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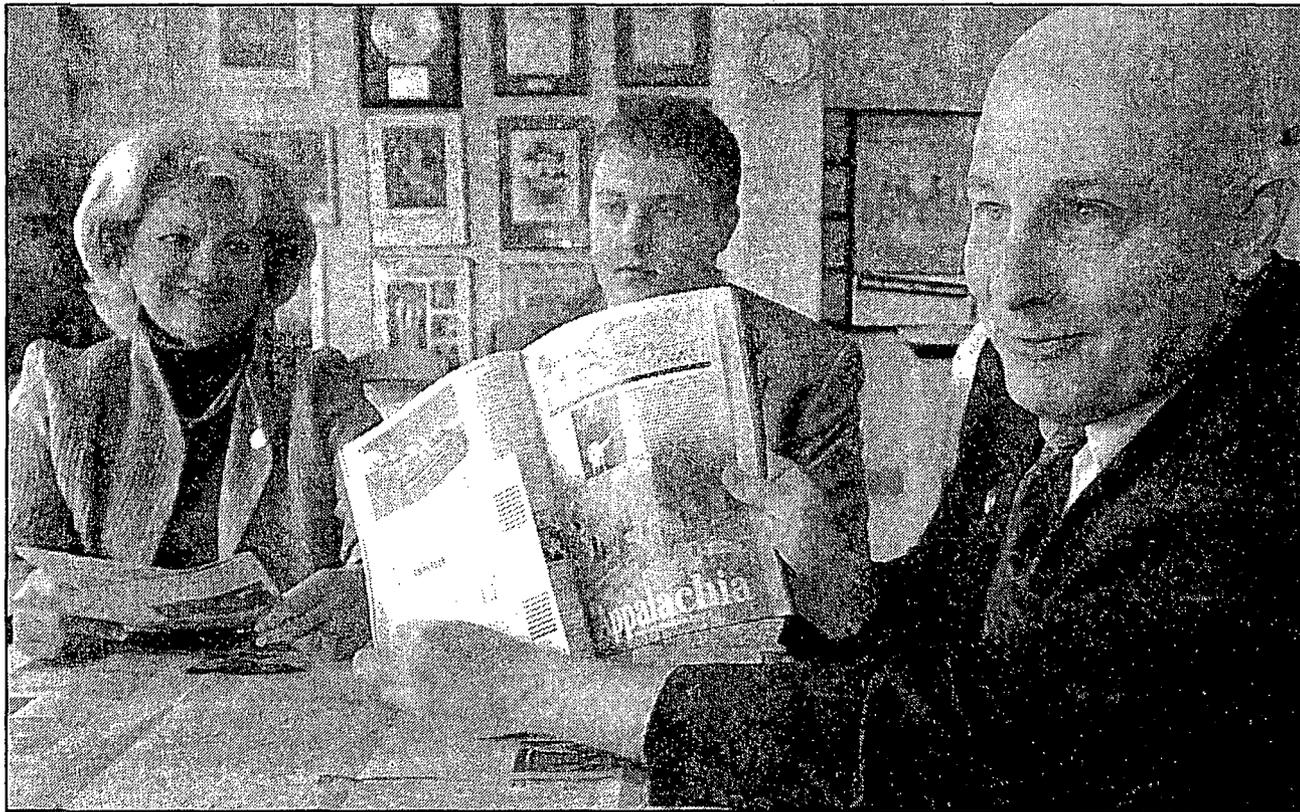
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# Local & State

The Huntsville Times | Tuesday, March 25, 2008



Eric Schultz/Huntsville Times

Richard Peltz shows the new Appalachia map in the upcoming issue of National Geographic's Traveler magazine to Dana Lee Jennings, left, and Adam Harbin.

## We're trailblazin'

### National Geographic Traveler map touts 4 driving tours in state

By **PATRICIA C. McCARTER**  
Times Staff Writer  
patricia.mccarter@htimes.com

Soon, the 800,000 readers of *National Geographic Traveler* will discover just how much Appalachia has to offer.

In its April issue, the travel magazine will publish a 20-inch by 28-inch pull-out map highlighting the best driving tours in the 13 Appalachian states. Among the four must-see trips that go through this state are the 32-church Hallelujah Trail, the North Alabama Birding Trail, the Lookout Mountain Parkway and the Natchez Trace Parkway.

"No other state has more trails included than Alabama," said Dana Lee Jennings, president of the Alabama Mountain Lakes Association, which created the church tour. "It just goes to show that there's a lot to do and a lot to see on one tank of gas."

Richard Peltz, co-chair of the Appalachian Regional Commission with its headquarters in Washington, D.C., said *National Geographic Traveler* included a different map of Appalachian tourist sites in April 2005, and the response was amazing.

"There was a very large increase in tourism in the area, and it could be traced back to that map being in the



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Blackwell Swamp in the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge is part of the North Alabama Birding Trail.

magazine," Peltz said. "People who love to travel really pore over these National Geographic maps. They plan their vacations by them. They call up and make reservations off of them."

"I think it's going to be a tremendous boon and up and down Appalachia."

The region begins in New York and goes down the Eastern Seaboard, ending in north Mississippi.

Here's how the map characterizes the driving tours in Alabama:

■ **Hallelujah Trail:** Take a spiritual journey along this trail linking 32 century-old churches and synagogues ... experience the story of religion in the American South as told through song,

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architecture and local legends.

■ **North Alabama Birding Trail:** A series of 50 roadside stops help you spot the eastern woodland birds and waterfowl that flock to and through north Alabama ... Pileated and Red-headed woodpeckers, noisy great-crested flycatchers, Carolina wrens and swainson warblers ... Birds are more active in the morning, so plan to stay overnight.

■ **Natchez Trace Parkway:** This 444-mile National Scenic Highway, originally used by buffalo, served as a key trading route for Native Americans and traders ... Over 400 types of wildlife and 800 plant species live here ... Renowned for its unspoiled natural beauty, the parkway blooms with fresh scents and new grass each spring; it turns brilliant with bold color in fall.

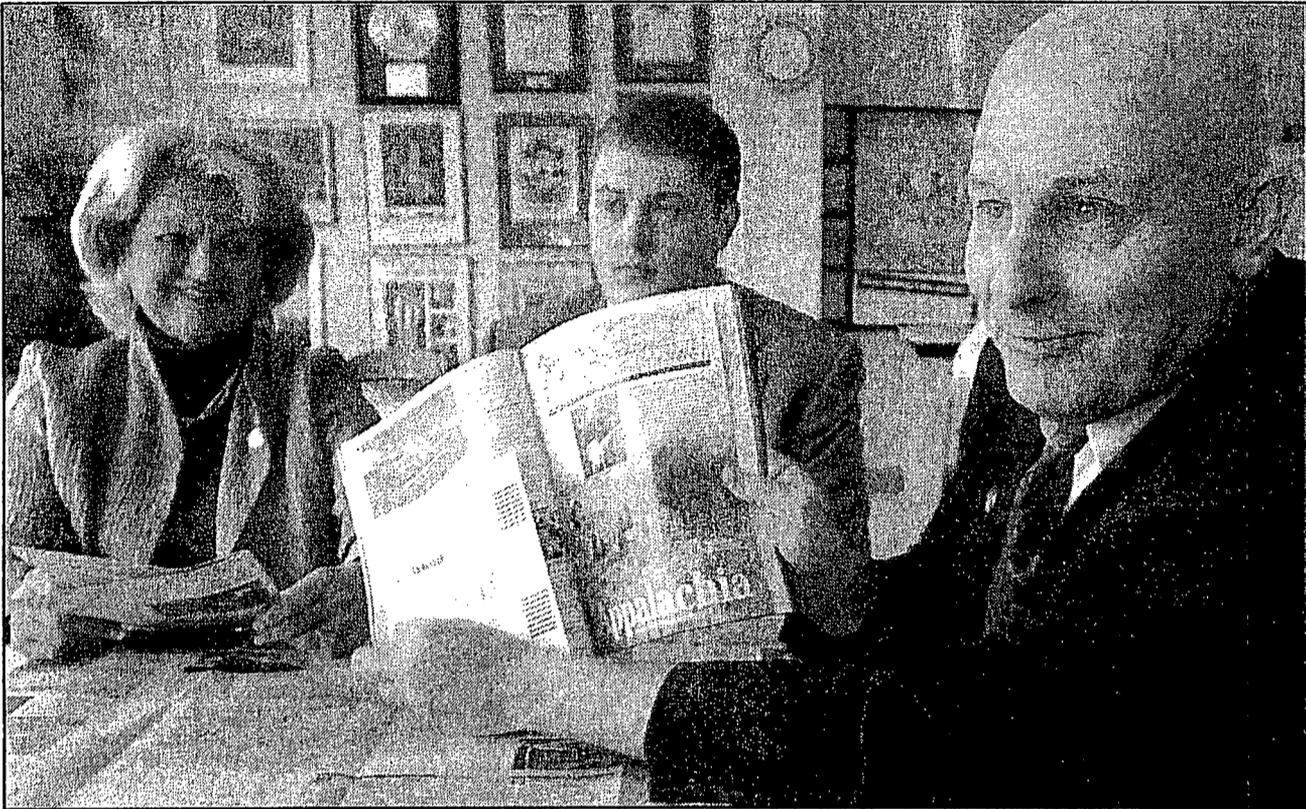
■ **Lookout Mountain Parkway:** From Nocalula Falls in Gadsden to Chattanooga, this route roams along waterfalls and gorges, through dense forests and historic towns.

"We are blessed to live in such a glorious region," Peltz said, "but many of us don't know what's available to us within 50 or 60 miles."

In addition to the 800,000 copies of the map published in *National Geographic Traveler*, Peltz said another million were printed to be distributed at visitor centers and other tourism venues.

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