



SOUTHEAST TOURISM SOCIETY

STS Announces 2022 Shining Example Award Winners

Several Southeastern States Receive Regional Tourism Recognition

CONCORD, N.C. – During the annual Shining Example Awards Ceremony in Concord, North Carolina, STS Vice President of Operations, Suzanne Moon, won the **Dorothy Hardman Spirit of STS Award**, which highlights an individual who best expresses the genuine love, passion and devotion Dorothy Hardman had for STS, its members, and its purpose. Suzanne was chosen for the award for her 30 years of dedication to STS and STS Marketing College®.

The recognition was one of sixteen Shining Example Awards presented during Southeast Tourism Society's annual Connections conference.

Florida Oceanographic Ocean EcoCenter has been named the **Escape to the Southeast Travel Attraction of the Year** for 2022. Located on Hutchinson Island, this 57-acre marine life nature center was built to inspire environmental stewardship of Florida's coastal ecosystems through three key pillars: education, research, and advocacy. In July 2021, this attraction made headlines when it debuted its highly anticipated capital expansion, the Ocean EcoCenter. The 27,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art attraction houses a 5,000-square-foot multipurpose Ocean Exploration Lab, 2,000 gallons of aquariums showcasing more than 300 local fish and invertebrates, and 30 new exhibit elements.

The Shining Example **Partnership Award** for cooperative tourism work went to the African American Experience of Northeast North Carolina created by Camden County Tourism Development Authority, Chowan County Tourism Development Authority, Currituck County Department of Travel and Tourism, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Tourism Development Authority, and Perquimans County Tourism Development Authority. More than 30 visitor-ready sites were identified, leading to the development of a self-guided, digital heritage trail that includes interpretive signs and monuments, parks, waterways, and museums with the mission to inspire exploration and appreciation for the African American experience in this region

The Shining Example **Rising Star Award** went to the Director of Social Media of Visit Lake Charles, Kathryn Shea Duncan.

Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion music festival received the **STS Event or Festival of the Year Award**. The music festival attracted an impressive attendance of 27,000 people, and not only brought entertainment and delight to those who attended, but also recognition and economic benefit to their local and regional communities.

Jeffrey Crowe, Heaven Hill Distillery and Nicole Twigg, Louisville Tourism; received the **Chairman of the Board Award** for their leadership with the transition of Domestic Showcase.

The efforts, creativity, and success stories that were brought to life by tourism marketing teams always attract a lot of attention and earn multiple Shining Example awards. Three of these awards are based on budgets and one based on niche marketing. The winners of the **Best Marketing Shining Example Awards** are as follows:

- Columbia County Conventions & Visitors Bureau (Georgia) won for its “Serene18 Paddle Trail (budget of less than \$100,000).
- Visit Clarksville (Tennessee) won for its “Fall Travel” campaign (budget of \$100,000 - \$499,000).
- Currituck County Department of Travel (North Carolina) won for its “Simply Corolla, NC – Find Yourself Here” campaign (budget of more than \$500,000).
- Louisiana Office of Tourism won the **Best Niche Marketing Award** for its Louisiana Civil Rights Trail campaign

Some of the most coveted Shining Example Awards recognize the overall tourism success of destinations. This year’s winners include:

- Visit Oxford (Mississippi) was named the **Tourism Office of the Year** for organizations with budgets of less than \$1 million.
- Visit Myrtle Beach (South Carolina) was named the **Tourism Office of the Year** for organizations with budgets of more than \$1 million.

Three individuals received Shining Example Awards:

- The **Beacon Award**, which honors someone for their outstanding tourism leadership over a career, went to Dan Rowe.
- The annual **Government Tourism Leadership Award** went to Pro Tem Mayor and District 5 Commissioner Seth Clark of Macon-Bibb County.
- The **Best Epicurean Partner** was awarded to Tammy Jordan, President, Executive Pastry Chef, and Lead Agriculture Instructor of Fruits of Labor, Inc.

- The **Best Lodging Partner** was awarded to 106 Jefferson in Huntsville, Alabama.

About STS

The Southeast Tourism Society is a not-for-profit membership association dedicated to the development of travel and tourism professionals and organizations within the southeast region. STS' mission is to strengthen the economic vitality of the region by uniting all segments of the travel and tourism industry through the four pillars of education, advocacy, recognition, and networking. Member states include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

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