

Jekyll Island

G E O R G I A ' S J E W E L



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Jekyll Island Authority Announces Revitalization Project

New inn & cottage colony to be built on the site of the former Ramada Inn

JEKYLL ISLAND, GA - November 25 – The Jekyll Island Authority today approved a new ground lease with 150 Beachview Holdings LLC, clearing the way for an exciting new redevelopment of the former Ramada Inn/Georgia Coast Inn hotel site. The 5.8 acre beachside site has been vacant for several years, and the new project adds to the progress and momentum of the revitalization of Jekyll Island.

The new project will be a combination of a small Inn and a colony of 27-32 beachside cottages. The low density approach is a key factor in gaining support and approval.

“The Board is pleased that the leaseholder came forward with such an attractive plan for the site,” stated Bob Krueger, Chairman of the Jekyll Island Authority. “We are looking for the right balance of development and protection of natural areas, and this project fits well with the other revitalization projects that have already been announced.”

New South Partners, LLC and Global Asset Alternatives, LLC are partners in 150 Beachview Holdings and have secured the ground lease to the former hotel site after years of legal disputes. In order for the new development to move forward, an extension of the existing lease was required. That was obtained through the Jekyll Island Authority Board action on Tuesday.

“I’m thrilled to get this project moving forward,” stated Rick Patton, principal with New South Partners, LLC. “We are a Georgia company, and we know that Jekyll is a special place and this is a special site. It is deserving of a quality development that fits responsibly into the natural beachside setting.”

The former Ramada Inn was first constructed in 1961 and opened as a Holiday Inn. The property sold in 1963 and became Stuckey’s Carriage Inn, later becoming a Ramada Inn, then independent Georgia Coast Inn until closing in 2003. The hotel was popular with conventioners and was known for its swimming pool shaped like the State of Georgia. The four-story structure fell into disrepair and was demolished in 2005. The new project will feature low-rise construction with traditional beach cottage architecture.

The revitalization of Jekyll Island now boasts five new hotel projects, including the planned Jekyll Island Beach Village, which will create a new gathering place on the island with integrated shopping, dining, plaza, park and a completely renovated and expanded Convention Center. Revitalization is being guided by several important policies that are meant to protect the character of Jekyll Island, as well as protect the natural environment and enhance conservation efforts. The new Inn & Cottages at Georgia Coast will comply with newly adopted design guidelines which provide regulation of architecture and restrict both density and building height. Projects are also monitored by a new visitation forecast model developed by Bleakly Advisory Group.

"This project fits nicely in the current forecast model," explained Gary Mongeon with Bleakly Advisory Group. "It is lower density compared to other projects, yet provides the highest per acre return to the Jekyll Island Authority."

The Jekyll Island Authority provides a limited number of commercial ground leases for private hotel development. Ground leases are tied to the appraised value of the land as required by law. The Jekyll Island Authority uses local appraiser Richard Freeman to determine the value range of each leased parcel.

A key component of a ground lease for new development is a rent escalation feature. Rent on a ground lease begins immediately, but escalates over the course of construction through opening and to the point of full operation.

"The rent escalation feature allows the developer to successfully get underway, and allows the Jekyll Island Authority to fully share in the future success," stated Jones Hooks, Executive Director with the Jekyll Island Authority. "We also place constraints and requirements on the developer, so we can maintain control and not let development become bigger than what the public wants on Jekyll."

The Jekyll Island Authority requires all development be sensitive to the natural environment, even if it is replacing an existing structure in approximately the same building footprint. The new Inn & Cottages project will stay away from the dunes line and beyond the shoreline jurisdiction line as defined by Georgia's Shoreline Protection Act. All new projects must also comply with a new beach lighting ordinance, created with public and expert input to protect the beach from light pollution. Artificial light has been shown to disrupt the nesting and hatching behavior of the loggerhead sea turtle.

"This project is big news in a bad economy," stated Hooks. "Development activity has all but stopped in the region, but here on Jekyll Island we have five projects moving forward."

Jekyll Island currently has seven hotels open and operating, including the signature Jekyll Island Club Hotel. Other hotels along the beach include the boutique Beachview Club Hotel, the Days Inn & Suites, Oceanside Inn & Suites, Quality Inn, Oceanfront Clarion Resort and the Villas By The Sea. Privately owned cottages are also available for vacation rental, more information is available at jekyllisland.com. Information regarding all Jekyll Island revitalization projects and policies can be found at jekyllisland.com/news.

About Jekyll Island

Jekyll Island is a barrier island on Georgia's coast – midway between Jacksonville, Fla. And Savannah, Ga. Accessible by car just minutes from I-95, Jekyll Island offers a variety of amenities, including 10 miles of beach, four golf courses, a 250-acre Historic Landmark District, water park, tennis center, an array of lodging options including hotels, cottages and campgrounds. Owned by the State of Georgia, and managed by the Jekyll Island State Park Authority, Jekyll Island has had development limited to just 35 percent of its available land area. This unique aspect of Jekyll Island serves to preserve the critical barrier island ecosystem, and provide guests with a unique escape from the crowds and complications of other beach resort destinations. The Jekyll Island Foundation is a public 501 (c) 3 organization which operates exclusively for charitable and educational purposes to support the work of the Jekyll Island Authority by assisting in the preservation, conservation and appreciation of Jekyll Island. Please visit www.jekyllisland.com for more information or call 1-877-4JEKYLL.

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