




**1st QUARTER 2024-2025**  
**PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE**  
**AMLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
(Time span covered September thru December 2024)  
**January 21, 2025**  
**Holiday Inn**  
**Guin, AL**




# PRINT AND INTERNET ADVERTISING

## Digitals Ads through Compass Marketing

### Facebook & Instagram Ads - Top Ad Performance

| Ad  | Mobile Preview  | Link Clicks  | Impressions    | CTR (Link Click-Through Rate) | Post Reactions | Post Comments | Post Shares |
|---|---|--------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| AML   Sep-Nov 24   Traffic (Clicks)   Geo/Waterfalls Int   VFS    |    | 2,798        | 172,355        | 1.62%                         | 1,227          | 58            | 195         |
| AML   Sep-Nov 24   Traffic (Clicks)   Geo/Fall Hiking Int   VFS   |   | 2,259        | 122,867        | 1.84%                         | 1,178          | 31            | 182         |
| AML   Sep-Nov 24   Traffic (Clicks)   Geo/Patriot Trail Int   VFS |  | 1,694        | 105,432        | 1.61%                         | 2,135          | 75            | 290         |
| <b>Total</b>  |   | <b>6,751</b> | <b>400,654</b> | <b>1.68%</b>                  | <b>4,540</b>   | <b>164</b>    | <b>667</b>  |

### Google Display - Ad Group Performance

| Ad Group                      | Ad ID        | Clicks | Impressions | CTR   | Image Ad Preview  |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------|-------------|-------|---|
| ALM Fall 2024 - Hiking & Fall | 711246251915 | 5,480  | 801,082     | 0.68% |  |
| ALM Fall 2024 - Waterfall     | 711246251918 | 1,133  | 36,877      | 3.07% |  |
| ALM Fall 2024 - Patriot Trail | 711246251921 | 765    | 38,944      | 1.96% |  |

# INTERNET ADVERTISING



**Travel South/HBX Group**  
Digital International Advertising

## WELCOME TO NORTH ALABAMA

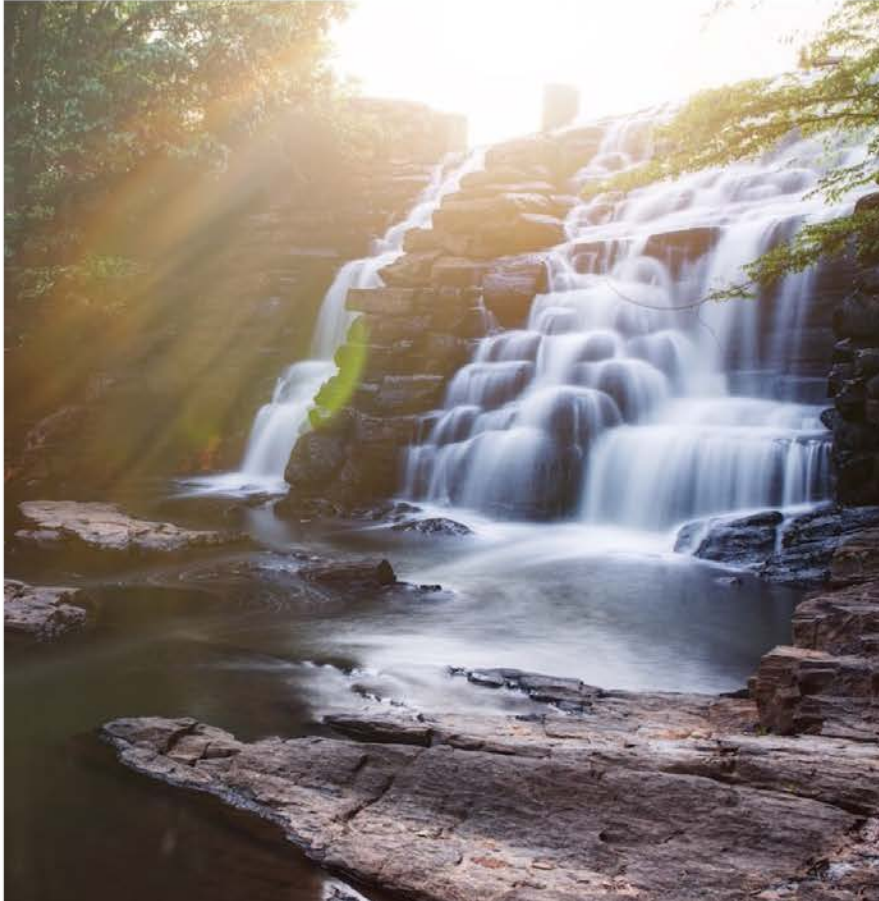
From Mountains and Lakes to Rockets in  
Space!

Find the best place to throw a line. Get the scoop on a can't-miss play. Relive the

NORTH  
**ALABAMA**  
ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES  
TOURIST ASSOCIATION

ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

# INTERNET ADVERTISING



SPONSORED

## 6 Must-Visit Destinations in Alabama

From a bustling college town to a few waterfront escapes, here are six destinations in Alabama that are worth a weekend getaway or extended vacation!

by **BRIANNA GOEBEL**

Published on November 25, 2024



[Create your free profile](#) or [log in](#) to  
save this article

**Style Blueprint Sponsored Content**

Launched November 2024

ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

# INTERNET ADVERTISING

Digital ads for Flawless Delivery running on Alabama Restaurant Hospitality Association and Yellow Hammer websites



# PRINT ADVERTISING

## FAME 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program



From scenic beauty to legendary sounds, North Alabama has it all. Whether you are here for the music or the moments, North Alabama invites you to explore its unique blend of adventure, culture and sound.



Call, click or scan for your free travel guide:

800.648.5381 • [www.NorthAlabama.org](http://www.NorthAlabama.org)

@visitnorthal

**NORTH ALABAMA**  
Where the Lakes Meet the Mountains

## Tennessee Magazine Ad



**NORTH ALABAMA**  
Where the Lakes Meet the Mountains  
Call or click for your free travel guide:  
[NorthAlabama.org](http://NorthAlabama.org)  
800.648.5381

@visitnorthal

## New Vision Magazine

Experience the Flow:  
Waterfalls, Wine, Greens, and Grooves Await!

Picturesque Views

Spa & Sights

Championship Courses

Legendary Muscle Shoals Sound

Call or scan for your free Travel Guide!

[www.NorthAlabama.org](http://www.NorthAlabama.org)  
(800) 648-5381

**NORTH ALABAMA**  
Where the Lakes meet the Mountains  
@VisitNorthAL

# PRINT ADVERTISING

Alabama State Vacation Guide

**Experience the Flow:**  
*Waterfalls, Wine, Greens, and Grooves Await!*

Picturesque Views  
Sip & Sighs  
Championship Courses  
Legendary Muscle Shoals Sound

Call or scan for your free Travel Guide!

**NORTH ALABAMA**  
*Where the Lakes meet the Mountains*

www.NorthAlabama.org  
(800) 648-5381

@VisitNorthAL

National Tour Association Ad

**Launch your Imagination:**  
*Waterfalls, Space, Treasures, and Legendary Grooves Await!*

@VisitNorthAL

www.NorthAlabama.org  
(800) 648-5381

**NORTH ALABAMA**  
*Where the Lakes meet the Mountains*

Let's Golf Ad

**NORTH ALABAMA**  
*Where the Lakes Meet the Mountains*

Robert Trent Jones Courses • North Alabama State Parks  
Appalachian Foothills Public Courses

800.648.5381 • www.NorthAlabama.org  
@VisitNorthAL

**NORTH ALABAMA**  
*ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION*

# PRINT ADVERTISING

Tourism All-a-Bama Flyer

**NORTH ALABAMA**

## JOIN THE NORTH ALABAMA ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVE

Make your property accessible to **ALL** visitors

North Alabama lodging partners are invited to take part in free accessibility training. By **completing the attached survey** and ALL-a-Bama's free, hour-long training, your property will be featured on our new Accessibility website, giving your business visibility to travelers seeking accessible accommodations in the region.



For more information or to register for a training, please contact: [angie@NorthAlabama.org](mailto:angie@NorthAlabama.org)  
256-318-4446

**Help North Alabama become a more accessible and inclusive destination for everyone!**

Small Towns Magazine

## Unique Stays for a Unique Holiday



Eagle's Crest  
Montone, AL



Castlesman Boutique Hotel  
Fayetteville, AL



ReTreet  
Scottsboro, AL



ReTreet  
Scottsboro, AL



15411  
Gentle, AL



The Flying Carpet  
A Moroccan Treehouse  
Cullman, AL



Goose Pond Colony  
Scottsboro, AL

Call, click or scan for your free travel guide:

**800.648.5381** • [www.NorthAlabama.org](http://www.NorthAlabama.org)



@visitnorthal



**NORTH ALABAMA**  
Where the Lakes Meet the Mountains

Fall Issue of the Alabama Municipal Journal



**NORTH ALABAMA**  
*Where the Lakes meet the Mountains*



## ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

[WWW.NORTHALABAMA.ORG](http://WWW.NORTHALABAMA.ORG)  
(800) 648-5381

Call or scan for your free Travel Guide!



@VisitNorthAL



# PRINT ADVERTISING

Coast 360 Magazine

**Experience the Flow:**  
*Waterfalls, Wine, Greens, and Grooves Await!*

*Picturesque Views*

*Sip & Sightsee*

*Championship Courses*

*Legendary Music & Sports Sound*

*Call or scan for your free Travel Guide!*



[www.NorthAlabama.org](http://www.NorthAlabama.org)  
(800) 648-5381

**NORTH ALABAMA**  
*Where the Lakes meet the Mountains*

  
@VisitNorthAL

ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

# UNEXPECTED ADVENTURES IN NORTH AL PODCAST

## Unexpected Adventures in North Alabama Podcast

The Unexpected Adventures in North Alabama podcast focuses on all the amazing places in North Alabama—that you might not even know about! Join hostess Melea Hames as she interviews world renowned chefs, brilliant historians, rocket scientists, outdoor enthusiasts, and rising stars with stories to tell about North Alabama. Subscribe to our podcast on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music, CastBox, Deezer, iHeart Radio, Listen Notes, Podcast Addict, Podchaser, or Radio Public and stay tuned for all our unexpected adventures!



**Melea Hames,  
Social Media Manager**

A 1995 Auburn University graduate, Melea has been a social media manager in the tourism...

[Read More ▶](#)

Unexpected Adventures in North Alabama  
81: Welcome to Alabama! A Look Inside ... 00:00:00

SHARE SUBSCRIBE DESCRIPTION

IN THIS PLAYLIST 10 OF 80 EPISODES

- ▶ 81: Welcome to Alabama! A Look Inside The Ard... 20 min
- ▶ 80: Celebrating Community at The Huntsville Mu... 27 min
- ▶ 79: Exploring the Enchanting Ave Maria Grotto 25 min
- ▶ 78: Dog-Friendly Spots in North Alabama 24 min
- ▶ 77: An Ethereal Glamping Experience at Starligh... 17 min

**Released 8 episodes from September-December**

# LOCATION MARKETING



Angie at AAA Show  
In Cleveland, OH  
October 2024



Travel South  
International in  
Atlanta, GA  
December 2024

# LOCATION MARKETING



**Co-Hosted OJEFA in  
The Shoals  
November 2024**



**Brand USA Travel Week in UK  
October 2024**

# LOCATION MARKETING

**Flawless/AMLA Booth - Alabama Chambers  
Professional Development Conference -  
Orange Beach, AL  
Oct 1-3, 2024**



**Flawless/AMLA Booth - AARC Conference / Von Braun  
Center Huntsville, AL  
Oct. 6-8, 2024**

# LOCATION MARKETING



**Flawless/AMLA Booth - Rural Tourism Conference –  
Union City, TN**

# LOCATION MARKETING



**Melea represented AMLA at Crowdriff's SEE Conference  
in Austin, TX**

**ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION**

# LOCATION MARKETING



**Flawless/AMLA Booth - ALM Conference- Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, AL  
October 2024**



# LOCATION MARKETING



**AMLA and Tourism All-a-bama traveled to San Francisco to further market and develop our North Alabama Accessibility Plan**

# LOCATION MARKETING



**Flawless/AMLA Booth - NTA Huntsville, Von Braun Center, Huntsville, AL  
Nov. 17-20**

ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

# LOCATION MARKETING

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Register to win from North Alabama at 2025 Canoecopia</p>              | <p>Register to win at the 2025 Dallas Travel Show</p>      | <p>Register to win from North Alabama at the 2025 East Tennessee Fishing Show</p>  | <p>Register to win from North Alabama at the 2025 Indianapolis Boat, Sport &amp; Travel Show</p>  |
| <p>Register to win from North Alabama at the 2025 Memphis Farm Show</p>  | <p>Register to win at the 2025 Snowbird Extravaganza</p>  | <p>Register to win from North Alabama at the 2025 St. Louis RV Travel Show</p>    | <p>Sign up to receive travel information from North Alabama</p>                                  |

**New QR Codes used for Consumer Travel Shows**

# MEMBER SERVICES

## About Us

The Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association (AMLA) is a not-for-profit organization that promotes the travel and tourism industry in the 16 northernmost counties of the state. We have more than 500 members and more than 1,500 supporters from across the region.

Since 1964, our mission as a regional tourist organization has been to attract visitors to the region while promoting economic development and advocating for our members. We work with our members to help promote the region to millions of visitors and over the last five years we have seen tourist expenditures in North Alabama grow from \$2 billion to nearly \$5 billion.

Proudly serving these counties:

- Blount
- Lauderdale
- Cherokee
- Lawrence
- Colbert
- Limestone
- Cullman
- Madison
- DeKalb
- Marion
- Etowah
- Marshall
- Franklin
- Morgan
- Jackson
- Winston

Members include attractions, festivals, restaurants, accommodations, campgrounds, golf courses, tourist organizations, chambers of commerce, vendors, tour operators, municipalities, counties and individuals.



## Member Exclusive Benefits Tourism Promotion • Advocacy • Education



Let's make North Alabama a must-visit destination—together.

## Join today!

For just \$150 a year, you can unlock incredible opportunities for reaching travelers and growing your business. When you join AMLA, you contribute to the growth and prosperity of your community while gaining tools to enhance your business. You will be able to connect with other tourism professionals, build new business, find new ideas and solutions, and most importantly, develop relationships with one another. Promote your attraction, festival, accommodation, restaurant, business or destination to North Alabama's \$4.7 billion tourism industry.

AMLA is more than a membership—it's a community of innovators and advocates driving the success of tourism in North Alabama.

Don't wait—become part of the North Alabama tourism family!

Scan QR code to apply!



## Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association MEMBERSHIP

NORTH ALABAMA

To apply for membership please complete all questions.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Title : \_\_\_\_\_

Company : \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Membership Fee: \$150 (Please pay by card or check)

Items entered below must match credit card information

Card Type:  Mastercard  Visa

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Type (select one):  Attraction  Festival  Retail

Chamber of Commerce  Restaurant  Accommodation

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
(specify type of business)

RETURN APPLICATION TO:

ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 2537 DECATUR, AL 35602

New Membership Brochures and Forms coming soon!

ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

# MEMBER SERVICES



## PROACTIVE HOSPITALITY

A Creative Discussion on Ways to WOW the Customer

Thursday, September 12, 2024

11:30 AM

Zoom Meeting

Registration Code: LLProactiveHospitality

Register Here:

<https://learnwithamla.org?KeyName=LLProactiveHospitality>



**Hospitality Workshop via Zoom**

## Alabama Welcome Center FAM Tour



# MEMBER SERVICES



**Flawless Delivery Holds its First Spanish-Language Hospitality Training Class in Alabama**

**ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION**

# MEMBER SERVICES



# MEMBER SERVICES



**Placer.ai**



**ZARTICO**

**Deadline for submissions:**

**Extended to:**

**January 24, 2025**

**AMLA's 16 Counties and members were invited to a free Training Session in Huntsville regarding Placer.ai and Zartico. The meeting shared how these two platforms can transform your understanding of location intelligence and foot traffic insights.**



# MEMBER SERVICES

## FY 2025 Tourism Legislative Event Grants

In the FY2025 Budget, \$2,730,000 was allocated to the Alabama Tourism Department for grants to promote local and state economies. Grants shall be reflective of the geographical diversity of the state. Each grant shall be awarded following the recommendation of members of the Legislature or legislative delegations. No House of Representatives district shall receive more than five grants at \$2,600 per grant awarded, and no Senate District shall receive more than ten grants at \$3,900 per grant awarded. The Alabama Tourism Department is proud to work with the Alabama Legislature to administer these grants. Please review the grant guidelines and FAQ to learn more and if you have any questions, let us know.

### Questions?

Reach out to our staff at [grants@tourism.alabama.gov](mailto:grants@tourism.alabama.gov).

### Reference Documents

[2025 Legislative Grant Guidelines.pdf](#)

[2025 Legislative Grant FAQs.pdf](#)

[2025 Senate Application.pdf](#)

[2025 House Application.pdf](#)

## FY 2025 Community Grants

The Community Grants Program provides assistance to municipal and nonprofit Alabama organizations promoting travel and vacation business to Alabama on a reimbursement basis. Organizations approved for Community Grants may be considered for grants for an amount up to \$2,500 for festivals and/or events and up to \$5,000 for attractions.

### Questions?

Reach out to our staff at [grants@tourism.alabama.gov](mailto:grants@tourism.alabama.gov).

### Reference Documents

[2025 Community Grant Guidelines.pdf](#)

[2025 Community Grant Application.pdf](#)

[2025 Community Grant Brochure Guidelines.pdf](#)

**2025 Legislative Grants are available again!**

# MARKETING

**WHAT TO SEE & DO ON**  
**INTERSTATE ALABAMA 22**

BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST  
DISMAL CANYON

DUNCAN BRIDGE MARINA & RV PARK

**NORTH ALABAMA**  
Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association  
800.648.5381 • www.NorthAlabama.org

Photo by John Dersham

**MUST SEE STOPS • FESTIVALS • MURALS • ACCOMMODATIONS**  
**WWW.NORTHALABAMA.ORG**

@VisitNorthAL

10-24 Printed in USA

**NEWLY UPDATED I-22 BROCHURE**

**ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION**

# MARKETING

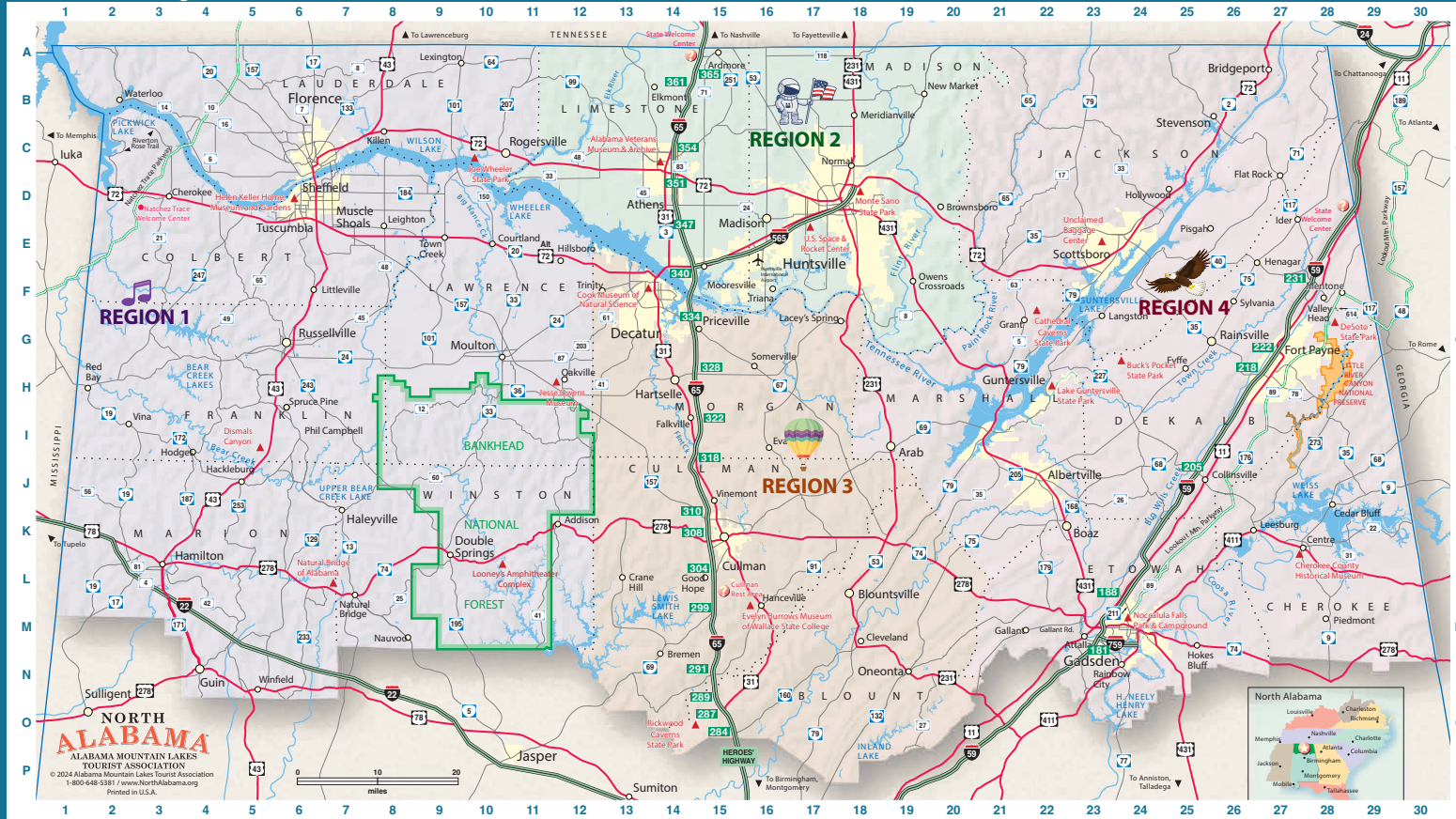
## NORTH ALABAMA: *Where the Lakes Meet the Mountains*



Follow us @VisitNorthAL

800.648.5381 • [www.NorthAlabama.org](http://www.NorthAlabama.org)

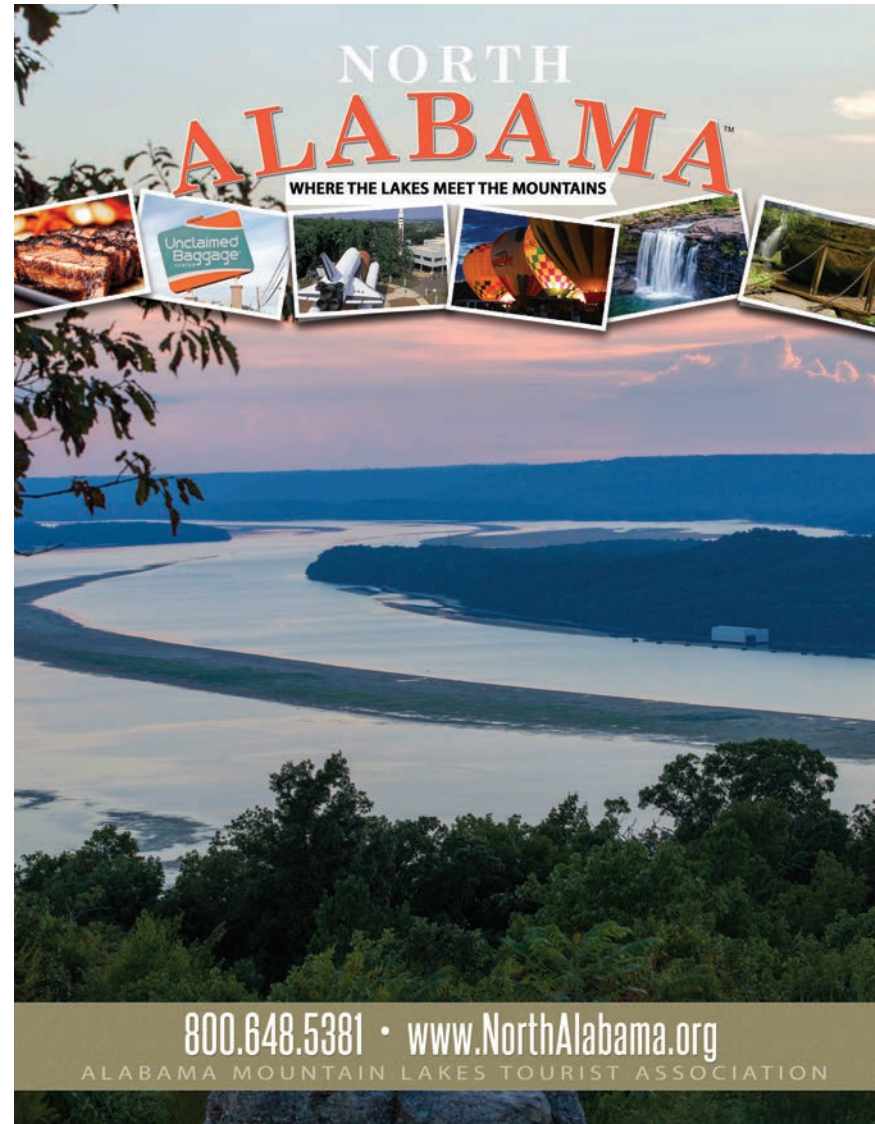
Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association



**NEWLY UPDATED TEAR OFF MAP**

**ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION**

# MARKETING



**NEWLY UPDATED GROUP TOUR HAND OUT**

**ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION**

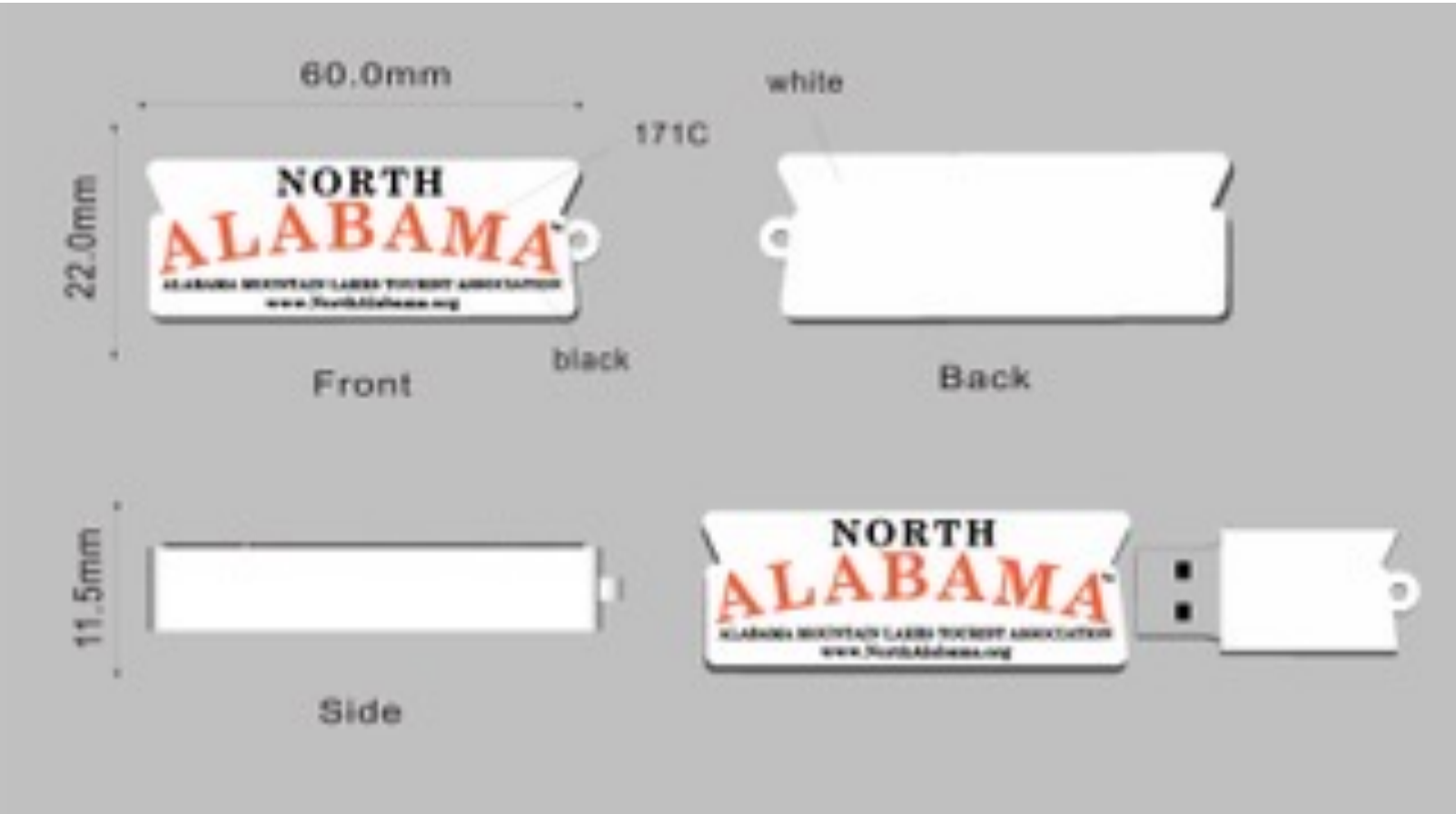
# MARKETING



**September 2024 Golf FAM Tour**

**ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION**

# MARKETING

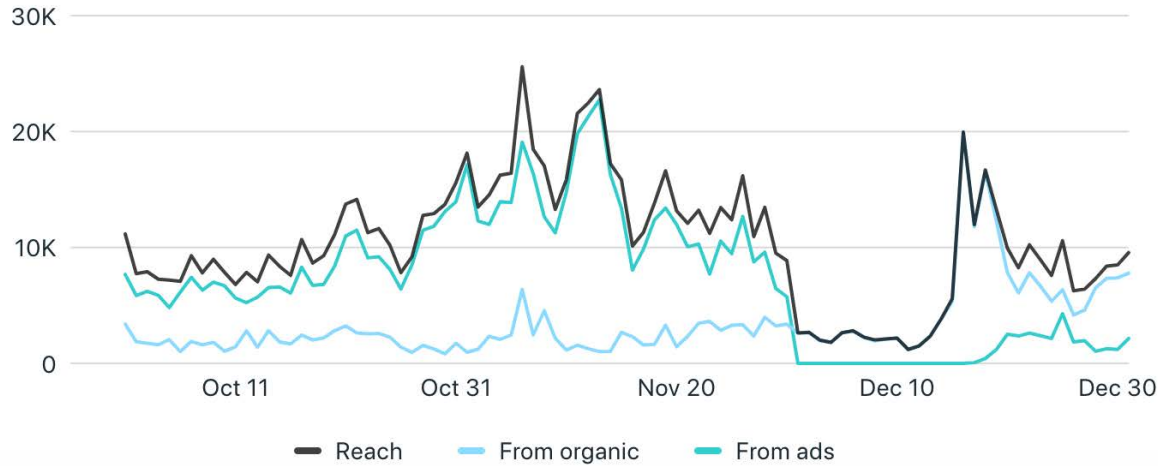


**New flash drives for our potential members**

# SOCIAL MEDIA

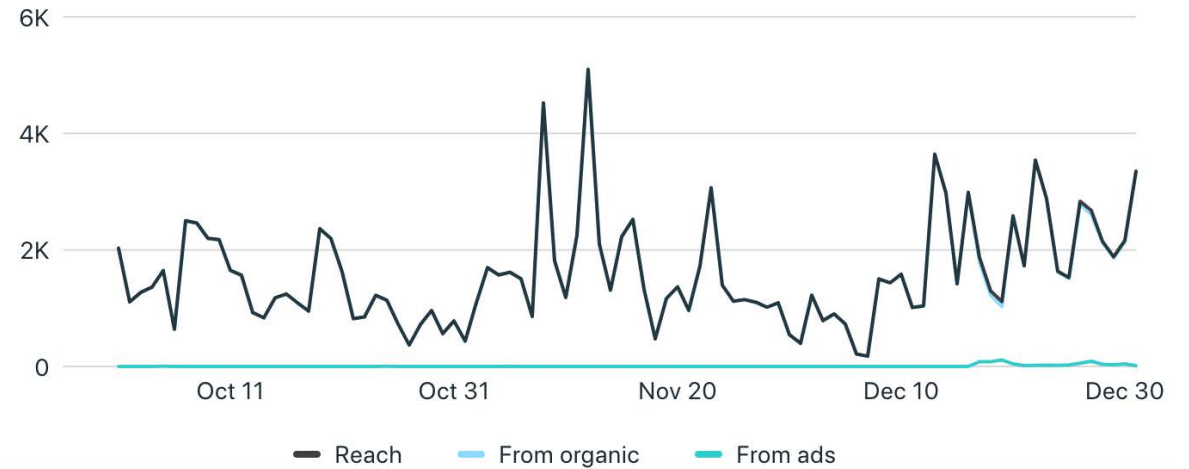
## Facebook

### Performance



## Instagram

### Performance



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## TikTok



**Visit North Alabama**

@visitnorthal

1802 Followers

5201 Likes

### Analytics

[View more >](#)

Last 7 days

Last 30 days

**Last 90 days**

New followers

**464**

264 (+132.00%) ↑

New likes

**1,492**

520 (+53.50%) ↑

New profile visits

**501**

231 (+85.56%) ↑

New video views

**55,673**

24.1K (+76.53%) ↑

## Pinterest

### Overview

Percent changes are compared to 92 days before the selected date range. Audience metrics updated 1 day ago. All other metrics updated in real-time.

Date range

Start date

End date

Content type <sup>i</sup>

Custom



10/01/2024



12/31/2024



All



[More filters](#)

### Overall performance

Percent changes are compared to 92 days before the selected date range. Metrics updated in real-time except for audience.

Impressions <sup>i</sup>

**34.53k** ↑ 68%

Engagements <sup>i</sup>

**1.84k** ↑ 30%

Outbound clicks <sup>i</sup>

**240** ↓ 10%

Saves <sup>i</sup>

**279** ↑ 12%

Total audience <sup>i</sup>

**22.81k** ↑ 84%

Engaged audience <sup>i</sup>

**1.19k** ↑ 49%



# ACCESSIBILITY

## Making travel accessible

Book hotels and find experiences with all the accessibility details you need.

-  Hotels
-  Things to do
-  Multi-day trips
-  Transportation
-  Rentals
-  Group tours
-  Verified destinations

Book hotels with confidence. Know before you go!

Where to?

When?

Travelers

Search

## Find your next accessible adventure



Discover Riviera Maya: stunning beaches, ancient ruins, and vibrant culture. Verified accessibility, with personalized planning support.

From **\$54** USD  
Per person. Based on two travelers



Limited spots

Embark on an accessible journey from Vancouver to Alaska's glaciers, visiting Ketchikan, Skagway, and Juneau.

From **\$2244** USD  
Per person. Based on two travelers



4 spots left!

March 22 to April 3, 2025  
Cape Town, Johannesburg, Kruger National Park, Tshukudu Private Game Reserve


From **\$3590** USD  
Per person. Based on two travelers





4 spots left!

April 9 to 17, 2025  
Athens, Seunon, Attica, Corinth, Olympia, and more.

From **\$3970** USD  
Per person. Based on two travelers

 **Create your accessibility profile**  
Customize your trip—find hotels and activities that fit your needs.

 **Sail to all shores with accessible cruise**  
Visit multiple destinations and enjoy onboard accessibility.

 **What is Wheel the World?**  
We make travel accessible, creating memorable experiences for people with disabilities. Read our story!

Wheel The World

# ACCESSIBILITY



## Meet the 12 Change-Making Champions to Watch in 2025.

As we look ahead to 2025, the landscape of travel is being transformed by a remarkable group of individuals who are dedicated to making it more inclusive for everyone. These 12 Accessibility Change-Making Champions are the pioneers and trailblazers shaping the movement to ensure that travel is accessible to all, regardless of ability. As we celebrate their achievements, we recognize their vital role in creating a world where every journey is open to everyone. They were selected through a multi-week vetting process by the TravelAbility team with final approval from the [TravelAbility Advisory Board](#). Each month we will provide a Q&A with a different champion.

### 1. Ross Calladine, Accessibility Inclusion Leader, Visit England. Revolutionizing Hospitality with Accessibility Tools for the Industry.

Ross has revolutionized the hospitality industry by creating a comprehensive online toolkit that is available for all travel-related businesses in England. His innovative resources empower establishments to enhance accessibility, ensuring inclusive experiences for all visitors, regardless of their needs. By fostering collaboration between businesses and accessibility experts, Calladine has set a new standard for hospitality that prioritizes inclusivity and customer satisfaction.

### 2. Harry Hastings, Co-CEO at Ocean Holidays. Pioneering Outbound Accessible Tourism to America.

Harry has significantly impacted the tourism sector with their groundbreaking Accessible Florida tour program in the UK. This initiative in its first year, attracted over 4000 passengers and generated over \$11mn in revenue, showcasing the market's potential for inbound accessible travel. Hastings' commitment to promoting inclusiveness in tourism has inspired other companies to adopt similar programs including TUI, one of Europe's three largest travel companies, which partnered with AccessAble to produce a detailed accessibility guide to 200 hotels.

### 3. Michelle Irwin, Founder, All Wheels Up. An Early Champion of Wheelchairs on Flights.

Michelle is a relentless advocate for seamless travel experiences for individuals with mobility challenges. Her tireless campaigns have successfully influenced major airlines, including Delta, to accommodate wheelchairs on flights, marking a critical step towards inclusivity in air travel. Irwin's efforts have not only raised awareness about the barriers faced by travelers with disabilities but have also prompted significant policy changes within the aviation industry, paving the way for the prospect of passengers' wheelchairs in the main cabin and fewer in the repair shop.

### 4. Steve Nelson, Accessibility Diversity program manager, Alaska Airlines. Innovating Accessibility at Alaska Airlines

In 2025, Alaska Airlines has made significant strides in enhancing accessibility for passengers with diverse needs by orchestrating autism practice sessions across multiple cities as well as "Fly for All," an app with Infinitech that provides know-before-you-fly simulations. Additionally, Alaska Air has successfully implemented self-driving wheelchairs at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA), giving passengers a unique experience while addressing a solution to the shortage of airport wheelchair assistants.

### 5. Tami Reist, CEO of North Alabama Mountains and Lakes. Building Inclusive Tourism in North Alabama

Tami has been a strong advocate for inclusive tourism for many years. She has financially supported sensory training for hotels across 16 counties, which included practice overnight stays at the trained hotels. In 2025, her region will host a Familiarization (FAM) tour featuring 10 content creators with various disabilities, including Down Syndrome, mobility, visual and hearing impairments, and PTSD. This initiative will effectively demonstrate the region's commitment to accessible tourism by creating itineraries tailored for visitors with diverse disabilities, thereby raising awareness about the importance of inclusivity in the hospitality industry.

### 6. Sophie Hyde-Hook, Chief Inclusion Officer, Destinations International (DI). Leading the DMO Charge for Inclusive Travel

Sophie Hyde-Hook has played a crucial role in advancing accessibility as an essential component of social inclusion, representing the next evolution of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) initiatives. Under her leadership, (DI) has partnered with TravelAbility to develop, The Accessibility Playbook, a comprehensive resource designed to empower their destination members with the essential tools and strategies to ensure that travel experiences are inclusive and accessible for all visitors, regardless of their abilities. Through her leadership, DI is not only enhancing the travel experience for individuals with diverse needs but also promoting a more equitable and inclusive tourism landscape for all. [www.destinationsinternational.com](http://www.destinationsinternational.com).

### 7. Gordon Harman, Founder, Mountain Woodstead, Creating a World of Fun for All

Tami was selected as one of 12 Accessibility Change-Making Champions of 2025

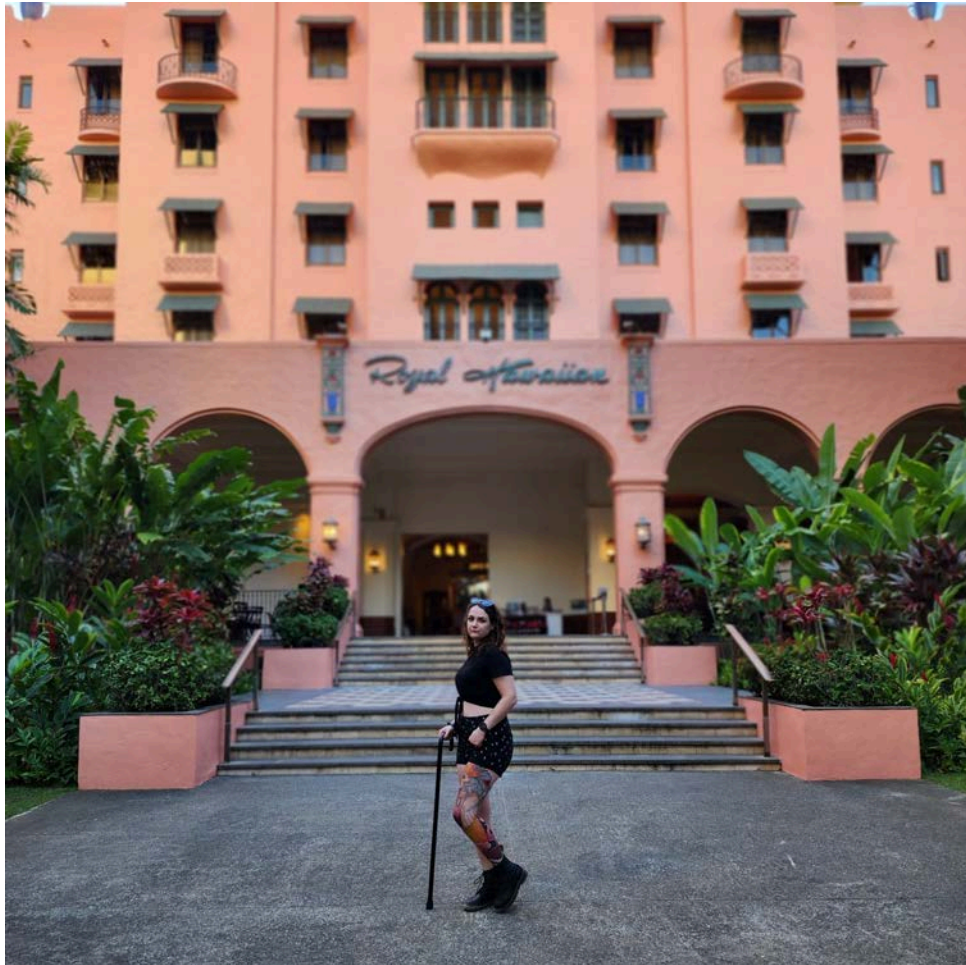
ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

# ACCESSIBILITY



**Attended the U.S. Travel's Future of  
Travel Mobility in Washington D.C.  
with Leslie Walker**

# ACCESSIBILITY



Phoenix Travels North Alabama Itinerary

## Phoenix Powell (Phoenix Travels) Creator Fam Tour Itinerary

- **Tour Title:** Accessible Adventure with Visit North Alabama
- **Dates:** February 18 – 22, 2025
- **Organized by:** Leslie Walker – Leslie Walker Consulting

Hosts: [Visit North Alabama](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@visitnorthal](#)
- Twitter: [@visitnorthal](#)
- Facebook: [Visit North Alabama](#)

### Day 1: Tuesday, February 18, 2025

Time: 3:05 p.m.

Activity: Phoenix Arrives!

Location: [Huntsville International Airport](#) – Huntsville, Alabama

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@flyhsv](#)
- Twitter: [@flyhsv](#)
- Facebook: [Huntsville International Airport](#)

Phoenix will be picked up by Leslie Walker and driven to host hotel for the evening, [AC Hotel Huntsville Downtown](#).

- Instagram: [@achotelhuntsvilledowntown](#)
- Facebook: [AC Hotel Huntsville Downtown](#)

Once Phoenix is checked in, comfortable, and has had time to communicate with her family, Leslie and Phoenix will have dinner in downtown Huntsville, location TBD.

### Day 2: Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Time: 8:00 a.m. meet in lobby

Activity: Breakfast

Location: [Blue Plate Cafe](#) (MENU)

Social Media Handles:

- Facebook: [Blue Plate Cafe](#)

Activity: Out of this world tour!

Location: [U.S. Space & Rocket Center](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@rocketcenterusa](#)
- Twitter: [@rocketcenterusa](#)
- Facebook: [U.S. Space & Rocket Center](#)

Activity: Lunch

Location: [Campus No. 805: Straight to Ale Brewing, Ale's Kitchen](#) (MENU)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@campus805](#), [@straighttoale](#)
- Twitter: [@campus805](#), [@straighttoale](#)
- Facebook: [Campus No. 805, Straight to Ale Brewing](#)

Activity: Looking for Treasures

Location: [Unclaimed Baggage](#) and [Downtown Scottboro](#) as part of [Visit Jackson County](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@unclaimedbag](#)
- Twitter: [@unclaimedbag](#)
- Facebook: [Unclaimed Baggage](#)

Time: 4:00 p.m. or later

Activity: Check-in and Explore Accommodations

Location: [ReTreat Resort & Spa](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@retreatresort](#)
- Facebook: [ReTreat Resort & Spa](#)

### Day 3: Thursday, February 20, 2025

Activity: Relax and Enjoy ReTreat

Location: [ReTreat Resort & Spa](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@retreatresort](#)
- Facebook: [ReTreat Resort & Spa](#)

Time: [insert time]

Activity: Zipline Adventure

Location: [Savannah Falls at Lake Guntersville State Park](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@alstateparks](#)
- Twitter: [@ALStateParks](#)
- Facebook: [Alabama State Parks](#)

Activity: Lunch – La Esquina Cocina (MENU)

Location: [City Harbor at Lake Guntersville](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@cityharboratlakeguntersville](#), [@laesquinacocina](#)
- Facebook: [City Harbor at Lake Guntersville](#), [La Esquina Cocina](#)

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Activity: Cave Tour

Location: [Cathedral Caverns State Park](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@cathedralcavernsstatepark](#)
- Facebook: [Cathedral Caverns State Park](#)

Activity: Dinner

Location: [50 Taters](#) (MENU)

Social Media Handles:

- Facebook: [50 Taters](#)

### Day 4: Friday, February 21, 2025

Time: 7:15 a.m.

Activity: Coffee/Breakfast

Location: [Alabaster Coffee Company](#) (MENU)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@alabastercoffee](#)
- Facebook: [Alabaster Coffee Company](#)

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Activity: Mooresville Walking Tour

Location: [Mooresville, Alabama](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@MooresvilleAL](#)
- Facebook: [Mooresville, Alabama](#)

Activity: Play like a kid!

Location: [Cook Museum of Natural Science](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@cookmuseum](#)
- Twitter: [@cookmuseum](#)
- Facebook: [Cook Museum of Natural Science](#)

Activity: Lunch

Location: [The Salty Cod](#) (Menu)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@thesaltycod](#)
- Facebook: [The Salty Cod](#)

Time: As needed

Activity: Check in to hotel

Location: [AC Hotel Huntsville Downtown](#)

Activity: Stroll around and meet with local artist

Location: [Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@lowemillarts](#)
- Twitter: [@lowemillarts](#)
- Facebook: [Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment](#)

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Activity: Dinner

Location: [Connor's Steak and Seafood](#) (MENU)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@ConnorsRestaurant](#)
- Facebook: [Connor's Steak and Seafood](#)

### Day 5: Saturday, February 22, 2025

Time: 8:00 a.m. meet in lobby and check out

Activity: Breakfast/Coffee, Downtown Huntsville, and Harrison Brothers Hardware

Location: [Honest Coffee](#) (MENU), [Downtown Huntsville Inc.](#), and [Harrison Brothers Hardware](#)

Social Media Handles:

- Instagram: [@downtownhsv](#)
- Twitter: [@downtownHSV](#)
- Facebook: [Honest Coffee](#), [Downtown Huntsville Inc.](#), [Harrison Brothers Hardware](#)

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Activity: Return to airport for 1:11 p.m. departure

Location: [Huntsville International Airport](#)

Safe and happy travels, Phoenix!

Sidebar/Additional Notes

- Contact: Leslie Walker, 256-426-5726

# ADVOCACY



**AMLA Board Retreat  
Huntsville, AL**



Home / Learning center / How Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association ...

SUCCESS STORY

## How Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association is Creating Positive Tax Revenue from Rentals in North Alabama



AMLTA Case Study

# ADVOCACY

Code of Alabama

Title 40. Revenue and Taxation. (Refs & Annos)

Chapter 26. Transient Occupancy Tax. (Refs & Annos)

Ala.Code 1975 § 40-26-1.1

§ 40-26-1.1. Duties of accommodations intermediary; annual report; exemptions.

Currentness

(a) This section shall be known and cited as the Alabama Tourism Tax Protection Act of 2024.

(b) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) ACCOMMODATIONS INTERMEDIARY. Any person, firm, or corporation, other than an accommodations provider, that facilitates renting, furnishing, lodging, or accommodation transactions subject to the tax levied under [Section 40-26-1](#) and charges a room fee or an accommodations fee to the customer, which it retains as compensation for the facilitation. Facilitating transactions include brokering, coordinating, or in any other way arranging for the purchase of the right to use accommodations via a transaction directly, including via one or more payment processors, between a customer and an accommodations provider.

**Tourism Tax Protection Act**

# AROUND THE REGION



## Inaugural Veterans Day Celebration



**Alabama Veterans Museum- Athens, AL**



# AROUND THE REGION

## Cullman County announces Harmony Heard as new Director of Tourism

### Cullman County Tourism Bureau announces Harmony Heard as new director of tourism

By: [Staff Reports](#)  
September 17, 2024

1423 0

Like 44

Share



# AROUND THE REGION

## Ardmore Welcome Center Ribbon Cutting 10/16/2024



ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION

# AROUND THE REGION

## Athens Farmers Market Ribbon Cutting *October 2024*



# AROUND THE REGION

**Dr. Rolando Herts (superintendent of the Freedom Riders National Monument and Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument in Birmingham) Welcome Reception at the Scottsboro Boys Museum**



# AROUND THE REGION



**Small Hotelier of the Year**

Heather Dill – The Alamite, A Tribute Portfolio Hotel

**Supplier of the Year**

TSC Associates

**Chef of the Year**

Luis Branez – Church Street Family Hospitality

**Best New Culinarian of the Year**

Nikolis LoCascio - The Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa – PCH Hotels & Resorts

**Bartender of the Year**

Kati Wilson Lee – Church Street Family Hospitality

**Tourism Promoter of the Year**

Tami Reist -Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association

**Humanitarian of the Year**

David Barranco - Chappy's Deli

**Educator of Excellence**

Cindy Yates – Career Academies of Decatur

# AROUND THE REGION

## In Memory of Julie Patton



Julie Patton, age 59, of Guntersville, passed away on January 9, 2025 after a yearlong battle with cancer.

She spent many years following in her mother's footsteps as a member of the Twenty-First Century Club where she served several years as the chairman of the annual Art on the Lake.

A visitation will be held on Saturday, January 25, from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. at The Guntersville Museum and Cultural Center. The family will hold a private burial at Crestview Cemetery.

The family requests in lieu of flowers, memorials be sent to Guntersville Museum and Cultural Center, P.O. Box 626, Guntersville, AL or to Twenty-First Century Club, P.O. Box 1072, Guntersville, AL.

# FILM OFFICE



# FILM OFFICE

## SUCCESSFUL CONNECTIONS

- A production company contacted NAFC in search of a farmhouse, barn, cattle and a downtown street with a country-style restaurant/deli. A successful match was made. Filming should start in early 2025 and is estimated to take about seven days.
- A videographer in search of a little white church in the Cullman/Blount County area for a gospel video was successfully connected with the Shady Grove Methodist Church, a site on the North Alabama Halleluiah Trail.
- NAFC met with a new film producer in the Athens, Ala. area. She has written the script, began filming and is looking for investors.
- Birmingham Scout seeking a Huntsville Scout to help with locations for filming in 2025 was successfully connected to someone local.
- PA Production Company wanted to use two murals in the Huntsville area for a promotion commercial for Submarine Builders recruitment project. NAFC contacted the murals' artists and also connected the film crew with City of Huntsville Police Department for closing of a street during production.
- A student at NYU (from New Market, Ala.) is looking for a run-down trailer park, lake house and county road for filming to take place Nov. 28-Dec. 2, 2024.
- Connected LA film crew with local vendors for lighting and sound for a project coming in Spring 2025.

## EVENTS, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, NETWORKING

- Attended the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama at Orange Beach Convention Center and promoted the NAFC and North Alabama.
- Worked a booth at the Alabama Association of Regional Councils held at the VBC in Huntsville Oct. 6-9.
- Traveled to Doraville, Ga. to tour Assembly Studios Atlanta on Oct. 18. Investors took an old site of the General Motors Assembly Plant and repurposed it into a modern film studios development.
- Sponsored the Rocket City Short Film Festival, held Oct. 25-26 at Studio Huntsville (follow J Spencer Film Family-Studio Huntsville on FB). This is the 19<sup>th</sup> year for the festival, and the first year at this new location. Festival organizer, Alex Gibson, booked over seventy short films to be viewed in the two day event. Friday night was the showing of several high school and college age students short films. Saturday started off with a Film Writers Workshop, followed by a day of short films being shown and other workshops. NAFC had a booth to promote NAFC and North Alabama.
- Be a sponsor of the Swamp-a-thon 2.0, a live production from the Muscle Shoals Recording Studio set for Nov. 23, 2024. The event is patterned after an old-fashioned telethon and will feature Muscle Shoals music performances, a not-so-silent auction offering musical instruments, travel experiences, music centric experiences such as DJ for a day, recording sessions, onsite weddings and special occasion celebration packages.
- Participate in the George Lindsey Film Festival hosted by the University of North Alabama in early March 2025.
- Visited Tonya Holley with Cypress Moon Productions. She has been in the film and recording industry for over thirty years.
- Sponsorship to the Southern Fried Film Festival coming in June 2025 to Huntsville.



# FILM OFFICE

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Current NAFC board members are:
  - Sandra Lafferty, Actress
  - Debbie Wilson, Muscle Shoals Sound Studio
  - Nancy Noever, U.S. Space & Rocket Center
  - Ben Stark, Ben Stark Films
  - Chris Roquemore, AIDT
  - Codie Gopher, Global Entertainment
  - Tami Reist, Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association

The NAFC has seen a significant boost in activity over the past three months. Several potential location sites and businesses have been added to the Film Industry Database ([https://al.reel-scout.com/loc\\_results.aspx?g=northAL](https://al.reel-scout.com/loc_results.aspx?g=northAL)).

We continue to work hard to connect local businesses and industries with production companies, scouts and crews looking to film in North Alabama. This proactive approach not only supports local economic growth but also establishes North Alabama as an attractive, sustainable destination for a diverse range of productions. For more information, visit [www.northalabamafilm.org](http://www.northalabamafilm.org).

# SEPTEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## MEMBER SERVICES

- Ms. Reist continues to serve as Chairwoman for the Tennessee River Valley Stewardship Council (TRVSC). We continue to seek new board members to replace those who are retiring across the seven-state region.
- Angie will attend Travel South International representing TRVSC.
- Ms. Reist met with Mayor Segraves from Guin, Alabama to discuss a project they are working on for his area. She gave him information on places to look for funding for the project.
- Ms. Reist met with Mayor Peebles from Courtland, Alabama to discuss short-term rentals and presented a presentation to her and the city clerk.
- Angie and Ms. Reist conducted the North Alabama FAM Tour. This was an amazing experience and we are already seeing positive results from both the welcome center employees and our members. We received an email from one of our wineries sharing how they had visitors come to visit after learning about them from the Welcome Center.
- Ms. Reist attended the Appalachia Regional Commission annual meeting in Chattanooga. She was able to network with several of our ARC partners.
- Ms. Reist has been working with Cullman regarding their new tourism director. We are excited they have hired Harmony Heard, who has worked in the hotel industry for many years in the Huntsville market as well as in Texas for a tourism bureau. She will start her new position in November.
- Angie and Ms. Reist interviewed two candidates for Jerry Yarbrough's position. We have hired Josh Dalberto. He will train with Jerry on the routes to service our members.
- We have put together a new community engagement team and a community representation guide to help our members and AMLA staff.
- Ms. Reist spoke to the UA GEDI Intensive course in Auburn. The group consisted of fifty-two economic development directors, county commissioners, business owners, power companies, etc. The presentation went well and the evaluation will be emailed next week.
- Karen and Ms. Reist attended the grand opening of the Blount County Multi-Purpose Center. The center is located in Cleveland, Alabama and would make a great place to host a quarterly board meeting. Ms. Reist was able to sit with Congressman Aderholt and Dr. Vicki Karolewics, President of Wallace State Community Colleges. Dr. Vicki was on the search committee for Cullman County's Tourism Director and is excited about Harmony.
- We have analyzed responses from the last quarterly board meeting survey which offered insights on speakers for future board meetings.
- Chris Flores has completed all of the String of Pearl videos. These video will be shown at the PEAK Awards luncheon and will be shared on LinkedIn.
- AMLA has entered into a contract with Granicus for our sixteen counties to continue to receive insights into short-term rentals located in the North Alabama region.
- We have emailed an invitation for a reception honoring Dr. Rolando Herts, the new Superintendent of the National Park Service overseeing the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and the Freedom Riders National Monument located in Anniston. AMLA is hosting the reception at The Scottsboro Boys Museum in Scottsboro Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

# SEPTEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## ADVOCACY

- Ms. Reist attended the NAIDA (North Alabama Industrial Development Association) meeting in Decatur. She met with Alabama Secretary of Commerce, Ellen McNair and spoke about the North Alabama Film Office. They have hired a company to look at duplicate efforts and have found one for Workforce Development.
- Ms. Reist spoke at the STS Connections at Auburn on the Importance of Advocacy. She played our advocacy video during our panel discussion and was able to meet the new firm that has taken over the advocacy program for STS.
- We continue to work on the video "How to work with your Legislators" video/tutorial.
- Craig and Ms. Reist attended the ACCA Meeting at Perdido. We met with several of our North Alabama County Commissioners. They came by the booth to get their free gift, a Patriot Trail t-shirt. We also received a lead from one of the vendors who asked for 100 brochures. He is a veteran and part of a veteran motorcycle group. He wants to bring the group to Alabama to check out the Patriot Trail. I will invite him to the new Patriot Trail In Honor of Veterans Celebration in Athens in November. Next year the Celebration will be held in Blount County at their new Veteran's Museum and I have asked him to speak.

## MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Karen is developing the new Patriot Trail Passport via Bandwango. We hope to have the pass ready to launch by November.
- We have created a new video showcasing Alabama Mountain Lakes and its history. This video will be played at the annual meeting opening session and during the PEAK Awards luncheon. This video will also be used when speaking to groups.
- Angie and Leslee worked with Pam Shaheen and the Golf FAM Tour. Angie said they loved the courses and seeing the attractions. We know we will get several stories from these writers.
- Ms. Reist spoke to the STS TMPs about "Work, Life, Balance" at the STS Connections conference in Auburn.
- Ms. Reist met with Lee Mills with Business Alabama to discuss opportunities for next year's marketing efforts.
- Ms. Reist will be speaking to the DeKalb Leadership group on tourism. Thirty-five people are registered to attend.
- Patti Culp and Ms. Reist are working on gifts for the NTA Board. Huntsville will be hosting the group and we have always co-sponsored the dinner. Craig Johnston is scheduled to speak at the upcoming NTA Meeting.
- We mailed Alabama State Parks Director Greg Lein a retirement gift to his home. I will be unable to attend his retirement party.

# SEPTEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Karen created a survey for our Welcome Center FAM Tour. We received positive feedback on the fam from the welcome Center employees.
- The quarterly newsletter featuring our annual meeting was mailed.
- Melea distributed her quarterly podcast to our viewers.
- We continue to receive updates from Janin Nachtweh, Germany, Austria and Switzerland representative.

## WORKFORCE TRAINING

- The staff attended the weekly call with Holistic Performance Group and our staff that works on the Flawless Delivery Team.
- We had a going away luncheon for Annalaura Swinea, our summer intern. She was an asset and contributed greatly to our marketing and operations staff. The latest AMLA newsletter includes a writeup on her receiving a national award from her sorority.
- We are working on a pilot class for one of our CTE schools in Huntsville or Guntersville. I hope to have finalized by end of September.
- Ms. Reist met with Ryan Cate, co-founder of HPG, to discuss the Flawless Delivery Program for the upcoming year.
- Ms. Reist met with NARCOG regarding their SCSEP Program (Serving Seniors who Serve the Community). This program allows businesses to hire a person over 55 years old making less than \$25,550.00 per year for 19.7 hours per week. NARCOG pays the employee and supplies the workers comp insurance.
- Ms. Reist attended the North Alabama Workforce Summit held in Huntsville.
- We have started to receive survey data on the Flawless Delivery certification program from HPG. This information will be placed on the [flawlessal.com](http://flawlessal.com) website. Visitors to this site can see responses from those who have completed the program.
- AMLA will be partnering with the ACCS Innovation Center on the Skills for Success Program for funding of Flawless Delivery for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

# SEPTEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## WORKFORCE TRAINING

- We will submit information on October 1<sup>st</sup> on the ETF Portal for the 2024-2025 appropriations for Flawless Delivery.
- The board and staff retreat is set for Nov. 12-13, 2024, in Huntsville. Featured presenter is Adrienne Mobley who has served both Mississippi and Louisiana as the Director of Tourism and is a life coach and a frequent speaker with groups throughout the U.S. If anyone is interested in having her speak to your team while she is in town could possibly get a great price.
- We have a pilot class scheduled in November for the CTE schools in Huntsville where we will incorporate the new Skills for Success program with our Flawless Delivery certification program. This will allow students to receive two credits from the training. A videographer will film during the training for all CTE schools training in Hospitality and Culinary.
- Craig hosted a virtual lunch and learn training in September. The topic was on “Proactive Hospitality – Ways to Wow the Customer.” Eighteen people participated in the training and feedback has been positive.

# OCTOBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## MEMBER SERVICES

- Karen sent out surveys to the annual meeting attendees. Twenty-six people responded, providing great feedback that we can incorporate in future meetings.
- We hosted a new board member orientation with 17 people in attendance. I will work on meeting those that could not attend.
- Attended the Regional Council of Governments meeting held in Huntsville. They had 280 registered for the conference.
- Presented the “Future of Hospitality” presentation to the DeKalb County Leadership group. Twenty-five people attended this presentation.
- Our reception honoring Dr. Rolando Herts, the new Superintendent of the National Park Service overseeing the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and the Freedom Riders National Monument located in Anniston, was a success. Approximately 50 people attended the reception. As a result of this event, we now have a group meeting via zoom to work together on the U.S .Civil Rights Trail.
- Continue to serve as Chairwoman for the Tennessee River Valley Stewardship Council (TRVSC). We continue to seek new board members to replace those who are retiring across the seven-state region.
- Angie will attend Travel South International representing TRVSC.
- Melea and Joy Harris Smith from the Cook’s Museum of Natural Science will be attending Travel South International representing North Alabama.
- Our community engagement team met and have started working on a plan for our region. We hope to reduce the number of turnovers with membership.
- AMLA continues to work with Granicus on getting our members added to the portal. Our counties will be able to receive insights into the short-term rental located in the North Alabama region.

## ADVOCACY

- Attended the Regional Council of Governments and Danielle and I were asked to speak about Advocacy. Approximately 20 people attended our presentation.
- Attended the Alabama Women’s Commission’s Meeting held in Montgomery. Representative Collins and I rode together to the meeting.
- Angie attended the Alabama Tennessee Valley Government Meeting held in Gatlinburg.
- I met with Congressman Dale Strong at the Jesse Owens Museum during his visit to the museum followed by a visit to First Solar.
- We have continued our partnership with the Alabama County Commissioner Association.
- We have partnered with the Alabama Chamber of Commerce Association.
- Continue to partner with EDAA through a sponsorship of the advocacy section.

# OCTOBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Karen has completed the new Patriot Trail Passport via Bandwango.
- Karen is currently working with Owen Chapman on the new Patriot Trail Geo Tour Passport. Owen has trained Joshua on how to replace and maintain the geocaches.
- “Things to See and Do on I-22” brochure has been updated.
- Randa and Karen are still working on updating and refreshing the look of the North Alabama Tear Off Map.
- Randa is working on the social media book for the Tennessee RiverLine partners.
- Karen is redesigning the Retirement and Relocation Guide to North Alabama. Each county will have a fact sheet on their area.
- We are researching new marketing outlets and creating new campaigns for 2025. We will be placing ads in *The Tennessee Magazine*.
- We are also exploring Style Blueprint Alabama.
- Karen attended Brand USA Travel Week U.K. & Europe. She and Jennifer Moore with Huntsville CVB had 33 appointments and was able to share all the great things taking place in North Alabama.
- Angie attended a new AAA Show in Cleveland, Ohio.
- Attended the Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee rural tourism conference held in Union City, Tennessee.
- We have started seeing results from the Golf FAM Tour conducted in September. Pam Shaheen will be giving us a detailed results with the values as they all get completed.
- Continue to receive updates from Janin Nachtweh, Germany, Austria and Switzerland representative.
- Reviewed the Unexpected Adventures podcast report from Relic.
- Reviewed stats for the North Alabama Ambassador Program. This is a report generated from Klear.
- Reviewed the Google Analytics report.
- Reviewed advertising responses by month.
- Received the Smith Travel report for the month of September.

# OCTOBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## WORKFORCE TRAINING

- Attended the weekly call with Holistic Performance Group and our staff that works on the Flawless Delivery Team.
- We received a draft of the MOU from the ACCC regarding the Flawless Delivery Customer Service Training program and it all looks doable. We will submit quarterly \$250,000 and receive the funds to pay for the entire state of Alabama for Flawless trainings.
- Working with Karen Rodriguez, a Huntsville Center of Technology Culinary instructor. We have the class scheduled for November at the Marriott Huntsville. This will allow students to receive two credits from the training. A videographer will film during the training for all CTE schools training in Hospitality and Culinary.
- Have received two great letters of support for the Flawless Delivery Customer Service Training Program. We received a letter from Srinath Yedla regarding the Yedla Hotels and one from Commissioner Chris Blankenship regarding the state parks.
- We have started to receive Flawless Delivery survey data from HPG. This information will be placed on the flawlessal.com website. Visitors to this site can see responses from those who have completed the program.
- The board and staff retreat is set for Nov. 12-13, 2024, in Huntsville. Featured presenter is Adrienne Mobley who has served both Mississippi and Louisiana as the Director of Tourism and is a life coach and a frequent speaker with groups throughout the U.S. If anyone is interested in having her speak to your team while she is in town could possibly get a great price.
- We have scheduled Placer AI and Zartico training for December 12<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2pm at The Venue at Oak Place in Huntsville. We will have Jennifer Green from JSU working with us on Placer AI from 10am-1pm and Sydney Hamilton from Zartico training us from 1pm-2pm via zoom.

## NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- Videographer Chris Flores and I attended Danville Elementary to get footage from the students working on the veterans cards and video interviews that we will be sharing during the inaugural Patriot Trail In Honor of Veterans Celebration scheduled for November 7, 2024. The event will take place at the Alabama Veteran's Museum located in Athens.
- Videographer Adam Vaden updated a 30 second commercial for North Alabama. We will be sharing this at the Alabama American Bus Association booth. The event will take place in February in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- We are working on a media mail out to North Alabama media for the inaugural Patriot Trail In Honor of Veterans Celebration.
- Karen continues to work with Zartico representatives and is establishing the points of interest for North Alabama. Zartico will allow us to gather insights into the movement of visitors, visitor spending, event performance and lodging performance for strategic decision-making in terms of advertising, promotions and product development. This platform is comparable to Placer-AI but offers additional data sets.
- Continue to work on the Take the Drive on I-65 project for the four states (Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama) to invest in. We are working with Lyn Pilch, who developed the Mississippi River Country project. Her proposal includes both international and domestic markets. Each state would buy in to the project through her and she would oversee and fulfil all leads. The proposal will include Zoom calls and quarterly reports on the success of the project with the partners.
- Continue to explore the National Travel and Tourism Infrastructure Strategic Plan manual. We have found several ways to help the transportation department tract spending and start a "Keep I-65 Safe" campaign, which would coincide with the Take the Drive on I-65 promotional campaign.
- We are developing a new "What's New in Your Community" booklet and will share with ATD Public Relations Manager Brooklyn Lundy.



# OCTOBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- Thereasa and I attended the Assembly Studio in Dunwoody, Georgia. This venue was formerly an old Chevrolet assembly plant and has been converted into film sets where they have filmed everything from “Stranger Things” to “The Walking Dead” to the “Avengers: Infinity War.” I can see in North Alabama using an old plant to do something like this in our region.
- We continue to develop North Alabama as a premier accessible travel destination. This includes developing inclusive itineraries and highlighting local resources in North Alabama fostering accessible tourism and developing a dedicated page on [www.northalabama.org](http://www.northalabama.org) highlighting attractions, accommodations, events that meet different accessibility needs to enable travelers to make an informed choice. We will also bring in “Wheel the World” to access AMLA member properties and take measurements for the new North Alabama accessibility website.
- Leslie Walker and I will both be speaking at the TravelAbility’s Emerging Markets Summit held in San Francisco, CA November 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>.
- We are working on a piece to share how many people are estimated to be a part of our region and listing the cities and towns that fall in the North Alabama region.
- Angie is looking into creating a Mound Trail Passport. The project was funded in the past by AMLA, UA and RC&D. This will allow more visitation to our Mounds across the state.

# NOVEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## MEMBER SERVICES

- Continue to serve as Chairwoman for the Tennessee River Valley Stewardship Council (TRVSC). We continue to work with those across the TVA seven state region. Our year end audit was submitted to TVA and we are working on our budget for 2025.
- AMLA continues to work with Granicus on entering members to the portal. Our counties will be able to receive insights into the short-term rentals located in the North Alabama region. We have added city clerks and revenues clerks in the region from last year's report.
- Spoke to Clerks from all towns in Jackson County regarding short term rentals. Thirteen people attended and they have been signed up to view the Granicus portal. Scottsboro has started the compliance for their city.
- We continue to work with our members and share with them the POW for 2024/2025.
- Attended the Alabama Main Street meeting in Marion, Alabama.
- Working on an Ambassador's presentation to present in December at the Alabama Trails Conference.
- Karen and Randa completed the first quarter newsletter; it has been sent for printing and mailing.

## ADVOCACY

- Leslie Walker and I will be attending The Future of Travel Mobility presented by US Travel in DC. We will hear from United Airlines, CEO of Uber, Hilton Hotels and others on how they are preparing for the increase in mobility needs.
- Attended the Alabama Community of Excellence meeting in conjunction with the Alabama League of Municipalities meeting. I was able to speak with approximately twelve of North Alabama mayors.
- Attended the Alabama Women's Commission's meeting in Montgomery. We are excited to have Haley Rutland of Guntersville serving as a Junior Ambassador.
- Working with STS on securing the dates for the next congressional summit.
- Mailed congratulations cards to our Alabama Delegation that won their race. Mailed one to our newest elected house member Congressman Figures. He is the son of State Senator Vivian Figures who serves on the Alabama Women's Commission with me.

# NOVEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Attended the Alabama Restaurant and Hospitality Meeting in Montgomery. ARHA President Mindy Hannan discussed a few changes to receive grants from the US Restaurant and Hospitality. There are several metrics they have to reach in order to receive the funding including meeting PAC goals, attendance requirement for DC trip on Advocacy, etc.
- Received a story regarding short term rentals and the losses to communities and received an article from Athens regarding short term rentals.
- Angie will attend Travel South International in Atlanta representing TRVSC. Melea and Joy Harris Smith from the Cook Museum of Natural Science will be attending representing North Alabama. The appointment schedule will be issued November 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the Alabama Restaurant and Hospitality STARS Banquet. I was nominated for Tourism Promoter of the Year by Penny Groux , VP Sales for the Perdido Beach Resort, and received the award, beating out three other nominees. I nominated Tereasa Taylor White and the Good Culture Foundation for the Spirit Award. She was one of the finalists for this award. I also nominated Ashlee Crosby, GM for the Springhill Suites in Downtown Huntsville, for the Hospitality Leadership Award. She received the award and was very honored. At the banquet, I sat at the head table with Senator Gudger and Senator Elliott. They both had wonderful things about the work AMLA is doing for the North Alabama region. Senator Gudger received the Government of Excellence Award and mentioned AMLA in his speech.
- Karen and Randa have slightly redesigned and updated the North Alabama Tear Off Maps. They are currently at the printers.
- Randa continues to work on the social media book for the Tennessee RiverLine partners.
- Randa created an accessibility PowerPoint for me to use at the Travelability's Emerging Markets Summit. I have been asked to speak on developing an accessible tourism plan for North Alabama.

## MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Received a call from Travel with Darley. They are working on a piece around accessible travel and presented an advertising plan for North Alabama to host an episode.
- Karen continues to redesign the Retirement and Relocation Guide to North Alabama. Each county will have a fact sheet on their area.
- Melea attended CrowdRiff's annual travel and tourism conference in downtown Austin, Texas.
- Attended the Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee rural tourism conference held in Union City, Tennessee. This was a great event Tennessee put on the ritz. We will start meeting with the Athens tourism team to establish plan for the 2025 conference.
- We continue to see great results from the Golf FAM Tour held in September. Pam Shaheen will give us detailed results with the values as they all get completed.
- Karen, Melea and I were on a zoom call with Laurie Rowe and her team to discuss topics and story pitches for 2025. We discussed accessibility travel, outdoor tourism, unique accommodations and our trails.
- Karen and I zoomed with Darley Newman (Travels with Darley) and her agent. The show has plans to focus a segment on tourism accessibility and was interested in us partnering with them. She has sent us the Travels with Darley media kit. Her show airs on PBS we were going to look into a grant with the state to see if we could make this happen. This could be one of our Semi quincennial projects.
- Karen and Randa are redesigning and updating the membership recruitment brochure.
- Attended the annual ATHENA meeting where we selected the 2004 Athena recipient.
- Videographer Adam Vaden updated a 30 second commercial for North Alabama. We will be sharing this in the Alabama booth during the American Bus Association marketplace. The event will take place in February in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

# NOVEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Continue to receive updates from Janin Nachtweh, Germany, Austria and Switzerland representative.
- Reviewed the Unexpected Adventures podcast report from Relic.
- Reviewed stats for the North Alabama Ambassador Program. This is a report generated from Klear.
- Reviewed the Google Analytics report.
- Reviewed advertising responses by month.
- Received the Smith Travel report for the month of October.

## WORKFORCE TRAINING

- Attended the weekly call with Holistic Performance Group, along with AMLA's staff that works on the Flawless Delivery Team.
- We received a draft of the MOU from the ACCC regarding the Flawless Delivery Customer Service Training program and it all looks doable. We will submit quarterly \$250,000 and receive the funds to pay for the entire state of Alabama for Flawless trainings. I spoke with Jessica Faulk with the ACCC office about our grant. She said that the Chancellor will have to sign the contract. As soon as he signs the contract, she will let me know.
- We worked with Karen Rodriguez; she is the Huntsville Center of Technology Culinary instructor. They bused thirty students to the Marriott Huntsville to do a Flawless Training. Our goal is to get all CTE students training in Hospitality and Culinary certified in Flawless Delivery.
- We have scheduled Placer AI and Zartico training during the Committee of 16 training scheduled for December 12<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2pm at The Venue at Oak Place in Huntsville. We will have Jennifer Green from JSU working with us on Placer AI from 10am-1pm and Sydney Hamilton from Zartico training us from 1pm-2pm via zoom.

# NOVEMBER PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- Working on an economic piece to show why North Alabama is an ideal place for making movies, music and more. We will have this piece ready to present to Hilton Howell to discuss the potential of doing something similar in North Alabama to what he did at the GM Assembly in Georgia. We have the opportunity of using the Tourism Incentive Tax for this project.
- Continue to work on the Take the Drive on I-65 project for the four states (Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama) to invest in. We are working with Lyn Pilch, who developed the Mississippi River Country project. Her proposal includes both international and domestic markets. Each state would buy in to the project through her and she would oversee and fulfil all leads. The proposal will include Zoom calls and quarterly reports on the success of the project with the partners.
- We continue to develop North Alabama as a premier accessible travel destination. This includes developing inclusive itineraries and highlighting local resources in North Alabama fostering accessible tourism and developing a website dedicated to accessible tourism. We will also bring in “Wheel the World” to access AMLA member properties and take measurements for the new North Alabama accessibility website. Sample website to see is [www.visitcharlottesville.org](http://www.visitcharlottesville.org).
- Leslie Walker and I will both be speaking at the TravelAbility’s Emerging Markets Summit held in San Francisco, CA, November 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>.
- We have completed two Patriot Trail videos: one for the trail and one of students at Danville Elementary showing patriotism. We will use these videos to promote the importance of showing patriotism.
- Angie has completed the Mound Trail Passport. The project was funded in the past by AMLA, UA and RC&D. This will help promote visitation to the Mounds across the state.

# Welcome New Members.

## Thank you renewing members.

- A Family Tradition Cabin- Town Creek
- Tennessee Valley Art Association- Tuscumbia
- Alabama Veteran's Uplift- A Patriotic Event- Moulton
- Moulton Mardi Gras Parade- Moulton
- Promenade Formal Wear- Tuscumbia
- Champy's World Famous Fried Chicken- Muscle Shoals
- The Sherrod- Courtland
- Florence Arts & Museums- Florence
- George's Steak Pit- Sheffield
- Valentina's Pizzeria and Wine Bar- Madison

**Total Members: 526**



Partner with the Economic Development Association of Alabama



Partnership with Alabama County Commission



Alabama Restaurant & Hospitality Association Board of Directors



Supporting partner of Tennessee Valley Stewardship Council



Supporting partner for Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics



Alabama State Parks Advisory Board



Instructor for Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College



Supporting Member of Harvest Hosts



Supporters of U.S. Travel Association



Supporter of Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama



Platinum partner with Alabama League of Municipalities



Supporting partner for TVA Community Development Surveys



Supporter of Appalachian Regional Commission



Supporter of Tennessee RiverLine

# SAVE THE DATES

- **Social Media Virtual Seminar**  
January 29, 2025
- **Virtual Lunch and Learn**  
March 13, 2025
- **State Tourism Bash**  
April 22, 2025- Montgomery, AL
- **Social Media Virtual Seminar**  
April 23, 2025
- **Quarterly Board & Membership Meeting**  
April 29, 2025- Arab, AL
- **Washington D.C. trip with Southeast Tourism Society**  
June 8-12, 2025
- **Launch of North Alabama Accessibility Plan & News Conference**  
July 17, 2025- Cook Museum- Decatur, AL
- **Quarterly Board & Membership Meeting**  
July 22, 2025- Sheffield, AL
- **Governor's Conference:**  
August 23-26, 2025- Gulf Shores, AL
- **AMLA Annual Meeting**  
September 18, 2025- Gadsden, AL
- **Rural Tourism Conference**  
Oct. 20-22, 2025- Athens, AL



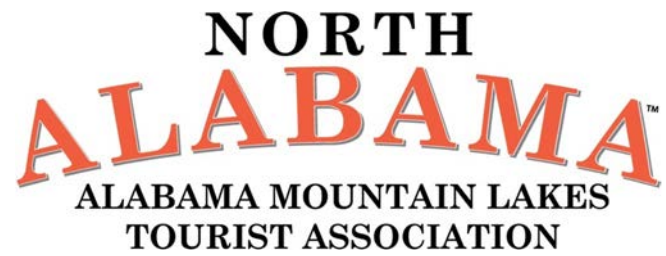
**NORTH**  
**ALABAMA**<sup>™</sup>  
**ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES**  
**TOURIST ASSOCIATION**



**GUEST PRESENTER**

**Dr. Rachael Carter**

Extension Specialist II Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Center  
for Government and Community Development.



**1st QUARTER 2024-2025**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AMLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Thank you for attending.**

AMLA January Quarterly Board  
Meeting Feedback Survey 2025

