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Tennessee Sustainable Tourism

www.tnsustainabletourism.com

Updated September 10, 2008

- ♻️ **Tennessee and North Carolina partner to preserve, protect and grow** the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, a World Heritage Site, and its gateway communities through sustainable tourism.
- ♻️ **Grassroots campaign initiated in the gateway communities.** TDTD held 10 Town Hall Forums in **Nov. 2007 and Feb. 2008**. The Forums were attended by more than 400 community and industry leaders creating an open dialogue to identify challenges, opportunities, and sustainable tourism best practices.
- ♻️ **Agenda developed from a grassroots campaign** for the inaugural GSM Sustainable Tourism Summit which included more than 70 influential speakers from across the country, and 30 case study presentations.
- ♻️ **Sustainabletourismsummit.com launched in Jan. 2008** by TDTD to build on the grassroots initiative and continue the open dialogue on the Sustainable Tourism Initiative and the Summit. Since Jan. the homepage has received 7,438 page views with more than 9,500 total page views of the sustainable tourism Web site.
- ♻️ **6 Week E-Communication Plan** initiated by TDTD in **March 2008**. Leading up to the Summit a weekly email was sent to more than 5,000 contacts to build participation for the Summit and to drive people to the Web site. The plan was a huge success with more than 35,000 emails sent resulting in an additional 200 people registering for the Summit.
- ♻️ **Sustainable Tourism Toolbox** developed by TDTD and distributed to all Summit attendees in **April 2008** and made available online in **May 2008**. The Toolbox is an in-depth guidebook containing 33 best practice case studies, research, sustainable resources and contacts.
- ♻️ **Sustainable tourism video produced** by TDTD in coordination with National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations to highlight the importance of rural stewardship and leaving a legacy for our children.
- ♻️ **A Call to Action** best describes the Summit attended by more than 500 community leaders and tourism professionals who were inspired to preserve, protect and grow their destinations through sustainable tourism.
- ♻️ **Not a one and done.** Following the Summit all speaker presentations, Sustainable Tourism Toolbox were launched on the Web site **May 2008**. The Sustainable tourism video and taped sessions from the Summit made available on the Web site **June 2008**.
- ♻️ **Pre and post-event media coverage** of the Sustainable Tourism initiative included 1.2 million in print media impressions and \$100,000 in total print media equivalency.



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- ♻️ **National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations implements 3-year pilot project** in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's gateway communities to develop sustainable tourism projects.
- ♻️ **Appalachian Regional Commission announce Gems of Appalachia grants** to promote sustainable tourism and cultural heritage projects in TN and NC in the GSM National Park and Cherokee National Forest gateway communities.
- ♻️ **MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation and the City of Gatlinburg** submits new project "The Historical and Architectural Resources of Gatlinburg, 1807-1960" to the Tennessee Historical Commission.
- ♻️ **Governor Bredesen appoints 4 member task force to save energy** . The Governor's task force will develop immediate recommendations for what Tennessee should do to cut electricity use in state buildings and gas consumption in the state's fleet of vehicles. The Governor has charged the task force with developing an action plan to stop people in Tennessee from wasting energy and start saving it so the citizens of Tennessee can lead by example.
- ♻️ **Gatlinburg City Commission halts all ridgetop development** until further review of Saratoga Taskforce Plan.
- ♻️ **Gatlinburg Goes Green campaign launched by Gatlinburg Chamber**. As stewards of the majestic GSMNP, the residents and business community are aware of the responsibility to be environmentally conscious about every aspect of life in the Smokies. Gatlinburg is pledged to pursue every opportunity to stay in touch with our environment and maintain the aesthetics which allow the city to blend into our mountains, supporting not only the goals of GSMNP, but the wishes of our community to continue to offer a unique, unforgettable setting to make memories in a wholesome and conscientious community.
- ♻️ **Jim Gray Gallery in Gatlinburg joins new Gatlinburg Green Campaign** and becomes more energy efficient.
- ♻️ **SmartBank in Gatlinburg uses energy efficiency to save** by taking advantage of natural light and energy efficient technology.
- ♻️ **Rock City announces Green Partnership** with Orange Grove Center's Recycling Program.
- ♻️ **Knoxville Zoo Announces Green Monkey Program** and new Web site thinkgreenmonkey.org to promote Conservation and Green Practices.
- ♻️ **Cades Cove Shuttle Task Force purchases two environmentally friendly shuttles** for the Cades Cove Heritage Tours Program.
- ♻️ **City of Gatlinburg installs new recycling containers** for environmentally conscious visitors and citizens. Recycling effort grows in Sevierville, Gatlinburg as local residents pitch in by the truck load, and Sevier County's first two recycling efforts are a big success. City officials overseeing programs in Gatlinburg and Sevierville say the public response has been nearly overwhelming,
- ♻️ **Friends of the Smokies Green Partners** encourage businesses to use of at least two conservation practices.



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- ♻️ **Mini-Sustainable Tourism Summit planned** as one of the GSMNP 75th anniversary community events.
- ♻️ **City of Oak Ridge plans Oral History Program** to preserve the stories collected from the original pioneers of the Manhattan Project.
- ♻️ **Cleveland State Community College receives Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award** for their achievements and positive impact on the state's natural resources. Cleveland State was one of the first schools nationwide to initiate programs tied to protection of the environment and natural resources.
- ♻️ **New alliance formed to save vistas across the state.** The Preservation and Conservation Alliance has formed as a result of threats from ridge residential development, cell towers, rock mines and mountaintop mining. 17 conservation and preservation groups came together to form the alliance.
- ♻️ **Consumer sustainable minisite.** TDTD is currently in the process of developing a minisite to tnvacation.com to promote sustainable destinations across Tennessee
- ♻️ **Smokies launch Global Climate Education Initiative.** GSMNP launches new "Do Your Part" initiative aimed at educating visitors about measures that they can take, in the Park and at home, to reduce their contributions to global warming. Visitors are encouraged to also visit www.nps.gov/grsm/naturescience/climate-friendly-ark.htm to learn more on climate change and personal actions to reduce their contribution to the problem.
- ♻️ **Tennessee will put emphasis on fuel-efficient vehicles.** Emphasizing the use of fuel-efficient vehicles for state business is one step Governor Bredesen said he will take this summer to lower Tennessee's energy costs.
- ♻️ **Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival recycles.** Contracting with a local Chattanooga recycling company and Clean Vibes, Bonnaroo is on the forefront of recycling. In 2008, Clean Vibes recycled 60% of all Bonnaroo waste. More than 2,000 recycling bins were available for fans to recycle bottles and cans and collect food waste for compost. The company has diverted more than 850 tons of recyclable and compostable material from the landfill where the material is recycled for use in plant bedding, building materials and lawn furniture, etc.
- ♻️ **TN's first green parking facility in Pigeon Forge.** Located across from the new Belle Island Village the parking area will have 600 spaces and contractors are using a pervious concrete pavement with five-foot wide strips at the end of the parking stalls. This design turns the water to the ground instead of drainage pipes allowing it a chance to follow a natural course to the Pigeon River.
- ♻️ **Nashville forms Green Ribbon Committee – Goal to become the greenest city in the South.** The committee will identify goals and develop a plan of action that will help Nashville to become the greenest city in the Southeast, and one of the greenest cities in the nation.
- ♻️ **Governor signs bill to improve energy efficiency.** Through the use of \$100 million of lottery reserve funds Tennessee schools to become more energy efficient. The bill also creates a council to award grants or loans for improvements such as better lighting or insulation in TN schools.



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- ♻️ **Volkswagen says green card instrumental in calling Chattanooga home.** VW's North American group's CEO, Stefan Jacoby said the decision went well beyond the question of the state's financial incentives ...it hinged equally on the city's deep and durable commitment to the vision of renaissance and quality of life that resurrected Chattanooga from pollution and decline; to the community's dedication to a sustainable future; to our efforts at nurturing our natural environment and enriching our cultural amenities; and to the sense of commitment and determination for a better future that Volkswagen's leaders culled from their conversations with people who live and work here and who spoke optimistically of their values, culture, schools, housing, hospitals and quality of life.
- ♻️ **TN's top luxury hotel takes Five Star approach to funding preservation.** The Hermitage Hotel in Nashville partners with The Land Trust for Tennessee to inaugurate an innovate program to save what is finest about TN – the state's open space, farms, woodlands, scenic corridors, vistas and historic places. The hotel is now offering guests the chance to donate \$2 to The Land Trust for each night of their stay – generating \$50,000 each year. About 500 acres of scenic and historic land will be protected each year through this partnership.
- ♻️ **GSMNP gets greener.** Two new vehicles classified as Neighborhood Electric Vehicles were donated to the park through a Clean Fuels Advance Technology grant and the Friends of the Smokies. The park has assigned them to highly-visible uses where they serve as tools to help educate visitors about the park's air quality issues.
- ♻️ **Sustainable Shelby.** County Mayor Wharton challenges the citizens of Shelby County to consider the choices in their community's future and to develop its first sustainability agenda. Over four months, seven committees developed an sustainable action plan that gave equal weight to the opinions of the committees and the public.
- ♻️ **Franklin's Charge to create Civil War Park.** The land where the fiercest fighting during the Battle of Franklin was fought will be purchased by the Civil War Preservation Group. The group's goal is to create an open space for the park.
- ♻️ **Burgess Falls Park grows by 45 acres.** Burgess Falls State Park grows with the addition of 45 acres to the state park's current property located near the final and largest of three waterfalls in the park. TN used funds set aside for land acquirement to purchase this addition to the park and plans are to leave the land in its natural state.
- ♻️ **Environment-friendly international convention comes to Knoxville.** EcoQuest International will bring its international convention to the Knoxville Convention Center on August 19-22, 2009. With an average of 3,000 attendees from all over the U.S. and 19 different countries, the EQ convention features world-renowned speakers, training sessions and hands-on experience with new eco-friendly products. EQ International is a global leader in the indoor environmental health industry.
- ♻️ **Scott's Gulf to be protected by TPGF.** TN Parks and Greenways Foundation acquired 689 acres of Scott's Gulf in Sparta. The land will now be protected against development and will be opened up to the public to enjoy. About 55,000 acres total of Scott's Gulf have been acquired by TPGF to date.
- ♻️ **Oak Ridge to be part of the National Ecological Observatory Network.** This network will provide valuable information related to climate change, biodiversity and invasive species, infectious diseases, etc. Being selected as a candidate core site to represent the Southern Appalachians and Cumberland Plateau domain is a reflection of the unique environmental and infrastructure qualities and the long history of excellent research conducted at Walker Branch Watershed, said Pat Mulholland, senior scientist at ORNL.



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- ♻️ **Chattanooga recognized by MSN as Smart City.** Chattanooga is one of 12 unexpected urban areas that are doing good green stuff. Sustainability is nothing new in this mid-sized Tennessee city, in the early 1980s, its leaders began a comprehensive effort to improve the economic, environmental, and social aspects of the place they call home. Through an extensive community-oriented process, Chattanooga revitalized its downtown riverfront, put a new emphasis on developing and renovating affordable housing, worked to amend land-use codes that discouraged mixed-use development, and actively wooed non-polluting industries. All of which put it decidedly ahead of the curve in the green-city arena.
- ♻️ **Oak Ridge's Secret City Festival goes green.** As the first step of a two-year transition to become a green event, the Secret City Festival has invited the East TN Earth Day Coalition to join as waste coordinators. The ETEDC will establish recycle centers at the festival, as they did at the community's Earth Day Festival where more than 75% of the festival waste was composted or recycled. Over the next two years, these steps and others will be implemented so the festival will not only be one of the premier festivals in the southeast, but also one of the greenest.
- ♻️ **New event shows off Unicoi County's natural side.** When your backyard is the Appalachian mountains, there is no shortage of outdoor recreational activities. Unicoi County officials showed their natural side at a major new tourism event called Mountain Expo. The Expo was created to showcase the natural beauty, wildlife, heritage and recreational opportunities in the county. The event was a tremendous success with over 4,000 attendees.
- ♻️ **Chattanooga Green Committee submits interim report.** In June, the committee submitted its interim report to Chattanooga's mayor listing ways to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions. The committee consists of four task forces including education and policy, natural resources, healthy communities and energy efficiency. The city's goal is to reduce the city's carbon footprint, or the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, by 7% by 2012.
- ♻️ **Nashville Metro Parks Nature Centers receive Governor's environmental award.** Metro Parks win the award for its centers at Shelby Bottoms Greenway and Beaman and Bells Bend parks. Features include a green roof, electricity generation utilizing photovoltaic cells, geothermal heat pumps and pervious concrete sidewalks.
- ♻️ **Sustainable tourism continues at Governor's Conference.** The 2008 Governor's Conference on Tourism will feature an educational session focusing on sustainable tourism as a follow-up to the GSM Sustainable Tourism Summit.
- ♻️ **Sustainable tourism gets a seat at the economic development table.** The 2008 Governor's Conference on Economic and Community Development will feature a breakout session on Civil War Heritage and Sustainable Tourism.
- ♻️ **Sustainable Tourism Initiative presented at two national conferences.** Commissioner Susan Whitaker will participate in panel discussions at two national conferences for the Travel Industry Association – on August 23-26, 2008 at the Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations in Florida and on October 27-30, 2008 at Marketing Outlook Forum in Oregon.



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- ♻️ **ARC Gems of Appalachia grants announced.** Tennessee projects include: Tennessee Overhill to educate community leaders on tourism sustainability and development, land planning, and regional integration; Great Smoky Mountains Association in Tennessee to develop audio and video podcasts on natural and cultural history, recreational opportunities and local tourist attractions; Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association to add video and audio tours to the Web site and develop GIS configured biking trails and interface with other trails; Cocke County Partnership Tennessee to create a water recreation system for Douglas Lake and French Broad, Pigeon and Nolichucky rivers; and Unicoi County to develop a strategic economic development plan with emphasis on sustainable tourism, compatible land use planning and smart growth practices.
- ♻️ **Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival wins 2008 Greener Festival Award .** Bonnaroo is excited to announce they are one the first recipients of the prestigious 2008 Greener Festival Award for their efforts in promoting environmentally friendly music festivals. So far this year, Bonnaroo is the only festival in America to receive the award and was singled out as a 'beacon of excellence.' The Festival continues to take progressive steps towards mitigating the event's environmental impact and in 2008 new initiative included a car-pooling competition where vehicles with four or more occupants could win VIP tickets, an extensive recycling and on-site composting program and excellent environmental education and campaigning in the now famous 'Planet Roo' village.
- ♻️ **Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Gatlinburg raises the stakes in the Sevier County Lodging Industry.** In an effort to support and build upon Gatlinburg Goes Green initiative, HMS along with development team from Hilton Garden Inn are working to earn the coveted U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) LEED Silver Level certification. When accepted, the certification will confirm that third-party experts verify that the hotel satisfies criteria for sustainable site development, water conservation, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environment quality. "HMS will not only will bring in the award winning mid-priced Hilton Garden Inn brand to Gatlinburg but we also hope to showcase a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified hotel." said Logan Coykendall, president of Hospitality Management Solutions. "There are currently only seven LEED certified hotels in the nation with none in Tennessee."
- ♻️ **Tennessee River Gorge is among the green-ist attractions available.** A new Chattanooga attraction keeps making waves among locals and visitors alike. The Tennessee River Gorge Explorer offers a 90-minute tour of the river gorge and a glimpse at protected wildlife. This is a unique boat in that it's the only high speed vessel of it's type operating in an inland water way in North America. The 2 point 6 million dollar boat is among the "green"-ist options available. Congressman Wamp states, "They are taking data from these engines and they are designed to meet the latest EPA, tier 2 standards. I don't think you could be the Tennessee Aquarium and have the reputation they have globally for environmental sensitivity without having a boat like this one." He calls the attraction a bold step for Chattanooga. Wamp says, "This is educational, it's environmental and it's fun."
- ♻️ **Lookout Mountain tops in US natural attractions according to AOL.** AOL Travel and the Travel Industry Association recently named "America's Amazing Natural Wonders" and Ruby Falls and Rock City both made the top of the list. Ruby Falls was listed as number three on AOL's travel page and Rock City was number five. This recognition follows last year's accolades of Ruby Falls taking the number four spot on RealTravel's "Top Ten Hidden American Treasures" list and being dubbed by GotoBus.com as one of the "Seven Natural Wonders in the U.S."



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- ♻️ **Green focus of city affirmed Image-makers weigh tourism outlook.** The city's future is green. Bob Doak, president and chief executive of the Chattanooga Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau, said his organization will continue to push Chattanooga's green initiative and maintain its eco-friendly reputation. "We were green before it was truly cool to be green," Mr. Doak said. The city's commitment to the ecology helped it capture Volkswagen, he said, calling it a company dedicated to sustainable manufacturing and the design and assembly of automobiles that will have a reduced effect on the environment. "**Does anyone still wonder if going green matters?**" he asked. Mr. Doak said the Convention and Visitors Bureau will set timetables to implement new environmental practices, work closely with environmental groups such as GreenSpaces, Mayor Ron Littlefield's Green Committee as well as Outdoor Chattanooga.
- ♻️ **Governor Bredesen, Energy Task Force To Discuss EcoBuild Program.** Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen and the Governor's Energy Policy Task Force will meet today at 9 a.m. at the Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division Administration Building and afterward tour the Uptown neighborhood to learn about MLGW's EcoBuild program. The task force will make recommendations to help Tennessee become a leader in energy efficiency and conservation through the use of alternative fuels, renewable resources and the development of clean-energy technology.
- ♻️ **Priority: Gatlinburg Final Report Presented.** After months of research, study and fact-finding, leadership of the Gatlinburg Partnership Council make its final report to the community. The Chattanooga consulting firm Kennedy, Coulter, Rushing and Watson (KCRW) has led the Priority: Gatlinburg project, with the City of Gatlinburg providing the primary funding, aided by the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce and the Gatlinburg Gateway Foundation. KCRW distilled information gathered into five priority areas for next steps: 1) Greening of Gatlinburg, 2) Improving Workforce Housing, 3) Preserving Mountain Views, 4) Authentically Representing Gatlinburg's Place, History & Culture, and 5) Developing More Attractive Buildings & Public Realm.
- ♻️ **College kids in Tennessee help to spread green gospel.** Rebecca Flowers, a senior at St. Cecilia Academy wants a place where students walk or bike to class, where recycling is a way of life and where energy is conserved by such things as outdoor classes. Flowers and her classmates care more about the environment than did college students a decade ago, and they want to know that their schools are practicing the green gospel that has become an integral part of their lives. In response, colleges are touting a wide range of green measures, from energy-saving buildings and revamped recycling efforts to campus cars that run on used cooking oil. But for all of the emphasis on energy-efficient infrastructures, the greatest contribution of colleges could well be the environmental awareness students are developing on campus.
- ♻️ **Storytelling goes digital as network links historic sites.** A consortium of local educational and tourism-related organizations has established a new wireless Wi-Fi network in the downtown area that will promote Knoxville's black heritage through digital storytelling. Knoxville African American Tours of Cultural Heritage will offer a "cultural heritage tour" encompassing 15 historically significant sites, said Avon Rollins, director of the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, the lead partner in the project. Of the 15 sites, 10 will feature digital storytelling presentations produced by Carpetbag Theatre, a partner in the project, while all sites will be featured on the network using text and photographs of people, places and events in Knoxville's history. The wireless network will be accessible to anyone with a Wi-Fi-enabled device and should be completed by mid-October, said Eric Ogle, project coordinator for the University of Tennessee Community Partnership Center, the partner in the KAATCH project with responsibility for design and implementation of the network.



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- ♻️ **Group protects historic enclave with ties to Civil War.** Its Civil War significance aside, the South Knoxville site that was once Fort Higley can still surprise newcomers with its lush urban woodlands, tucked away barely a mile from downtown in an enclave that could just as easily be mistaken for a quiet corner of the Great Smoky Mountains. And the Aslan Foundation wants to ensure it will stay that way. The local philanthropy of the late attorney Lindsay Young purchased nearly 100 acres - encompassing the majority of the former Union Army encampment recognizing its value as a historic and aesthetic community asset worth protecting from encroaching development.
- ♻️ **Gatlinburg hillsides group wraps up work.** The final meeting of the Gatlinburg Hillsides & Ridges Taskforce Committee resulted in unanimous approval to send its recommendations on to the City Commission. The draft copy of the task force recommendations was compiled by City Planner David Ball and Assistant City Planner Ashley Miller. Ken Maples said, "The process was very fair and balanced. We blazed a trail because I know Sevierville and Sevier County's committees were watching what we did. With our terrain and proximity to the (national park), it's good that we were the first to do this."
- ♻️ **SmartBank opens third office in Gatlinburg.** SmartBank has opened its third office in Gatlinburg. "The building was designed with the same look and feel as other SmartBank offices. This one really fits well with the natural landscape of the Gatlinburg community," SmartBank President and CEO Billy Carroll said in a statement. SmartBank recently received the "Gold-Level Award" from the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce in their "Gatlinburg Goes Green" campaign. This is the first SmartBank office constructed within the parameters of an environmentally friendly "green" facility.
- ♻️ **Centennial Park added to national historic list.** Nashville's Centennial Park has been added to the National Registry of Historic Places. Metro Parks and Recreation Executive Director Roy Wilson said the city learned of the designation Thursday. "The National Registry is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation," Wilson said. "No park in our inventory is more worthy of preservation. It is a beloved place for thousands of people who visit from all over the world."
- ♻️ **Grant Announced For 'Quilt Trail' Development.** The Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development Council has received a \$10,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The grant, which is administered through the ARC, provides funding to develop a map and signage program for the "Follow the Quilt Trail" which is expected to attract more visitors to the area. The Quilt Trail features 70 hand-painted murals of traditional quilt patterns on barns, museum and gallery walls, and other visible places in Carter, Greene, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington counties.
- ♻️ **Tennessee School "Pulled Out of the Fire."** A long-neglected school built in 1929 has a shot at seeing its centennial. "It got pulled out of the fire at the last minute," says Dan Brown, executive director of the Tennessee Preservation Trust. "The Sgt. York Foundation was elated to have the opportunity to save this schoolhouse," says H. Lee Barfield II, partner at Nashville-based Bass, Berry and Sims, who represents the foundation and three of Sgt. York's ancestors. "If you honor the vision of Alvin York, who helped build it and mortgaged his farm, a future use would be as an educational purpose," says Patrick McIntyre, state historic preservation officer, who petitioned state agencies to save the York Institute. "We're so proud of how it all turned out."



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- ♻️ **Manager hired for Cades Cove shuttle tour.** Alex Roch is the new manager of the Cades Cove Heritage Tours program, which was established by the Cades Cove Shuttle Task Force to provide a voluntary nonprofit educational tour of Cades Cove. The Cades Cove Heritage Tours will use 19-passenger touring vehicles, taking visitors from the Great Smoky Mountain Heritage Center in Townsend into Cades Cove. The program was designed to provide visitors with the option of experiencing the Cove through an interactive tour and lessening the environmental impact of tourism.
- ♻️ **Tennessee Civil War Guide Announced by SETTA.** A newly produced driving trail directs people all across southeast Tennessee, serving up a mixed batch of sites and stories from this significant time in history. Southeast Tennessee's Civil War Trails, Fighting for the Rails brochure provides a designated path for travelers to follow as they explore sites associated with the American Civil War in Tennessee. The brochure has 47 sites and covers 10 counties. Southeast Tennessee Tourism Association (SETTA) worked in conjunction with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development.
- ♻️ **Sevier, Blount and Cocke Counties Plan Gateway Green.** As a follow-up to the GSM Sustainable Tourism Summit these three counties will team up to hold a one day sustainable symposium, Gateway Green on January 29, 2009. This meeting will be an educational forum for residents, leadership and businesses to learn ways they can be more sustainable in their homes and businesses.