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Good news as summer travel increases on Jekyll Island

Jekyll Island Authority Board of Directors pleased with results, progress

JEKYLL ISLAND, Ga. (July 20, 2010) – With revitalization now underway, Jekyll Island is beginning to see a return of visitation despite the sluggish economy. At its regular meeting Monday, the Jekyll Island Authority (JIA) Board of Directors reviewed hotel reports showing strong revenue growth for the month of June. Hotel revenue was up 28 percent over June 2009. The new Hampton Inn & Suites generated nearly \$500,000 in revenue and achieved 92 percent occupancy for the month. The Jekyll Island Club Hotel saw revenue increase 25 percent over last year.

“The new Hampton Inn & Suites is attracting people back to Jekyll,” stated JIA chairman Bob Krueger. “I spoke with a hotel guest this morning who had not been to Jekyll in many years. He was having a great time.”

The growth in business was split between groups and guests on vacation. Several conventions held their meetings on Jekyll Island in June including the Georgia Press Association. Groups were rewarded with great weather and businesses ready to serve up a healthy dose of hospitality. Groups also had improved wireless phone service due to a new Verizon tower installed earlier this year. Future conventions will also have improved AT&T service with the approval by the JIA of a new antenna lease.

“With the new lease, AT&T will be upgrading their antennas to provide the latest 3G and 4G service,” commented JIA Executive Director Jones Hooks. “This will allow iPhone users to have a strong signal and full use of all the smartphone’s features.”

Higher visitation translated into more business for island restaurants, the Georgia Sea Turtle Center and Summer Waves Water Park. Summer Waves’ revenue is 10 percent or almost \$100,000 more than last year. Marketing programs targeting Jacksonville and Savannah are paying off with more guests to the park. Mobile marketing and cross-promotions with local businesses like McDonald’s are also helping to attract locals with various discounts offers.

“Leveraging events to gain earned media and focusing on internet marketing is paying off,” stated Eric Garvey, JIA Chief Communications Officer. “We are in a good position. Our message is out there and we are being rewarded with incremental business.”

Ben Porter, Chairman of the JIA Board of Directors Marketing Committee, echoed the optimism. “These results are a reflection of the staff’s hard work and commitment, and I am very pleased with the direction we are heading.”

Several publications have recently featured Jekyll Island as a unique travel destination. Jekyll has been named in lists of secret beaches, top pet-friendly destinations and best places to watch fireworks. The Georgia Sea Turtle Center, operated by the JIA, continues to attract international media attention in its efforts to help injured and ill sea turtles.

With plans for more new hotels, shops and convention center moving forward, Jekyll Island is quickly becoming the premier Georgia beach destination. The good news is timely as the economic recovery tries to pick up steam. As people look for bright spots, they can look to the beautiful Georgia coast and Jekyll Island.

About Jekyll Island

Located on Georgia's coast, Jekyll Island with its rich history and quiet, laid-back atmosphere has attracted vacationers for more than one hundred years. Jekyll Island offers a variety of amenities, including 10 miles of beach, a 250-acre Historic Landmark District, four golf courses, a large water park, 20 miles of bike paths, a tennis center, and an array of lodging options including hotels, cottages and campgrounds. Owned by the state of Georgia and managed by Jekyll Island Authority, the island's development is limited to just 35 percent of the available land area to preserve the critical barrier island ecosystem. Great lengths have been taken to honor this ratio as the highly anticipated revitalization of Jekyll Island moves forward. By 2012, the island will boast three new hotels, an all-new beachfront convention center with more than 78,000 square feet of function space, a beautifully redesigned entry corridor to the island, beach village shopping and dining area and many more enhancements. Please visit www.jekyllisland.com for more information or call (877) 4-JEKYLL.

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