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Alabama

ABTT NEWS RELEASE

Bob Riley, Governor
Lee Sentell, Director
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Date of Release: 7/16/03

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ALABAMA

Alabama Coastal Birding Trail Wins Alabama Tourism Partnership Award

Huntsville, Ala.—The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail has been chosen for the 2003 Alabama Tourism Partnership Award in recognition of its outstanding contributions to the state travel industry. The announcement of its selection was made last night during the Alabama Tourism Partnership Governor's Conference at the Huntsville Hilton, with approximately 300 state tourism leaders present for the occasion.

The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail (ACBT), comprised of six birding loops totaling 220 miles, opened in April 2002. The trail goes through Baldwin and Mobile counties and the loops are in close proximity to one another, so that several birding expeditions may be enjoyed in a short time.

Each loop is distinctive. The Fort Morgan Loop, for example, travels along the coast and provides opportunities to see herons, egrets, loons, gulls and other shore birds. Farther north, the East Mobile River-Tensaw Delta Loop visits the domain of kites, hawks, vireos and other woodland species.

The trail is easy for birding enthusiasts to use. Directional and interpretive signs are posted and informative brochures are offered. A dedicated website appears at www.alabamacoastalbirdingtrail.com.

ACBT is a collaborative partnering effort between various tourism organizations, environmental entities and government agencies. Among them are the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau in Gulf Shores, Friends of the Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuary in Dauphin Island and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Daphne.

“The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail was the end result of a unique and non-traditional alliance working together toward a common goal,” said Herb Malone, president/CEO of the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau. “Many organizations, businesses and individuals with a passion for the protection of birds, and the promotion of birding through tourism, came together with fantastic results. On behalf of all involved in this project, we are honored to receive this award.”

The award that was presented is among 12 that comprise the Alabama Tourism Awards. These awards, first given out in 1998, annually honor outstanding achievement in the state’s tourism industry. Each award winner is recognized as a key player in making tourism a strong economic force in the state. The tourism industry contributes \$6.5 billion to Alabama’s economy and supports 139,000 jobs statewide.

A total of 356 nominations were received for the 2003 awards. Twelve tourism leaders from different areas of the state handled the preliminary judging. The Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel’s Advisory Board, which is made up of 21 tourism industry leaders appointed by the Governor, conducted the final judging. ABTT coordinates the Alabama Tourism Awards Program. The full list of award winners is as follows:

Alabama Tourism Hall of Fame: Eva Golson, Mobile

Alabama Tourism Hall of Fame: Ed Hall, Rochester, NY

Alabama Tourism Hall of Fame: Odessa Woolfolk, Birmingham

Alabama Attraction of the Year: The American Village, Montevallo

Alabama Event of the Year: Sail Mobile, Mobile

Alabama Governor's Tourism Award: Harvey & Joyce Ann Robbins, Muscle Shoals

Alabama Tourism Advocate Award—Government: Mayor Michael C. Dow, Mobile

Alabama Tourism Advocate Award—Media: *The Anniston Star*, Anniston

Alabama Tourism Employee of the Year: Alison Stanfield, Florence

Alabama Tourism Executive of the Year: Pam Swanner, Decatur

Alabama Tourism Organization of the Year: Alabama Travel Council, Montgomery

Alabama Tourism Partnership Award: Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, Baldwin & Mobile Counties

Alabama Welcome Center of the Year: Houston Welcome Center, U.S. 231, Dothan

ABTT Employee of the Year: Beverly Stallings, Fort Payne

Note to Media: Inquiries about news releases/digital images for each winner may be directed to ABTT's Russell Nolen at 1-800-ALABAMA.

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