

Visitor's bureau redesigns Web site to boost area

By Jenny Munro

BUSINESS WRITER

jmunro@greenvillenews.com

The Greenville Convention and Visitors Bureau wants to make it easier for visitors to find out more about the city and surrounding areas and plans to invest about \$200,000 over two fiscal years in that challenge.

The CVB has launched a redesigned Web site that is more user friendly and includes more information for visitors, meeting planners, groups, CVB members and the local community, said Lauren Posta, CVB marketing manager.

"Research tells us the Web is a tool that everyone utilizes," said Pam Swanner, CVB vice president. "We wanted to bring our site up to date. It's bringing our

local tourism partners into the fold."

In addition to the redesign, the CVB is integrating its Web site and database, search engine, e-mail sales and other electronic systems, said Diane Wilson, director of information services for the CVB. Major companies involved are Aristotle Web Designs, which specializes in tourism-related Web sites, and Software Management Inc., which is working with the database integration.

Planning has been going on for some months, but the redesign began in July, Wilson said. The redesigned Web site will be regional in its content.

Tools within the site will benefit the entire community, Swanner said. The tools will help resi-

WANT TO SEE IT?

■ The Greenville Convention and Visitors Bureau redesigned Web site can be found at its old address —
www.greenvillevcb.com.

dents learn more about activities in the area and enhance the efforts of the local tourism community to sell the Greenville area.

"Our Web enhancements support the aggressive sales work we're doing in luring meetings and conventions along with leisure weekend getaways to Greenville," said Chris Stone, CVB president.

The homepage is an overview of attractions in downtown Greenville and the surrounding mountains, Posta said. Informa-

tion about accommodations has been enhanced. A calendar of events includes featured events and can be searched by location, event and other methods.

Also, local event organizers are encouraged to submit their events online. After approval by the CVB, the event will be listed with others on the page.

"It's a tool that allows us to reach out to the community," Swanner said.

A trip planner can be found on every page of the Web site, allowing users to save information that would be useful in creating a trip to the area.

The accommodations page will include the featured accommodations, which are full-service hotels that are CVB members, as well as other hotels.

Also included is a map and transportation page, which includes an interactive map that people can use to plot their stops and three Michelin North America maps of downtown Greenville, Greenville County and the surrounding area.

Members of the CVB also can enter their new events, special packages, and coupons or delete events from the Web site without having to go through the CVB, Swanner said.

Also, the Web site interacts with the CVB database. Information in one updates the other, Posta said.

Information is added to the site daily and additional capabilities will be added over the next several months, she said.