

Forsyth CVB hosts regional Tourism Expo

By Diane Gildewell
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Forsyth Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) hosted its first Tourism Expo at the La Quinta Inn & Suites conference room on Nov. 7. The opportunity to learn of ways to connect to tourists through state listings like Explore Georgia, to bring in film productions and to make websites and other social media as productive as possible attracted representatives from the Robins Air Force Base Aviation Museum, Jasper County Chamber of Commerce, Forsyth Cable, Indian Springs Conference Center and State Park as well as local hotel owners, restaurateurs and retailers. Lindsey Isaacs, Georgia

Department of Economic Development Tourism Content Manager, spoke about highlighting things to do, including special events, with links to hotel/motel accommodations and eateries. She talked of targeting specific audiences and tracking response from advertising. She promoted Explore Georgia as a free tool for communities provided by the state.

Mary Ann Lamontica of the Georgia Film Office said all 159 of Georgia's counties are now certified as "camera ready" and have a designated liaison with the Georgia Film Office, which was founded in 1973 at Georgia Tech by then-Gov. Jimmy Carter. She said with the diversity around the state and one of the largest groups of



A mixture of local and regional individuals involved in tourism related businesses listened to tips on how to bring more visitors to their communities at the Tourism Expo at the LaQuinta conference room on Nov. 7

trained workers outside of California, Georgia has a strong presence in film. She said there are currently 36 projects filming in the state. She encouraged local property owners interested in having their sites used in films to add them to the Reel Scout data base. To do so they submit photos, and Lamontica gave examples of the type of photos to submit, generally broad, landscape shots. She said there are currently 7,000-8,000 properties in the data base. Films require all kinds of properties, and with stages around the state growing, the need for varied sites for location filming is also growing. Addresses are only made available to production companies who indicate they are very interested in the site.

"We need local people to help with venues and details like permits," said Lamontica. "It's like a village behind the scenes." She said a good way to get the attention of film companies is to hold a Fan Day, an event to let the film company know about the community. She said the community should list all available services, like caterers, with the Georgia Production Directory. During a lunch with a choice of Indian cuisine and sandwiches, Casey Hough of Compass Media talked about how to make websites and other social media most effective in making travelers aware of attractions, events and accommodations. He said

there are 35 trillion web pages and over 200 factors in how they are ranked. "Have the right content and titles. Provide descriptive information to the user," said Hough. "Whoever is indexed best will show up." He said to use images that support the local feel and to keep the website updated, relevant and useful but not jam too much on one page. He said Google is sensitive to overusing some words. He urged using primary and secondary headers and linking to relevant sites. He said Google will provide weekly reports on how a site is performing. CVB Executive Director Gilda Stanbery thanked Navid Kapadia of La Quinta Inn & Suites, Army Knight of Co Trique Boutique and others who helped facilitate the Tourism Expo and said she plans to make it an annual event with the importance of tourism to the Middle Georgia economy.

PREQUALIFICATIONS FOR GENERAL CONTRACTOR ADVERTISEMENT

The City of Forsyth is accepting Statements of Qualifications to pre-qualify General Contractors to bid on Forsyth City Hall proposed to be located at 28 East Main Street, Forsyth, GA 31029. Sealed qualifications will be received by Ms. Janice Hall, Forsyth City Manager, in the Welcome Center at 88 North Lee Street, Forsyth, GA 31029, up to 3:00 pm on December 16, 2019. This project is a new 10,500-square-foot two-story city hall building with a 3,000-square-foot basement. The project will be construction type VB with a steel frame and consist of offices, a council chambers, a bill-pay area with drive-through window, a basement used for storage, 43 parking spaces and associated site work. The project construction schedule is anticipated to be 12 months starting in March 2020. All proposals must demonstrate compliance with all aspects of Georgia state law and City of Forsyth policy, including minority and small business enterprise verification and other requirements. The owner retains the unqualified right to reject any and all proposals. The owner may or may not interview potential candidates to assist in the selection process. Please contact the Clark Nexsen construction manager below to obtain the prequalification package.

Clark Nexsen:
Allan Burgamy, Senior Construction Manager
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Phone Number: (478) 314-1255
E-Mail Address: aburgamy@ClarkNexsen.com

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