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**TRAVEL SOUTH USA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECT NEW OFFICERS AND  
ADOPT MARKETING PLANS FOR FY 2007-2008**

**Official Agenda included new marketing initiatives, research,  
Showcase enhancements and “Ultimate Advertising Challenge”**

**Atlanta (July 23, 2007)** – Travel South USA recently held its annual board meeting in Key West, Florida to set course for the next 12 months. The organization installed newly elected Commissioner of Tourist Development Susan Whitaker (TN) as Chair of the Travel South Board of Directors. Whitaker, in her fifth year as Tennessee’s travel chief, has served on various committees on the board since 2003.

"On behalf of the entire Board, we are delighted that Commissioner Susan Whitaker has been elected to serve as the next Chairman of the Board," said Bud Nocera, President and CEO for VISIT FLORIDA, the state’s official tourism marketing corporation. "I have had the privilege to serve with Susan and believe her marketing expertise is an asset to the organization. Her leadership skills present our group with opportunities that allow us to maximize the regional programming that serves the twelve southern states."

Whitaker said, "It is indeed an honor for me to be selected by my peers to take the leadership role at Travel South. This organization is significant to our region and I am proud to be a part of it as we tirelessly promote tourism in the southeast."

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Other Executive Committee members include:

- Vice Chairman – Chad Prosser, Agency Director,  
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism
- Secretary - Craig Ray, Director, Mississippi Development Authority  
Tourism Division
- Treasurer - Betty Carver, Commissioner, West Virginia Division of Tourism
- Past Chair - Bud Nocera, President & CEO, VISIT FLORIDA

New Committee chairs include:

- Web Marketing Committee Chair Lynn Minges, Executive Director  
North Carolina Division of Tourism,
- Sales & Promotion Committee Chair Alisa Bailey, President & CEO,  
Virginia Tourism Corporation
- Public Relations Committee Chair Randy Fiveash, Commissioner  
Kentucky Division of Tourism
- Showcase Committee Chair Craig Ray, Director, Mississippi Development  
Authority Tourism Division

This elite group of destination marketing experts adopted an integrated marketing plan that includes web marketing, advertising, sales and public relations aimed at the affluent consumers in Canada. Aristotle WebDesign (Little Rock, Ark.) and Edelman Worldwide (Atlanta and Toronto) were named official agencies of record. In 2006, more than 5 million Canadians visited the southern USA. Travel South USA and its partner states are targeting these visitors to generate revenue and extended stays in the southern states. Travel South also retained Research International (Toronto) to provide a focus group study testing the 2007-2008 advertising campaign.

Travel South Showcase, a core program for Travel South USA, was high on the list of priorities for 2007/08. A strong marketing and recruitment campaign along with impressive Signature Events will showcase the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Travel South Showcase 2008 will take place March 1-5, 2008 in Biloxi-Gulfport, Mississippi.

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Finally, to continue to take the lead as the southern tourism organization dedicated to regional marketing, Travel South USA will hold the Second Annual Ultimate Advertising Challenge will be held January 22-24, 2008 in Atlanta, Ga. This unique advertising forum is the only program where state tourism agencies come to the table with incremental monies to cooperatively buy regional advertising. Last year, the 12 states spent more than \$500,000 in one day. In 2008, the program will expand to include advertising opportunities in the Mid-West, Texas and Canada.

Travel South USA is America's oldest and largest regional travel promotion organization, formed in 1965 by resolution presented at the Southern Governor's Conference by the Southern Travel Directors Council. As the Official Destination Regional Marketing Organization for the south, its mission is to promote, foster and encourage travel to and within the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. For more information, visit [www.TravelSouthUSA.com](http://www.TravelSouthUSA.com) for consumers and [www.TravelSouthUSA.org](http://www.TravelSouthUSA.org) for travel trade programs.

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