



STS Members and Partners,

As we embark on a new year of exploration and discovery, I am delighted to share with you a recap of our 2023 achievements and outline our exciting plans for the upcoming year. The year 2023 marked an extraordinary journey for STS, and I want to express my sincere thanks to all of you for your steadfast support.

Year in Review:

1. **Celebrating 40 years of impact:** Celebrating our 40th anniversary at STS, we are excited to look back on the remarkable achievements of our endeavors. Employing cutting-edge strategies, we have effectively expanded our reach to a broader audience. The creation of new educational and networking events, and the establishment of new strategic partnerships has been instrumental in not only elevating our brand presence but also in solidifying our commitment to supporting the tourism industry throughout the Southeast.
2. **Membership Milestones:** Our members have flourished, with a myriad of unique experiences that have captivated the hearts of travelers worldwide. From pristine beaches to cultural gems, we've witnessed an upswing in positive reviews and increased visitor satisfaction across the region. We are appreciative of the record number of over 550 member organizations and tourism professionals engaged in STS.
3. **Significant progress on the 2022-2024 STS Strategic plan:** In 2022, the board and staff adopted a two-year plan that would make the following calls to action the strategic priorities for the association:
 - Be a leader in destination education & sustainability
 - Promote innovation
 - Ensure growth in revenue & engagement
 - Invest in & empower staff to thrive

I am thankful for the staff, board, partners, committees, and members that have helped us to implement new programs, processes, and resources for the association. We look forward to completing the strategic plan implementation in 2024.

Looking Ahead to 2024:

The STS staff will be working on a few member engagement opportunities for this year:

- The launch of the "We are STS" brand refresh campaign.
- Implementation of a *new* STS Committee Structure for increased member engagement and leadership opportunities
- Outreach to Travel Marketing Professionals (TMPs) and new program development to engage Marketing College® alumni
- Utilize the STS Tourism Academy to create and deliver new certification programming, based on the 2023 assessment results

As we embark on this journey into 2024, I am confident that together, we will continue to shape the future of tourism in the Southeast, empowering the tourism leaders of today and developing the leaders of the of the future. Thank you for being an integral part of our success.

Thank you,

Monica R. Smith, CMP, CASE, CDME

President & CEO