MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the TLC is to provide a unified group with committed leadership pledged to promote, protect and serve the interests of the tourism and hospitality industries of the greater Savannah area.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

President
Jack Bussert, River Street Inn

Vice President
Mark Spadoni, Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa

Treasurer
Mitch Linder, Holiday Inn Express/Hampton Inn Historic District

Secretary
Fran Harold, Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace

At–Large
Greg Kelly, Savannah/ H.H. International Airport

At–Large
Mark Dana, Prince–Bush–Smith Hotels

Immediate Past President
Whip Triplett, North Point Hospitality

Directors

Charlie Brazil, Old Town Trolley Tours
Jim Cone, Georgia Power
Brendan Ferrara, Savannah Technical College
Marc Friday, Planters Inn on Reynolds Square
Lindsay Fruchtli, Tybee Island Tourism Council
Marcie Hill, City Market
Sandy Hollander, 45 bistro
Marty Johnston, City of Savannah
John Katz, Savannah Sand Gnats
Paul Kennedy, Paul Kennedy Catering
Sarah Lamar, Hunter Maclean
Jody McIntyre, Savannah Marriott Riverfront
Matt Meece, Savannah Theatre
Michael Plummer, Yates–Astro
Diane Rousakis, United Distributors, Inc.
Scott Snipes, Hyatt Regency Savannah
Ansley Williams, Live Oak Restaurants

Past Presidents

Charlie Brazil (2010), Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah
Mark Dana (2009), Prince–Bush–Smith Hotels
Marcie Hill (2004–2005), City Market
Sandy Hollander (2002–2003), 45 bistro
Jody McIntyre (2007–2008), Savannah Marriott Riverfront
Michael Plummer (2005–2006), Yates–Astro
Mark Spadoni (2003–2004), Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa
Whip Triplett (2011) North Point Hospitality

TOURISM LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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www.tourismleadershipcouncil.com • www.tasteofsavannah.org • www.jobsinsavannah.com
History of the Organization

In 1997, seven tourism and hospitality professionals had a vision to establish an organization that would support the local tourism industry with programs, scholarships, and other projects. Thirty-seven businesses contributed $1000 each to provide seed money for the organization, and the first TLC meeting was held in July 1998.

Membership

In 2012, the TLC retained membership and brought in new members, growing our membership to more than 250 businesses (see below). The TLC enjoys a diverse membership, including lodging properties, restaurants, food and beverage distributors, caterers, tour companies, museums, retail shops, printers, banks, non-profit associations, law offices, and many other companies who are touched by the tourism industry.

With a staff of three, the non-profit professional association continually strives to provide members with resources to strengthen their businesses. These resources include networking opportunities for industry professionals, advocacy efforts on behalf of the industry, educational seminars and training for industry employees, workforce development initiatives, monthly luncheons with informative topics, job fairs and a job-listing website, and an emergency fund available for members in times of crisis. The TLC is dedicated to leading the way for greater tourism in Savannah and strives to ensure that the needs of the local tourism industry are being addressed.

2012 Tourism Leadership Council Members

1. 17 Hundred 90 Inn & Restaurant
2. 24e
3. 45 bistro
4. AAA Parking
5. Adventure Radio Group
6. Advertising Specialty Services
7. Aloha Janitorial Services
8. AlphaGraphics
9. Ambos Seafoods, LLC
10. American Diabetes Association
11. American Red Cross
12. America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia
13. Ameris Bank
14. ANDAZ Savannah
15. Andrew Low House
16. Arc Media Group
17. Azalea Inn
18. Azelle Photography
19. B. Matthews Eatery
20. Baymont Inn
21. Belfor Property Restoration
22. Belford's Savannah Seafood & Steaks
23. Best Western Plus - Savannah Historic District
24. Blowin Smoke BBQ
25. Blue Focus Media
26. Bluegreen Resorts
27. Boar's Head Grill & Tavern
28. BowStern Marketing & Communications
29. Bradbury Suites
30. Chart House
31. Churchill's Pub
32. City Market
33. City of Savannah
34. Classic Party Rentals
35. Clear Channel Media + Entertainment
36. Club One Jefferson/The Bay Cafe
37. Coastal Heritage Society
38. Coastal Insurance Partners
39. Cobblestone Connections
40. Comfort Suites Historic District
41. Cosmos Mariner Productions
42. Country Inn & Suites
43. Country Inn & Suites - Savannah Airport
44. Country Inn & Suites Savannah-Midtown
45. Courtyard By Marriott Savannah Historic District
46. Creative Catering
47. Creative Peanut
48. Crosspointe Interactive
49. Crosswinds Golf Club
50. Crystal Beer Parlor
51. Cumulus Broadcasting
52. Desoto Beach Bed & Breakfast
53. Desoto Beach Hotel
54. DeVivo Marketing, LLC
55. Discovery Maps
56. Doubletree Hotel Historic Savannah
57. Downtown Business Association
58. East Bay Inn
59. Eat It and Like It.com
60. Eliza Thompson House
61. Elizabeth on 37th
62. Embassy Suites Savannah Airport
63. Empire Distributors, Inc.
64. Fairfield Inn by Marriott
65. Fiddler's Crab House
66. Four Points by Sheraton Historic Savannah
67. Friends of Cockspur Island Lighthouse
Networking socials and membership luncheons were a top priority to many of our members as we prefer to do business with those whom we have relationships. Each month, about 120 business professionals gathered at membership luncheons to network and listen to speakers discuss a variety of issues related to the tourism and hospitality industry. Not only did these offer our members opportunities to network, but it also allows them opportunities to distribute promotional and marketing materials. The TLC scholarship fund proceeds were raised through raffle ticket sales at each membership luncheon. Our programs committee worked hard this year to provide relevant, quality programs for our membership. We gave our members the opportunity to showcase their culinary talents throughout the year in hosting these events. We hosted 10 luncheons this year and experienced some of the highest attendance rates ever.
Education & Workforce Development

The TLC continued to build on educational opportunities internally and externally. We continued our intern program during 2012. Throughout the year, four students, one from Georgia Southern University, one from Savannah Technical College, and two from the University of South Carolina – Beaufort, experienced the tourism and hospitality industry while assisting with TLC events and programs.

This year, the TLC jointly hosted a hospitality job fair with Savannah Technical College. The Workforce Development committee began planning for additional events in 2013 to include a hospitality job fair and internship and mentoring opportunities for members.

Seminars and training opportunities that were presented to the membership this year included a dynamic customer service training provided by “Twitchy,” ServSafe food and beverage training, and two Front Line Training programs. The TLC’s free Mobility Front Line Training program, featuring Savannah Technical College instructors, was offered in order to educate industry employees on how to get around in Savannah, highlighting the ‘dot’ system. To date, more than 300 people have gone through the program.

The Tourism Leadership Council continued to partner with Savannah Technical College. We were involved on the advisory board of the school’s hospitality program and served as a liaison between the educational institutions and the industry.

Through the support of raffle monies raised at monthly luncheons and fundraisers throughout the year, the TLC was able to award scholarships to students pursuing higher education in culinary and hospitality careers. Scholarships were awarded at the Annual Tourism Awards & Scholarship Dinner in February to students enrolled in University of South Carolina – Beaufort and Savannah Technical College. To date we have awarded more than $50,000 in scholarships.

The TLC’s jobsinsavannah.com website enjoys a strong partnership with Savannahjobs.com for the management and promotion of the site. A great benefit to membership is the free job posting each month to assist in staff recruitment efforts. Also, TLC members have the option to post additional jobs at a significant discount through this website.
Fundraisers

Fundraising Events

The TLC’s three fundraising events provide financial support for the programs and activities of the organization each year. They also provide exposure opportunities for businesses and a fun time for everyone involved! Not only did each fundraiser experience financial growth over last year, but we also focused heavily on improving the flow of the events and streamlining the volunteer process for our many volunteers.

On Thursday, February 16, 2012, the TLC hosted its 14th Annual Tourism Awards & Scholarship Dinner at the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center. Several awards were presented and scholarships were administered to five students pursuing careers in the hospitality industry at local area schools. The John P. Rousakis Community Champion Award went to Fran Harold of the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace. The Herb & Franklin Traub Visionary Award was presented to Walter O. Evans. Kimberly Philips of City Market took home the TLC Member of the Year Award.

The 14th Annual TLC Golf Tournament, sponsored by Yates-Astro, took place on Monday, May 14, 2012, at Savannah Quarters Country Club, Belford’s Savannah Seafood & Steaks, Doubletree Hotel Historic Savannah, Moon River Brewing Company, Paul Kennedy Catering, Savannah Coca-Cola, Southern Eagle, Spanky’s River Street, The Olde Pink House, and Wild Wing Café provided food and beverage. Through the support of team entries and sponsorships, the tournament was able to net more than $22,000.

The TLC’s 12th Annual Taste of Savannah® – In partnership with Savannah Waterfront, presented by U.S. Foods, took place on Thursday, November 8, 2012 in the Savannah International Trade & Convention Center’s Exhibit Hall. Twenty restaurants and caterers served samples of their favorite menu items to more than 500 guests and competed for awards presented by SYSCO. The event net nearly $50,000.

Savannah – A Southern Journey

The Tourism Leadership Council produced the third edition of the Savannah – A Southern Journey coffee table book in 2011. The book is intended to serve as a guide to visitors and is placed in more than 5,500 guest rooms in the Savannah area. This year, the book became available for retail purchase at four local retail shops. The 2012 Savannah – A Southern Journey book was designed and developed throughout 2012. The book is hard cover and includes advertisements, editorial, and photography.

As an addition to the Savannah – A Southern Journey project we created and implemented the 2012 Savannah – A Southern Journey Concierge Dining Directory. This book is placed in the lobbies of more than 50 participating hotels in the Savannah area and includes menus and photography from Savannah restaurants.
Advocacy & Community Involvement

Legislative and governmental affairs continued to be a focus and high priority this year. The TLC worked hard to create a greater awareness both to and for the industry in the legislative arena.

The TLC hosted a "Welcome Home" thank you reception for our Chatham County state legislators at 45 bistro. We also provided forums where local government candidates spoke about their views regarding issues specifically affecting Savannah’s tourism industry.

The momentum of the TLC continues to grow strong by working together on projects with other community organizations. The TLC represented the tourism industry through involvement with the following organizations, committees, and task forces including:

- American Red Cross
- Blood Alliance
- City of Savannah Arena Advisory Committee
- Coastal Workforce Investment Board
- Cruise Ship Exploratory Committee
- Dress for Success
- Georgia Restaurant Association (GRA)
- Georgia Southern University Eagle Fund Delegate Committee
- Hospitality Advisory Committee at Savannah Tech & Woodville Tompkins
- Junior League of Savannah
- Paint the Town Red Committee – Savannah Red Cross
- Pooler Chamber of Commerce
- Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Savannah Development & Renewal Authority (SDRA)
- Savannah Downtown Business Association
- Savannah Riverfront
- Savannah Tree Foundation
- South of DeRenne Association (SODA)
- Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Visit Savannah
- Westside Business Network

The TLC supported the community with various charitable donations and events throughout the year. The TLC hosted two blood drives with the Blood Alliance and the American Red Cross. The TLC Community Happenings email blast continued to promote charity events taking place in Savannah. The TLC Good Samaritan Fund paid out $250 to assist individual TLC members in need this year.
2012 TLC HIGHLIGHTS — MONTH BY MONTH

January
- Participated in Savannah Chatham Day in Atlanta – bronze sponsorship
- Participated in Tourism Day in Atlanta
- Hospitality Job Fair hosted with Savannah Technical College
- Training – ServSafe Course “Managers Certification Course”
  - Membership Luncheon – Hilton Savannah DeSoto – Mayor Edna Jackson talked about her commitment to tourism.

February
- 14th Annual Tourism Awards & Scholarship Dinner – Savannah International Trade & Convention Center – The event net nearly $12,000.
- Membership Social/SASJ Book Launch Party – Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa
- Training – ServSafe Course – “Employee Food Safety Training Course”

March
- Membership Luncheon – Savannah River Queen served a Civil War inspired lunch while Maria Sastre, Chief Operating Officer of Global Affairs for Signature Flight Support, shared her unique perspective on the cruise industry from her previous role as a former cruise ship industry executive.

April
- Membership Social – Ruth’s Chris Steak House
- Training – Frontline Mobility Training – The Mulberry Inn

May
- Membership Social – 45 bistro – Welcome home reception given for State legislators returning from Atlanta.
- Training –Tourism Service and Sales Mastery Training, “Twitchy”
- The Blood Alliance Blood Drive at AVIA

June
- Membership Luncheon – Savannah Marriott – Brett Bell with the City of Savannah presented marketing ideas.
- Membership Social – Massie Heritage Center

July
- Membership Luncheon – Richmond Hill City Center – Chris Sheppard with the Richmond Hill Convention and Visitor’s Bureau presented, “Get the Scoop on Savannah’s Own Backyard: Richmond Hill.”

August
- TLC Board volunteer day with Savannah Tree Foundation
- Membership Social – Uncle Bubba’s Seafood and Oyster House
- Training – Bar Card Training by Jim Deal with ProActive Control Systems, Inc.

September
- Participated in Governor’s Conference on Tourism in Atlanta, GA
- Membership Social – Churchill’s Pub & Restaurant

October
- Membership Luncheon – Bryson Hall – Chatham County Commission candidates forum
- Training – Frontline Mobility Training at The Mulberry Inn
November
  o  12th Annual Taste of Savannah® – Savannah International Trade & Convention Center – more than 500 attendees and the event net nearly $50,000
  o  Membership Luncheon – Hampton Inn & Suites - Midtown – Yelp’s Kathleen McNeill presented on the benefits of managing your online presence.

December
  o  Membership holiday reception with Visit Savannah and Savannah Riverfront – Vic’s On the River proceeds contributed to America’s Second Harvest
  o  TLC Board Retreat – The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa