

The A-Tax Update



First Quarter 2009

The Official Newsletter of the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee

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Appointed by the Governor at Recommendation of the Hospitality Association of SC

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Appointed by the Governor at the Recommendation of the SC Association of Tourism Regions

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Governor's At-Large Appointee

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Ex-Officio SCPRT

Lauren Sponseller

TERC Staff Liaison

Review of A-Tax reporting packages

The Committee is currently reviewing reporting packages which were due last October 15. Most of you may have received questions and comments from the Committee by now. All reviews should be completed by mid-March. Overall the reports were well prepared and submitted in a timely fashion. Those who did not report by November 15 were fined for late submittal as provided by Section 6-4-25(D).

The Committee very much appreciates the information provided and likes to make the following comments:

In order to adjudicate the validity of the expenditures it is important that valid information is provided in regards to total budget, total attendance and total out of town tourists attending the event to be funded. Make sure that should more than one jurisdiction fund the same event, that such is indicated. This year many reports ignored the interest income to be accounted for as per statute 6-4-10(4)(a) and other reports had errors in classifying the various expenditures using the coding system as provided. Hopefully we will be able to correct these issues this year and eliminate much of our correspondence and questions for future reports.

We thank you for understanding the importance in submitting these "project numbers" as accurately as possible. This data is used by the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to compile statistical reports, and the reports are only as accurate as the information provided.

For more information, contact Lauren Sponseller, Staff Liaison, at sponselL@sctax.org or call 803-898-5400.

Make Plans Now to Attend the 2009

Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism

Once again, the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee is proud to be a part of the upcoming Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism.

The conference is the state's largest gathering of tourism industry leaders. Over the past 40 years, the conference has grown to an attendance of 500-600 participants who find the seminars, workshops and networking opportunities enjoyable, informative, and productive. An assembly of a wide variety of backgrounds, the majority of our participants include: representatives from destination management organizations, state/county entities, regional tourism associations, accommodations, attractions, advertising agencies, economic development companies and various media outlets.

The 2009 conference will be held February 17-19, 2009 at the Westin Resort and Spa in Hilton Head. TERC will be presenting "Accommodations Tax and Your Community" from 9 to 10:30 on Thursday, February 19.

In order to obtain the most precise information possible, TERC is asking for any questions that attendees may want addressed to be submitted before the Conference. Should you have a question for TERC that has not been answered on our website or through our newsletter, please email sponselL@sctax.org or call 803-898-5400.

For more information and to register, go to the SCPRT website at www.scprrt.com.

... *The A-Tax Update, continued*



New Year, New TERC Staff Member

TERC would like to introduce their new staff liaison, Lauren Sponseller. Lauren comes to us from Sylvester Management, a meeting planning group in Columbia, SC where she worked with several committees. We feel that she will serve the Committee, Counties and Municipalities well.

Interest Income

TERC has received several reports this year where interest income is not reported or is reported as "0." TERC would like to remind local governments that Section 6-4-10 (4)(a) states "The remaining balance **plus earned interest** received by a municipality or county must be allocated to a special fund and used for tourism-related expenditures. This section does not prohibit a municipality or county from using accommodations tax general fund revenues for tourism-related expenditures."

TERC interprets this to mean that any interest generated by local accommodations taxes must be expended with the 65% funds.

Reporting Numbers Correctly

TERC asks that all counties and municipalities examine numbers that are reported closely. Several reports from this filing period had errors in Total Attendees vs. Total Tourists. The Total Attendee number should always be higher, since this number includes local attendees as well as tourist.

Filling Out Forms

TERC requests that the appropriate person(s) take responsibility for filling out and submitting Reporting Forms. These numbers play an important role in SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, and therefore need to be completed by someone from within the Finance Department of your municipality.

The A-Tax Update is published quarterly on an as needed basis by the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee, located in the SC Department of Revenue Building.

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