

Roaming Gnome was tourism gold mine

As many of you may have seen or heard, the Travelocity Roaming Gnome visited Savannah recently to promote our beautiful city

as a top tourism destination to their national audience.

The objective of the Gnome's visit was to raise Visit Savannah's social capital. This promotion was a chance for us to take advantage

of Travelocity's leading position within social media (45,913 Twitter followers and 84,718 Facebook fans), and it offered us a fresh and engaging platform to use to spread our message of Savannah as a destination.

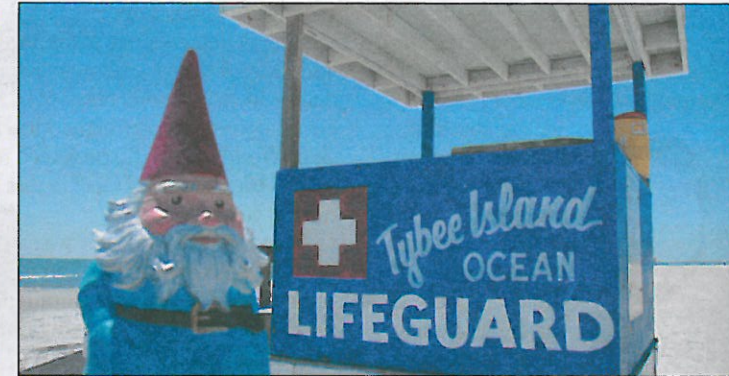
To say the Gnome was well received in Savannah would be the understatement of the year – people went crazy over the Gnome. His celebrity status generated a lot of chatter in Savannah, as well as on all Social Media networks for both Visit Savannah and Travelocity.

In fact, many Visit Savannah and Travelocity fans talked about how much they love Savannah and all of the Gnome's adventures – most of them can't wait to visit for the first time or for a return trip.

Many of the most popular attractions in Savannah were showcased online and in print through the Gnome's tour of Savannah, including Tybee Island,



Melissa Yao



Photos courtesy of Visit Savannah / Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce

Many of the most popular attractions in Savannah were showcased online and in print through the Travelocity Gnome's tour of Savannah, including Tybee Island, The Crab Shack, Bonaventure Cemetery, Historic Downtown Savannah, The Lady and Sons and River Street.

The Crab Shack, Bonaventure Cemetery, Historic Downtown Savannah, The Lady and Sons, River Street, the Hyatt, Mrs. Wilkes' Boarding House, Churchill's, the Ships of the Sea Museum, the Chamber's Annual Taste of Downtown, the Historic Savannah Theatre, the Savannah Slow Ride, the Owen-Thomas House and many more.

During the Gnome's three day visit, at least 30 Savannah Chamber members/partners were impacted positively by interactions with the Gnome.

Online, Visit Savannah was impacted greatly in our social media statistics. More than 390,000 impressions occurred on our Facebook page during the visit.

On Twitter, @Visit Savannah

acquired 317 new followers in the week that the Gnome visited, and the @RoamingGnome account tweeted to over 14,080 qualified twitter travelers.

Travelocity also retweeted the information to more than 45,913 followers on their official Twitter page.

There are also custom photo albums on the Travelocity (Roaming Gnome) Facebook page, which reaches their 84,718 Facebook fans and generated a total of 180,458 impressions.

Their video with our Forrest Gump impersonator generated 49,531 impressions on top of that.

Travelocity's online numbers on the visit include 42 out-going tweets with 805 interactions with retweets. The total impact of the social media interactions and

impressions translates to a 5 percent increase in followers for Visit Savannah both on Twitter and Facebook with 317 new followers on Twitter and 2,147 new followers on Facebook.

Additionally, we experienced great local and national media coverage with the Gnome's visit covered by CNBC, WSAV, WTOG, WJCL, South Magazine, blogs like "With a Southern Twist", The National Post Canada, and the Gnome was even on the front page of the Savannah Morning News.

Travelocity has been a key partner in driving tourism to Savannah, delivering 39,002 rooms sold into the Savannah market in 2010. This was an increase of more than 20 percent from 2009 or an impressive 6,500 additional hotel nights into the market.

Additionally, packaged room nights, including airfare, were also up 3.3 percent from 2009. The Roaming Gnome's visit to Savannah was a unique and successful drive of awareness and tourism to our city, reaching nearly 9 million travelers overall through Twitter, Facebook, email and media.

Visit Savannah looks forward to the additional benefits of a future visit as more and more visitors follow in the Roaming Gnome's footsteps.

For more information on the Gnome's adventures in Savannah, contact me at 912-644-6431 or MYao@VisitSavannah.com.

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