



An ATAC Client Success Story



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Nearly 100 event planners from throughout the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Tennessee participated in Auburn Technical Assistance Center's (ATAC) eighth annual Community Festivals Best Practices workshops. ATAC hosted two separate events this year -- one at Auburn University in January and another in February at the Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum in Birmingham. The Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel provided support to this year's events.



Rick Lott, executive director of the Savannah (Ga.) Waterfront Association, talks about key elements in planning festival events.

Festival planners glean from 'best practices' workshops

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"Auburn's annual event is the only known university conducted program focused on improving community festival performance and creating economic impacts," said ATAC's David Mixson in an event description provided to the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel.

This year's events received special support from the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel.

Attendees learned strategies for improving the success of community events from experts in such areas as volunteerism, sponsorship, promotion and publicity, and logistics.

Learn How to Dramatically Improve Your Festival
8th Annual Community Festivals
Best Practices Workshop

Two Events With Different Topics & Speakers

Auburn, Alabama
 Friday, January 25, 2008
 The Hotel at Auburn University
 & Dixon Conference Center

Birmingham, Alabama
 Friday, February 29, 2008
 The Barber Vintage
 Motorsports Museum

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"Community festivals are estimated nationally to be a more than \$25 billion economic engine, attracting a combined attendance of more the 405 million people to them every year," ATAC's Festival Event Coordinator Talitha Norris said. "Each year, we assemble a panel of experts in the field to provide festival planners with tools and information and the 'how to' to make their event as successful as it can be."

ATAC -- which arguably is best known for its training and continuous improvement assistance provided to the manufacturing community -- launched the Community Festivals Best Practices Workshop in 2000 as a means for making its outreach, training and economic development assistance initiatives available to a broader audience.

"ATAC provides business and technical assistance, customized training, and consultation in implementing value-added strategies to manufacturers and other businesses, not-for-profit

Shown above is the brochure for the 2008 workshops. Look for promotional information for the 2009 event to begin this fall. Meanwhile, please visit www.auburnworks.org for updates as they develop.

What participants said about the workshops:

“The presentations were very diverse and informative.”

-- Henrietta Anderson, George Washington Carver Arts & Crafts Festival, Tuskegee, Ala.

“Totally empowering, entertaining and extremely informative.”

-- Joanna Brood, Panoply Arts Festival, Huntsville, Ala.

“Great ideas and very organized.”

-- Nicole Ells, Cullman, Ala.



Lee Sentell, director of the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, addresses attendees at the Birmingham, Ala. event. Director Sentell's topic, "How The Tourism Bureau Can Help With Your Festival" covered a variety of assistance and promotional programs available through the bureau.

organizations and government agencies throughout Alabama and the Southeast," said Director Henry Burdg. "Our Community Festivals Best Practices Workshop is one of the programs we started to help Chambers of Commerce and other civic groups improve the outcomes of special events organized to promote their local economy."

ATAC already is planning next year's workshop offerings.

"Each year we try to improve our program and expand the topics presented," Mixson added. "We received some very good feedback and improvement suggestions from this year's participants, and will try to incorporate as many of those ideas and suggestions as we possibly can."

Look for promotional information to begin circulating this fall.

This year's topics and presenters included:

Building on Your Natural Resources:

Rick Lott, Executive Director of the Savannah Riverfront Association in Savannah, Ga.

12 Steps to Sponsorship Success, Part 1 and 2: Sylvia Allen, President of Allen Consulting, and author of "How to be Successful at Sponsorship Sales."

Special Event Insurance and

Liability: Tom Shipp, Vice President of Kaliff Insurance of San Antonio, Texas, which specializes in event and festival policies.

Will Work for Fun, Developing and Maintaining Volunteer Programs, and Presenting the Total Package, Creating Marketing & PR Campaigns: Wright Tilley, President and CEO of the Macon, Ga. Cherry Blossom Festival.

How The Tourism Bureau Can Help With Your Festival: Lee Sentell, Director of the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel.

Financial Management: Vicki Morese of the Lawrence County, Alabama Chamber of Commerce, and Director of the Chicken and Egg Festival.



Auburn Technical Assistance Center was established in 1976 and is an affiliate of the Alabama Technology Network and an Economic Development Administration University Center. As an Outreach arm of the Auburn University College of Business, ATAC provides business and technical assistance, customized training, and consultation in implementing value-added strategies to manufacturers and other businesses, not-for-profit organizations and government agencies in Alabama and the Southeast. SOAR is an ATAC publication. Direct inquiries and questions to Mitch Emmons, Sr. Outreach Assoc., 334.844.3881, emmonmb@auburn.edu.

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