

2008 Mississippi-Alabama Rural Tourism Conference

Monday, October 27, 2008

Pre-Conference Tour (optional) & Reception

Tuesday, October 28, 2008

8:00 Registration

8:30 Welcome -- Mayor Robert Smith

8:45 Keynote Robert St. John
Chef, Columnist, Author, and Restaurant Owner
Hattiesburg, MS

9:45 Breakout Sessions (2)

Culinary Tourism

Neil Ravenna
Miss Melissa's Café, Chef & Manager
Moundville, AL

Agri-Tourism Marketing

Bricklee Miller
Mississippi Horse Park
Starkville, MS

10:30 Break

10:45 Breakout Sessions (2) [repeat of 9:45 sessions]

11:30 General Session

Exhibitor Introductions

Open Discussion of Success Stories

10 Ideas in 10 Minutes

James Tsismanakis
Columbus/Lowndes Convention & Visitors Bureau
Columbus, MS

12:00 Luncheon

1:30 Keynote

Working with Your Legislators

Mike Cashion
Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association and AL
Lobbyist
Flowood, MS

Robert Hendrix
Alabama Tourism & Dothan Convention & Visitors Bureau
Dothan, AL

2:30 Breakout Sessions (2)

Rural Tourism Success Story

William Thomas Polk
Tourism Entrepreneur
Clarksdale, MS

Myspace, Yourspace (blogging)

Robert Ratliff, Executive Director
Tuscaloosa Convention & Visitors Bureau
Tuscaloosa, AL

3:15 Break

3:30 Breakout Sessions (2) [repeat of 2:30 sessions]

4:15 Free Time

6:00 Reception -- Juke Joint Party

7:00 Dine Around

Wednesday, October 29, 2008

8:30 Welcome

8:45 Keynote

Culinary Tourism: 100 Best Places to Eat in Alabama

Lee Sentell
Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel
Montgomery, AL

9:45 Breakout Sessions (2)

Using Festivals to Showcase Your Community

Jan Miller
Mississippi Main Street Association
Columbus, MS

Retirement Development

Diana O'Toole, Coordinator
Hometown Mississippi Retirement Program
Jackson, MS

10:30 Break

10:45 Breakout Sessions (2) [repeat of 9:45 sessions]

11:30 Keynote

Creative Marketing

Al Mathis, Owner
DeSoto Caverns
Childersburg, AL

12:15 Adjourn