

Mississippi Development Authority  
Tourism Division  
Meeting & Convention Development  
Marketing Action Plan  
FY 2008

Objectives

- Build a positive image of Mississippi as a meeting and convention destination
- Maintain an overall coordinated effort for meeting and convention promotion with an emphasis on building all Internet marketing opportunities
- Secure one major convention/meeting per year that offers prestige and substantial media coverage for Mississippi
- Support the renewal of the MS Gulf Coast meeting and convention market

Strategy I

- ★ Track and service the needs and requests of in-state and out-of-state meeting planners in search of a meeting site in Mississippi

Action Plans

- ✓ Continue meeting planner's resource guide to compliment meeting and convention website.
- ✓ Act as a resource to meeting planners for referral to appropriate agencies and professional meeting and

convention contacts

- ✓ Continue progressive marketing with the Incentive Program application and Request for Proposals on the Internet

## Strategy II

- ★ Develop a high level of awareness of Mississippi as a meeting and convention destination through participation in industry trade shows

## Action Plans

- ✓ In the International Market:
  - Attend and exhibit at Meeting Professionals International, WEC, Meeting Place Expo, July 28-31, 2007, Montreal, Canada; utilize pre-conference direct mail attendance builder; co-op booth space with industry partners
  - Attend and exhibit at Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, Affordable Meetings Tradeshow, September 5-6, 2007, Washington, D.C.; continue Marketing Partners co-op
  - Pursue Canadian Meeting and Incentive market with Lakeview Productions' internet banner ads and marketplace opportunities
  
- ✓ In the National Market:
  - Attend and exhibit at the American Society of Association Executives Annual Meeting and Exposition August 11-14, 2007, Chicago, IL; utilize pre-

conference direct mail attendance builder; sponsor exhibition floor luncheon and provide all wait staff with Mississippi aprons; co-op a booth with Marketing Partners

- Attend and exhibit at National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners' Annual Fall Tradeshow, November 28 - December 2, 2007, Miami, FL; review sponsorship opportunities

✓ In the Regional/State Market:

- Attend and exhibit at the Joint Conference and Tradeshow of Alabama Council of Association Executives and Mississippi Society of Association Executives, Oct. 7-9, 2007, Point Clear, AL; utilize pre-convention direct mail attendance builder; continue sponsorship to further recognition and awareness of Mississippi
- Attend and exhibit at the Louisiana Society of Association Executives Annual Tradeshow and Conference, (location and dates to be announced) meet buyers one-on-one and network with peers; utilize pre-conference direct mail attendance builder to qualified buyers; continue sponsorship to further recognition and awareness of Mississippi

### Strategy III

- ★ Support statewide Convention and Visitors Bureaus and emerging convention centers and venues in meeting and convention efforts and offer programs for the development of new prospects

### Action Plans

- ✓ Attend Alabama Council of Association Executives' Golf Outing, sponsor hole and open to all marketing partners
- ✓ Offer marketing and development consultation to all new convention/civic centers and their CVB partners
- ✓ Maintain local CVB and convention supplier mailing lists; distribute meeting and convention leads to tourism offices per client request; follow-up on location decisions
- ✓ Request changes/additions to Mississippi Meetings Profile Directory and mail out July 1, 2007 to participants and marketing partners
- ✓ Meet locally with tourism offices as requested to assist in the identification, development, and promotion of the meetings market. Purchase meeting and convention directories as needed for reference guide use.
- ✓ Staff to conduct sales calls in Nashville, TN and Atlanta, GA to secure leads in these major feeder markets and call on existing clients
- ✓ Pursue faith-based meetings for targeted areas of the state; attend Rejuvenate Marketplace, November 13-14, 2007, Houston, TX; consider renewal of co-op ad for Mississippi marketing partners

#### Strategy IV

- ★ Offer assistance to all meeting planners in search of a meeting site in Mississippi as well as conventions booked in State

## Action Plans

- ✓ Continue Convention Services for meetings held in Mississippi; produce promotional items to compliment meetings with Mississippi convention bags, lapel pins and brochures
- ✓ Promote Meeting and Convention Incentive Program with promotional brochure at tradeshow, direct mail, and Internet link
- ✓ Offer services for convention bid solicitation:
  - Facilitate invitation letter from Governor and MDA upon request
  - Provide video and brochures for site selection committee
  - Utilize generic brochure, lapel pins, and convention bags for convention services and attendance promotions based on availability and request
  - Serve on planning committees of conventions that offer prestige and image enhancement for Mississippi; serve as the meeting planner coordinator for Travel South Showcase 2008
  - Offer underwriting, sponsorship, staff support, or in-kind services for convention bids, conventions booked, or attendance promotions when of a prestigious nature
  - Offer Meeting and Convention Incentive Program for all groups that meet qualifications

## Strategy V

- ★ Maintain a high profile in associations where convention meeting planners are members

### Action Plans

- ✓ Maintain membership in the American Society of Association Executives for awareness and recognition; continue major tradeshow sponsorship for 2007 Annual Meeting
- ✓ Maintain membership in the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International to recruit national organizations' meetings to Mississippi
- ✓ Support the Gulf States chapter of Meeting Professionals International with participation in the World Education Congress and regional Chapter Meetings; sponsor meetings held in Mississippi
- ✓ Maintain membership in Mississippi's and surrounding states' Society of Association Executives: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee
- ✓ Maintain membership with the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners to attract the African-American meeting market

## Strategy VI

- ★ Expand Meeting Planners' awareness of Mississippi as a meeting site through various advertising mediums and high

profile meetings

### Action Plans

- ✓ Maintain advertising efforts in major resource directories, direct mail opportunities and Meeting and Convention programs on Internet; continue coverage in Convention South magazine as well as other ADV opportunities as available
- ✓ Follow-up to all advertising inquiries with Mississippi Meeting Guide; utilize MS Inquiry Center for fulfillment through 1-888-MEET-4-MS; utilize CD Rom of meeting images for travel writer and publication requests
- ✓ Work closely with state, regional and national publications/writers to further awareness of Mississippi's meeting product
- ✓ Continue to expand State website meeting planner options to include a full copy of the Meeting Planner's Guide; follow –up to all Internet driven Request For Proposals

### Strategy VII

- ★ Maintain participation in the Mississippi Tourism Association offering expertise and support to Mississippi communities

### Action Plans

- ✓ Co-sponsor the Governor's Conference on Tourism, 2008; continue to serve on the convention committee
- ✓ Attend scheduled meetings, committee workdays and annual meeting