



Dear Destination Colleagues:

Having just participated in this year's extraordinary ESTO: Where Destinations Grow conference held in Savannah, we were impressed by the remarkable nature of the annual event and the singular opportunity it presents for destinations of all sizes. If you were there, you can appreciate its uniqueness. And if you missed it, we sincerely encourage you to mark your calendar for next year's [ESTO](#), which will be held in Salt Lake City on August 28-30, 2011.

With world-renowned presenters talking about the latest trends and marketing techniques, as well as practical tips on topics ranging from building and keeping a budget to best practices in a changing media landscape and the critical steps necessary to prepare for future crises affecting our industry, ESTO's two and a half days were filled with invaluable information for destination leaders. Valerie Knoblauch of the Finger Lakes Visitors Connection and Susan Whitaker of the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development merit our thanks for leading the program content to ensure that it was timely and relevant.

But beyond the formal program, the unparalleled networking among the nearly 400 attendees was extraordinary. No other conference affords the opportunity for sharing ideas and collaborating for the overall good of destinations. Whether it is through the individual forums for state tourism directors and destination leaders to discuss issues among themselves on the first day, or the mingling that happens between sessions and during the evening events, the spirit of engagement and camaraderie sets it apart from all other industry events.

Nowhere is it more evident than at the final evening's awards gala, which celebrates the stellar marketing initiatives achieved over the past year by [destinations](#) and [state tourism offices](#), as well as this year's honoree as State Tourism Director of the Year, Mike Cerletti from the New Mexico Tourism Department. The genuine enthusiasm and support for the winners and the celebration of the evening makes it a true victory for everyone.

Thanks to everyone who attended this year's ESTO. Mark your calendar and make plans early to be in Salt Lake City in late August next year.

Best Regards,

Sharon Rossi
Chair, [NCDO](#) and
Vice President of Advertising,
Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing
Corporation

George Zimmermann
Chair, [NCSTD](#) and
Vice President,
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