, H.R. 2935, is co-sponsored by 68 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.



## SEND YOUR VIDEOS

As most of you know, the HCTDA maintains a [YouTube Channel](#). Send us a video highlighting your business (accommodations, attractions, restaurants, events, etc.), and we'll post to our channel so potential visitors can watch all Haywood County has to offer. Already on YouTube, just send us a link to your video(s), and we'll include in our playlists. E-mail links and/or video files to: [info@smokeymountains.net](mailto:info@smokeymountains.net)



Let your journey begin

## STAFF

Lynn Collins, executive director  
Sherry Warren, office/visitor center mgr  
Ashley Rice, marketing & communications  
Darren Miller, public & media relations

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[FRIEND US ON MYSPACE](#)  
[FAN US ON FACEBOOK](#)  
[WATCH US ON YOUTUBE](#)

1233 NORTH MAIN STREET  
SUITE 1-40  
WAYNESVILLE, NC 28786

828.452.0152

[E-MAIL US](#)