



## **Guidelines for Site Marketing & Communications Plans**

Division Action Strategy #4: Increase public awareness, participation and support by enhancing the image of Georgia's state parks and historic sites.

Goal: Working with internal and external partners, we will aggressively market our state's natural, cultural and recreational resources to gain public participation and support, increase volunteerism, tourism and economic development opportunities, and generate the greatest possible revenue return.

### **Step One – Assess Site Marketing Assets and Identify a Unique Selling Proposition**

A good way to start with the development of a site marketing & communications plan is to make a list of the "assets" which you think are important to market or communicate to your stakeholders (see below).

"Assets" are those natural, cultural or recreational resources that your site is managing and interpreting for the education and enjoyment of the public. There are many assets held in common by our parks and historic sites which must be marketed, but each site has its own special assets that set it apart from other sites and provide a "unique selling proposition" to use in its marketing and communications efforts. By assessing these site marketing resources, you will discover dynamic ways to present your site to the public that will encourage them to really appreciate your site and staff.

#### Natural assets could include:

- Lakes, streams, wetlands, estuaries or coastlines
- Scenic vistas or features
- Mountains or forests or swamps
- Plant or animal species and their habitats

#### Cultural assets could include:

- Historic or cultural resources such as C.C.C. facilities
- Museums or exhibits

#### Recreational assets could include:

- Interpretive programming or special events or festivals
- Outdoor challenge areas or ropes courses
- Recreational facilities ranging from Frisbee golf to boat ramps
- Fishing and water-based sports
- Golf courses or tennis courts
- Swimming pools or beaches
- Trails ranging from nature trails to backpacking
- Picnic areas and shelters
- Overnight accommodations ranging from primitive camping to lodge rooms
- Food service ranging from concession stands to trading posts to restaurants or catering services

## Step Two – Identify & Prioritize Marketing & Communications Objectives for Your Site

The division goal for marketing and communications is to “increase public awareness, participation and support by enhancing the image of Georgia’s state parks and historic sites.”

A more site-specific goal might be:

Working with internal and external partners, we will aggressively market our site’s natural, cultural and recreational resources to gain public participation and support, increase volunteerism, tourism and economic development opportunities, and generate the greatest possible revenue return.

Each site should use these division and site-specific goals to develop a set of prioritized, measurable marketing and communications objectives or outcomes that will help achieve its goals.

Measurable objectives or outcomes could include:

- Increasing day visitation and revenues
- Increasing overnight occupancy and revenues
- Achieving a higher level of sustainability (ratio of self-generated revenues/expenses)
- Increasing program participation
- Improving customer satisfaction
- Organizing a Friends Chapter or increasing the number of members
- Increasing the number of site volunteers, projects and hours

There are obviously lots of factors that will go into achieving these objectives or outcomes; however, effective marketing and communications strategies will play an important role.

## Step Three – Identify & Assess Current & Potential Stakeholders for Your Site

Identify and assess your site’s current and potential stakeholders and their origin (both internal and external), so you know who and where to target with your marketing and communications efforts; knowing this will help you determine which marketing and communications strategies to use and which will work most efficiently and effectively. Don’t overlook communications with your internal stakeholders – they can be your ambassadors in reaching your external stakeholders.

Possible internal stakeholders could include:

- Site associates
- Friends members, campground hosts and other volunteers
- Concessionaires and vendors
- Spherix call center and staff
- Interpreters and re-enactors
- Other parks & historic sites
- Division regions/sections
- Atlanta headquarters staff
- Other DNR divisions/programs

Possible external stakeholders could include:

- Day-use visitors
- Overnight guests
- Local businesses, chamber of commerce and/or economic development authority
- Travel industry, including local destination marketing organization/welcome center, regional travel association/tourism representative, and state tourism division and visitor information centers
- Legislators and local officials/government agencies
- Civic and community groups
- News/travel/outdoor media
- Educational groups such as schools, colleges and home schoolers
- Groups such as social, family reunions, youth or churches

Use random license plate surveys, guest records and other methods to determine the origin of your visitors so you know better where to target your marketing and communications efforts. As visitors and community members become aware of what we have to offer and participate at our sites, they will become stakeholders who will ultimately support our division's mission and vision.

#### **Step Four – Identify Marketing & Communications Strategies for Your Site**

Identify the marketing and communication strategies and messages that will work best to increase awareness of your site and participation among your potential stakeholders. Much of the “messaging” links back to the special assets and unique selling propositions for your site.

Possible marketing strategies could include:

- Listings or ads in travel guides/directories (local and regional)
- Listings or ads in camping guides/directories
- Display advertising in magazines and newspapers
- Direct marketing (mail/email)
- Consumer camping, lifestyle, travel and trade shows
- Special promotions to drive trial visitation to site
- Customer loyalty programs to increase repeat business and retention
- Familiarization tours for community leaders and media

Possible communications strategies could include:

- Newsletter
- Articles/publicity in magazines and newspapers
- Local TV/radio news coverage
- Appearances on local TV/cable/radio shows
- Guest columns in local newspapers and magazines
- Articles/notices in organization newsletters

Possible collateral strategies could include:

- Website/interactive marketing and links
- Brochure distribution at nearby sites, attractions, local welcome centers and state visitor centers
- On-site and off-site information displays/kiosks
- Display up-to-date posters and other information in cottages and information kiosks
- Display other promotional posters and banners, such as the group facilities or Friends posters and on-line reservation banners
- Highway trailblazer signage plan with regular inspections and replacements

Possible partnership strategies could include:

- Civic memberships and presentations
- Partnerships with local businesses, vendors or concessionaires
- Networking/relationship building

Possible programming marketing strategies could include:

- Thematic programming with calendar listings in media sources and websites
- Curriculum development (GPS) to improve educational visitation
- Classroom visits and presentations

There are several factors that will help determine which marketing and communications strategies will be most useful for your site, including availability of staff and funding, and whether the strategies are best implemented at the site or division level. Be creative in the use of your site staff, local partners and funding sources to leverage the possibilities.

Utilize the attached chart to outline the specific strategies to be implemented during the next fiscal year. Provide details about the tasks that will be necessary to implement each strategy, identify the financial and staff resources required, recommend by whom and when they should be implemented, and then prioritize them using an A, B, or C, with “A” being the highest.

### **Step Five – Identify Tracking/Results Measures for Marketing & Communications Strategies**

A good way to help decide which marketing and communications strategies will be the most effective and efficient is to take time during the planning process to determine how you will track and measure the results. If there is no fairly easy way to do this for some strategies, this may be a good reason to give them a lower priority and focus on implementing others (“lower hanging fruit”). Ultimately, tracking and measuring results is necessary to help us be accountable and to give us feedback on how successful our strategies are and whether to continue them. Measuring results is often difficult, but at the very least, you should track the implementation methods or tasks performed as part of a strategy. There will be lots of trial and error as our division figures out how to do this best. We will get better and better as we put best business practices into effect.

# Marketing 101

## Marketing:

The act or process of selling or purchasing in a market b: the process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service.

an aggregate of functions involved in moving goods from producer to consumer.

## The four P's:

### PRODUCT

- \* the physical features of the product, or the intangible aspects of the service
- \* covers things you do to make the product more attractive to buy

### PLACE

- \* decisions about where to sell the product
- \* or concerns about where the customers are, and how to get to them
- \* also includes the "channel of distribution" - meaning, all the different middlemen you use to get the product out to the customer

### PROMOTION

- \* telling the customer about the product
- \* promotion is typically sub-divided into
  - o Mass Selling
    - + Advertising - which you pay for
    - + Publicity - which is free
  - o Sales Promotion
    - + stuff you do in the store to get the customer to try the product
    - + contests, coupons, free samples
  - o Personal Selling
    - + direct contact person2person with a potential customer
    - + sometimes for large industrial sales
    - + sometimes for high quality consumer products, like selling a car

### PRICE

- \* are you going to sell at a high price and make a lot of profit in the short term
- \* are you going to sell at a low price to beat the competition and stay in the long term



## Marketing and Public Information Unit

### **Marketing & Public Information Manager**

Sally Winchester      Sally\_winchester@dnr.state.ga.us      404-656-0559  
Overall management of the unit      404-895-6301(cell)  
Coordination of major campaigns/agency relationships  
Partnership development & fundraising  
Liaison with Georgia tourism industry

### **Public Affairs Coordinator**

Kim Hatcher      KimH@dnr.state.ga.us      404-657-9855  
Publicity & media relations  
Copywriting, content, & editing of brochures, websites, & ads  
Calendar & site listings in various publications  
Internal communications  
Liaison with other DNR public relations staff

### **Publications & Website Coordinator**

Linda Patrick      Linda\_patrick@dnr.state.ga.us      404-657-9854  
Collateral design & printing  
Advertising creative & production  
Website development coordination  
Graphic design support

### **Marketing Coordinator**

Kenzie Jardina      Kenzie\_Jardina@dnr.state.ga.us      404-656-9858  
Coordination of site marketing & promotion projects  
Advertising fulfillment, brochure distribution & warehouse inventory  
Internet marketing & customer loyalty programs  
Liaison with state visitor centers & regional tourism reps  
Tracking performance measures, results & fulfillment  
Utilization of customer marketing databases  
Update/maintenance of displays for shows & exhibits  
Travel, camping, lifestyle & golf shows

### **Outside Agency/Consultant Support**

TedCo Worldwide – Advertising & PR agency for parks and historic sites, including lodge parks  
Crossroads Marketing – Advertising & PR agency for golf courses

## Quick and Dirty Marketing Plan

Product (or service):

Target Market:

Goals: (specific and measurable)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Strategies:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Placement:

Promotion:

Monthly Tactics

January:

February:

March:

April:

May:

June:

July:

August:

September:

October:

November:

December:



## **Brochure Request Form**

Return to: Sharon Addison, Georgia State Parks &  
Historic Sites

2 MLK Jr. Dr., Suite 1352, Atlanta, GA  
30334

404-656-2770 or **Fax 404-651-5871**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping Address (no P.O. Boxes) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose/method of brochure distribution \_\_\_\_\_

Check Below		# of Boxes Requested	Internal Use Only: Date Shipped
	72-page "Guide to Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites" (150 in a box)		
	"Guide to Georgia State Park Golf Courses" (500 in a box)		

**Rack Cards:** Site-specific cards are available for state parks & historic sites. Please fill in the grid below for rack cards. If you would like rack cards from more than six different sites, please call.

Check Below	Park/Historic Site	# of Packages Requested (200/pkg.)	Internal Use Only: Date Shipped

**Thank you for helping promote Georgia's State Parks & Historic Sites!**

Delivery may take 2-3 weeks. Because of demand and inventory fluctuations, we may not be able to fulfill the entire amount requested.

A division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.  
Updated 1/07



## TALKING WITH THE MEDIA

### **Do:**

Return phone calls within one hour whenever possible.

Be helpful and honest.

Admit when you don't know something and suggest someone who should know, or offer to get the answer and call them back.

Admit when you cannot discuss something. Refer them to someone who can help or tell them you will get back to them when you can discuss it.

Talk slowly enough to give the reporter time to take notes.

Get to know your local media. Write them, stop by to drop off a news release, invite them to visit, etc.

Offer to write a regular column or be regular guest.

### **Don't:**

Lie. The truth will eventually come out.

Avoid media. They will get the information somehow.

Say "No comment." It will appear that you are hiding something.

Talk off the record. Even if the reporter promises not to quote you, you are never off the record.

Talk badly about someone, be sarcastic or make sexist, racist, etc. comments – even jokingly.

Offer your personal opinion if it differs from your department's position or is not supported by the facts.

Ask to approve a story before it's printed. (It's okay to ask a reporter to repeat information during an interview to check accuracy.)

### **Appropriate Answers for Difficult Questions:**

I'm not qualified to answer that; you need to ask . . .

The matter is under investigation so the answer isn't available yet.

That's not relevant (if it isn't) so I don't want to get involved in that.

I speak only for Parks and Historic Sites; you need to talk to . . .



## ADDING SPECIAL EVENTS TO THE WEBSITE (WWW.GEORGIASTATEPARKS.ORG)

For special event questions, contact Linda Patrick: Linda\_patrick@dnr.state.ga.us or 404-657-9854.

### **Before you can add events, you need to set up an account for yourself.**

#### **Set Up an Account**

- At the bottom right of <http://www.GeorgiaStateParks.org> click "Sign In."
- Go to "Create Account" – Use your office address and e-mail.
- You will quickly receive a User Name and Password via e-mail. Write this down for future use; however, you may request a password reminder at any time from this website.
- Contact Linda Patrick to have your website access level increased to "staff" and to change your password if you would like a new one. Once you receive a confirmation, you will be able to add events.

#### **Add Events to the Calendar**


- Log on with your new User Name and Password.
- Go to your site's page (found in "Select a Park to Visit" near the top of the home page).
- Scroll down and look in the right-hand column. Click "Add Event." You must be logged on to see this link.
- Fill out all fields on this page:

**Add a new event or edit an existing event at this location** – This field defaults to New Event. With this menu you can create a new event OR select an event you've already entered into the system. If you select an existing event, you will be able to add another day or change existing dates. When adding new dates to an existing event that has NOT yet occurred, be sure that you do not accidentally delete upcoming dates that you want to keep.

**Event Title** – Use uppercase and lowercase (not all capital) letters.

**Description** – Be concise and specific, telling exactly what visitors will see or do. Tips:

- List large events rather than small daily programs.
- Don't waste space with sentences that do not describe the event and are over-used, such as:
  - Come on out and enjoy . . .
  - Fun for the whole family . . .
  - My State Park invites your family to join them for . . .
- Avoid being cutesy or using exclamation points.

**Event Dates** – This field has this graphic  next to it. If you click on the graphic it becomes a calendar. You can select dates using this graphic. Click the ">" to see another month.

There are only 3 date fields. If you have more than three days to add for an event with multiple days, check the box that says "Add Additional Dates" before clicking the continue button. This will take you to a page where you may add more days.

**Event Phone Number** – You must fill out this field, even if the phone number shows in the description. Otherwise, it will kick back to you when you select Continue.

**Parking Fee** – This field defaults to \$2 parking. Historic sites or parks waiving the ParkPass fee should select "No Parking Fee."

**Event Fee Description** – Follow the same format used throughout the calendar. For simplicity, this format does not make distinctions between "adult" or "child" fees; it just shows a range. Leave blank if the program is free. Do not include vendor fees.

**BEFORE SELECTING "CONTINUE," BE SURE TO PROOF YOUR ENTRY.**

**Try to make all final changes before clicking "continue."**

Select **Continue** when you're finished. The next page you see is a summary of your event. You've finished entering your event and can return to the homepage.

Events posted on our website will automatically be posted on the [www.georgia.org](http://www.georgia.org) calendar managed by the Georgia Department of Economic Development. Sites no longer have to post their events on both calendars.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How are the online events publicized?**

The Marketing Unit uses the website calendar to help promote your programs year-round. Events are copied off the website and sent to numerous magazines about 3 months in advance. This same calendar is sent to all Georgia newspapers and some radio stations about 1 month in advance. If your event is posted at least 3 months in advance, it will be included. Likewise, if an event is cancelled, you need to notify the Marketing Unit so it can be removed from the website and these calendars.

Additionally, the website calendar is printed in the annual *Guide to State Parks & Historic Sites* at the beginning of the year. Space is limited, so not all events are included.

### **Why is the description limited in size?**

The website calendar is used in many ways, so brevity and consistency are important. Because the calendar is sent to newspaper editors, it must follow standard calendar formats. Space is usually limited, so brief descriptions are best.

### **Why was my event edited after I posted it?**

Event listings are edited to ensure consistency with the rest of the calendar, to eliminate duplication of information, and to avoid possible typos, grammatical errors, misspellings, etc.

## Sample Calendar Announcement

Print on site letterhead or BLIND COPY e-mail.

This format (rather than a longer news release) is preferred for most events.

**Today's date, including year**

**Media Contact:** Your Name, Your Title  
Phone Number and E-mail

Always include a name and phone number, as well as today's date. If sending by e-mail, you can put this at the end of your release.

**Event Title Goes Here**

If sending by e-mail, put the event title and date in the Subject Line. Put everything else in the message box. Do not send attachments.

**EVENT TITLE:** Half-Day Wilderness Hike

**DATE:** Saturday, March 19, 2007 (always include the year)

**TIME:** 9 a.m. – Noon

**LOCATION:** Panola Mountain State Conservation Park  
2600 Hwy. 155  
Stockbridge, Ga.

**COST:** \$1 per person, plus \$3 parking. (NEVER put "Regular admission.")

**DESCRIPTION:** This moderately strenuous, four-mile hike will take visitors through a variety of habitats, including hardwood and pine forests, a river and 100-acre granite outcrop. Bring hiking shoes, layered clothing, snacks and water. Register before March 10. Panola Mountain is a granite mountain often compared to Stone Mountain and Arabia Mountain. The park features hiking trails, an interpretive center, picnic areas and a playground.

**INFORMATION:** 770-389-7801 or [www.gastateparks.org](http://www.gastateparks.org)

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**Tips:** When sending e-mails to media, put your entire message in the text box. Some newsrooms do not allow employees to open attachments. Put your event title (not "press release") in the subject line. Always put reporters' e-mail addresses in the "Blind Copy" box so their addresses remain private. You can put your own email address in the "To" box.

# Sample E-mail News Release

Use this format when sending by E-mail. Always “blind copy.”  
For most events, use the Calendar Announcement sample instead of this.

**SUBJECT LINE: Short and Catchy Title Goes Here**

You don't need to say “News Release” because editors will know what this is, if it is formatted correctly.

**MESSAGE BOX:**

Do not send your release as an attachment. Put it inside the message box.

**Your Town, Ga., August 5, 2007** – First, the basics: If you are sending this to more than one reporter, put their addresses in the Blind Copy field. Put your own e-mail address in the “To” field. This ensures their privacy. Include one space between paragraphs. Less is more; do not send numerous press releases or editors will begin to ignore you. If you have several programs in a month, send them all at once.

Because editors get numerous press releases, you are competing for their attention. They rarely have time to read lengthy articles, so an effective press release grabs their attention in the first few sentences. When promoting an event, make sure the title, location, date and time are in the first paragraph. **If your event does not need a lengthy description, use the calendar format rather than news release format.** In most cases, you should use the calendar format.

Although many smaller newspapers write in a casual style, you should be as professional as possible when sending press releases. Ask yourself if the story is truly newsworthy to the paper's readers. Keep your press release short. Avoid being too cutesy and proof your work carefully. Most importantly, avoid sending too many press releases because you could cause the editor to stop paying attention to mailings from the DNR. If you want to promote several events during one month, send all your calendar announcements together. The more professional and helpful you are, the more they will use your releases.

It is important to always follow standard formats for press releases, calendar announcements and PSAs. Notice that this sample is not written in ALL-CAPS. A contact name and number should always go at the top or bottom; never make the editor read through the release to find your telephone number. The date and year are important as well.

End with standard information about your site, such as location, cost, website and phone number. Here is a good example: The Little White House draws more than 110,000 visitors annually, more than any other Georgia state historic site. It is located ¼ mile south of Warm Springs on Hwy. 27 Alt. Admission is \$5 - \$7. For more information, visit [www.gastateparks.org/info/littlewhite/](http://www.gastateparks.org/info/littlewhite/) or call 706-655-5870. Georgia's state historic sites are operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Always end with  
### or -END-

###

Never say “regular admission fee” because few people know how much that would be. Be specific. Also, give directions rather than asking people to call for directions. People are busy and appreciate not having to work for information.

**Media Contact:**

Your Name, Your Title  
phone number  
[email@dnr.state.ga.us](mailto:email@dnr.state.ga.us)

Always include  
this contact  
information.

Never send a press release without ALL of this contact information.

## Sample Printed News Release

Print on site letterhead. For e-mails, see Sample E-mail News Release  
For most events, use the Calendar Announcement sample instead of this.

### Media Contact:

Your Name, Your Title  
phone number  
[email@dnr.state.ga.us](mailto:email@dnr.state.ga.us)

You don't need to say "News Release" because editors will know what this is, if it is formatted correctly.

Always include your town and today's date.

## Short and Catchy Title Goes Here

**Your Town, Ga., February 5, 2007** – Because editors get numerous press releases, you are competing for their attention. They rarely have time to read lengthy articles, so an effective press release grabs their attention in the first few sentences. When promoting an event, make sure the title, location, date and time are in the first paragraph. If your event does not need a lengthy description, use the calendar format rather than news release format.

Although many smaller newspapers write in a casual style, you should be as professional as possible when sending press releases. Ask yourself if the story is truly newsworthy to the paper's readers. Keep your press release short. Avoid being too cutesy and proof your work carefully. Most importantly, avoid sending too many press releases because you could cause the editor to stop paying attention to mailings from the DNR. If you want to promote several events during one month, send all your calendar announcements together rather than in numerous envelopes. The more professional and helpful you are, the more they will use your releases.

It is important to always follow standard formats for press releases, calendar announcements and PSAs. Notice that this news release is not single-spaced, allowing room for the editor to make notes. A contact name and number should always go at the top or bottom; never make the editor read through the release to find your telephone number. The date and year are important as well, especially if the release becomes lost in the newsroom.

End with standard information about your site, such as location, cost, website and phone number. Here is a good example: The Little White House draws more than 110,000 visitors annually, more than any other Georgia state historic site. It is located ¼ mile south of Warm Springs on Hwy. 27 Alt. Admission is \$5 - \$7. For more information, visit [www.fdr-littlewhitehouse.org](http://www.fdr-littlewhitehouse.org) or call 706-655-5870. Georgia's state historic sites are operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Do not say "regular admission fee" because few people know how much that would be. Be specific. Also, give directions rather than asking people to call for directions. People are busy and appreciate not having to work for information.

###

Always end with  
### or -END-

## Sample Public Service Announcement

print on site letterhead

### Media Contact:

Your Name, Your Title  
Phone and Email

PSAs are for radio stations only. Use them for events, to announce opening dates for facilities, etc. The information should be a public service; not an advertisement for your site.

### **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

Run until November 25, 2007

### Title or Name of Event Goes Here

This refers to the number of seconds it takes to read aloud. Choose :30 or :60

:30

TYPE YOUR PSA IN ALL-CAPS, INCLUDE A LARGE MARGIN TO THE LEFT AND DOUBLE SPACE IT. READ IT ALOUD TO MAKE SURE IT IS EASY TO READ AND LASTS 30 OR 60 SECONDS. HERE IS A NICE EXAMPLE: INDIAN HERITAGE WILL BE CELEBRATED SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, AT BEST STATE PARK IN SAVANNAH. FROM 9 A.M. UNTIL 5 P.M., CREEK INDIANS WILL DEMONSTRATE TRADITIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN CRAFTS AND AN ARCHEOLOGIST WILL IDENTIFY ARTIFACTS BROUGHT IN BY VISITORS. ADMISSION IS FREE AND PARKING IS \$3. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL BEST STATE PARK AT 404-656-3550 OR VISIT GEORGIA STATE PARKS DOT ORG.

###

All PSAs, press releases and calendars should end with ### or END.