

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TUSCALOOSA, Ala. -- The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development has aided West Alabama groups in the production of two brochures and an appearance at a key tourism showcase in an effort to sell the area to visitors and boost economic development.

The UA group has started a partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission to promote economic development and tourism in Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens and Tuscaloosa counties. The efforts also involve the development group Tour West Alabama.

Through its partnership with UA's Center for Economic Development and Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports, Tour West Alabama is able to participate in the Travel South International Showcase from Monday, Nov. 30, through Thursday, Dec. 3, in Charlotte, North Carolina. The groups will promote West Alabama through printed publications to more than 30 tour operators. The publications are the "Visit West Alabama" booklet and "West Alabama BBQ Trail" brochure.

"Having the opportunity to combine the sights, sounds and tastes from the West Alabama region has allowed me to present a more attractive package to the International market," said Tina Jones, director of tourism for Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports.

The "Visit West Alabama" booklet, which had a press run of 10,000, offers a two-day itinerary for visiting the seven counties of west Alabama, including the Pie Lab in Hale County and the Brierfield Ironworks Historical Park in Bibb County. The "West Alabama BBQ Trail" brochure features Truman's BBQ in Greene County and Boss Hog BBQ in Reform, among others. The brochures are distributed at the Alabama State Welcome Center in Cuba and other places and are available at the tourwestalabama.com website.

The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development, directed by Nisa Miranda, provides economic development resources and community-based strategic planning in support of local economic development efforts throughout the state. Center staff members provide guidance to communities in leveraging other UA resources and partners with the specific focus on community development and capacity building at all levels. Its mission is to assist communities as they prepare to take advantage of economic development opportunities for growth which puts them in a better position to support existing businesses as well as to create and attract new investments and jobs.

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Tour East Alabama wins 2015 National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Innovation Award

10/26/15

We are SUPER EXCITED to announce that “Tour East Alabama” has WON 2015 NADO Innovation Award! The Innovation Award honors significant advances in community and economic development, including but not limited to small business finance, energy and infrastructure projects, housing and human services, sustainable development, workforce development, and more.

We are SO EXCITED to be here in New Orleans to accept this award on behalf for Tour East Central.

Tour East Alabama is a regional tourism project that was started 7+ years ago with a partnership with the University of Alabama Center of Economic Development to help the rural counties in East Central Alabama come together as a regional tourism destination. Calhoun, Chambers, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Randolph, Talladega and Tallapoosa Counties.

Tour East Alabama would like to THANK Nisa Miranda, Joe Watts, Candace Johnson Skelton, Matt Leavell Doug Barrett and Lee Sentell for ALL their support and help though the years.

We'd also like to give a BIG THANK YOU to Donna Fathke for nominating Tour East Alabama for the 2015 NADO Innovation Award!

Please take a minute to visit Tour East Alabama on Facebook and visit www.toureastalabama.com

Tomorrow Cotina W Terry and Mary P. Smith will be a guest speakers on a discussion panel talking about ALL the steps that Tour East Alabama took you get us to where we are today as a 8 county Tourist Destination and how we have stayed together so long and have done so much as a volunteer organization. Tour East Alabama has no funding source.

We're looking forward to the BRIGHT BRIGHT future East Central Alabama has as a vibrant tourist destination.