

Tourism Group Seeks Young Leaders for National Recognition

Spotlight to shine on 40 professionals under age 40 from across U.S.

ATLANTA, Ga. (Feb. 2, 2012) – A tourism association headquartered in Atlanta wants to identify young travel and tourism industry leaders nationwide and put them in the spotlight.

The goal: Keeping that professional leadership and enthusiasm in travel and tourism.

“Forty for the Future: Travel’s Leading Talent” is a project of the 12-state Southeast Tourism Society (STS). It will honor 40 travel and tourism leaders under the age of 40.

Nominations, due March 31, are sought from throughout the nation. A cross-section of senior travel and tourism industry executives will evaluate the nominees, and those chosen will be recognized at an event in June.

“Travel and tourism is an exciting industry that is extremely important to the local, state and national economies, but we often see young stars lured into other industries,” said Bill Hardman, president and CEO of STS.

“We want ‘Forty for the Future’ to become an annual recognition of some of the best and brightest we have, and we want that recognition to encourage them to stay in tourism,” he said.

STS is casting its net widely and defines travel and tourism workplaces broadly.

STS anticipates nominees from direct-service providers such as lodging properties, transportation companies and attractions, from industry organizations such as convention and visitors bureaus and tourism authorities, and from travel industry research institutions, including colleges, universities and research firms.

“A secondary reason to create ‘Forty for the Future’ is to drive public awareness of how big the tourism industry actually is and how deeply it reaches into the economy,” Hardman said, noting that tourism is among the top three industries in all of its member states.

Another STS effort to encourage tourism professionalism is the STS Marketing College, an educational program that leads to designation as a Tourism

Marketing Professional (TMP). The STS Marketing College has certified more than 700 TMPs since starting in 1992.

The "Forty for the Future" nomination process is online at www.SoutheastTourism.org.

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