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Governor Nathan Deal receives Southeast Tourism Society's Shining Example Award for Governmental Tourism Leadership

Savannah, GA (Sept. 15, 2016) – Last Thursday evening, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, who vetoed the “Religious Freedom Restoration Act” (RFRA) that threatened his state’s convention and visitor industry, received the Shining Example in Governmental Tourism Leadership Award from the 12-state Southeast Tourism Society (STS).

Deal accepted the recognition at the annual STS Shining Example Awards Dinner in Birmingham, Alabama. The Shining Example Awards Program, an industry fixture since 1985, is comprised of 17 awards within 13 categories and recognizes outstanding contributions in tourism within the Southeast region.

“When this controversial House Bill 757 bill was passed back in March, our member CVBs heard from numerous existing and prospective convention clients expressing their concerns about meeting in a location where their delegates could be discriminated against,” said Julie Musselman, Executive Director of the Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus. “Some stated they would consider cancelling or even moving their meeting to another state.”

Musselman went on to say, “the potential loss of the 20 plus conventions that initially contacted the Atlanta CVB alone would have equated to a loss of 763,332 room nights and estimated visitor spending of \$990 million. If this bill had been signed into law, the long term negative impact to our state would have been billions of dollars in lost revenue.”

“This bill was unnecessary, divisive, and a distraction from the issues needed to advance Georgia,” said Musselman. “The Georgia Association of CVBs felt that Governor Deal was extremely deserving of this award and nominated him because he rose above politics to show exceptional leadership and courage in the face of great adversity.”

About GACVB: The Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus’ mission is to be the unified voice of Georgia’s 80+ destination marketing organizations and provide industry education and professional development opportunities to members. For more information, visit www.gacvb.com.