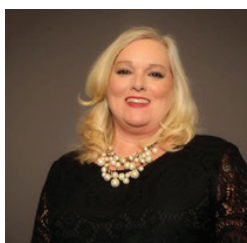


## ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION STAFF BIOGRAPHIES



Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association  
NorthAlabama.org

The Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association was formed in 1964 with the express purpose of developing North Alabama's travel industry and marketing the region to the traveling public. We now serve sixteen counties with an ever-expanding membership base representing progressive travel-regulated businesses and associations as well as various levels of government. Our hope is to expand on, and not duplicate, the objectives or efforts of local associations and organizations that represent specific industry components. We all prosper by working together in a unified effort to promote the sixteen-county region's natural, historic and man-made attractions.



### **Tami Reist, AMLA President/CEO**

During her more than three decade long career in the tourism and travel industry, Tami has lived by the theme expressed by the famous American heroine Helen Keller, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." This theme is carried forth in all of her speaking engagements across the country and has had proven results in her professional accomplishments.

Tami is the President/CEO of the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association (AMLA). Her duties include planning, implementing, directing, and evaluating all promotional programs as well as overall development of the tourism and travel industry within the 16 northernmost counties in Alabama. The region currently generates more than \$2.6 billion in travel expenditures on an annual basis.

Tami is a board member for a number of tourism and travel-related and civic organizations including: Governor Appointee to the Scenic Byways Committee, Alabama Tourism Chair for the Appalachian Regional Commission, Southeast Tourism Society Legislative Council, the Alabama Bicentennial Commission, Alabama Travel Council, Alabama Council of Association Executives, Alabama Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, and numerous other local and state travel related groups. Tami is also an instructor at the Southeast Tourism Society's Marketing College and has been a contributing presenter to the tourism and travel field of study at Mississippi State University. Among her many recognitions are the ATHENA Leadership Award from the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce, the Alabama Travel Council Partnership Award, the Southeast Tourism Society Dorothy Hardman Spirit Award, and *This is Alabama* and *Birmingham* magazine's Women Who Shape the State honoree.



### **Angie Pierce, AMLA Vice President of Operations & Marketing**

Ms. Pierce has been in the destination marketing industry for the past 23 years. She is currently the Vice President of Operations for the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association where she is heavily involved with the marketing, website development & management, program development, and financial operations for AMLA.

Ms. Pierce currently serves on the Finance Committee of the Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. Ms. Pierce was recognized as Tourism Employee of the Year in 2010 by the State of Alabama and recognized by the Southeastern Outdoor Press Association with the prestigious President's Award.

She is a graduate of Athens State University where she received a BS in Business and of the Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College where she received her TMP in Marketing.

She currently resides in Athens, AL with her husband Larry.



### **Tina Lawler, AMLA Membership Recruitment & Development, Legislative Liason**

Tina Lawler is responsible for seeking and recruiting new members, maintaining contact with current members, and striving for 100% membership retention for AMLA. In addition to her membership duties, Tina is the creator of Tina's Travels, a popular two-minute promotional video that takes followers on a journey across North Alabama by highlighting a different attraction each week. She received her Flawless Delivery certification from Calhoun Community College and is working on her TMP – Travel Marketing Professional - certification from Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College. She came to AMLA with 11 years of tourism experience.

Prior to joining AMLA, she was the activities director at Rock Bridge Equestrian Park, where she helped build the equestrian park from the beginning to a five-star horse park and campground and she was instrumental in the start of the Spirit of Hodges Festival where she assisted with fundraising efforts and seeking sponsors from 2007 to 2013.

## ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION STAFF BIOGRAPHIES



Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association  
NorthAlabama.org



### **Melea Hames, AMLA Social Media Manager**

A 1995 Auburn University graduate, Melea has been a social media manager in the tourism industry for more than a decade at Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association. At AMLA, Melea is responsible for creating content on Visit North Alabama's social media platforms, writing blog posts on the website, coordinating the North Alabama Ambassador Program, and speaking at various events and meetings about social media. Recently, Melea has become the host of Unexpected Adventures in North Alabama, AMLA's new podcast.

Prior to working for AMLA, Melea received her Masters at UNA in Secondary Education and taught middle school English and coached middle school cheerleaders for three years. She also taught English at Calhoun Community College for 8 1/2 half years. Before that she worked in public relations for an advertising agency in Atlanta, a minor league baseball team in Columbus, Georgia, and for Auburn University in the development office. Just last year, Melea created her very own social media marketing agency called M and M Social. She loves to write, travel, walk in the park (she walked over 600 miles in 2020), go to Auburn games, and read books about WWII.



### **Craig A. Johnston, AMLA Director of Workforce Development Training & Advocacy**

Craig is an experienced senior leader in various areas of corporate and community leadership, leadership coaching, training & development, and business & quality management. Craig is driven by the idea that training builds knowledge, knowledge builds power, and knowledge with action builds success. His passion for the growth, development, and success of people within their role, their community, and beyond is what drives his success. Prior to joining AMLA, he served as President & CEO / Executive Director of the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce and continues to serve the Chamber and community as a member of the Chamber Board of Directors. His passion and work ethic are clearly shown through the various programs, community events, training activities, and leadership development he has delivered throughout his career. Craig is also Senior Pastor of Life Center Fellowship church in Moulton, AL, which he founded in 2020.

As Director of Workforce Development Training & Advocacy for AMLA, Craig is focused on setting and achieving the organization's long-term vision to help develop the workforce within the tourism industry. He is responsible for the development and implementation of various training programs and certifications to help improve the overall competencies, effectiveness, and behavioral results that directly impact the tourism industry in North Alabama.

Craig attended Mobile University and has achieved numerous training certifications/designations over the years. He received his Flawless Delivery certification from Calhoun Community College and is working on his TMP – Travel Marketing Professional – certification from Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College. He currently resides in Town Creek, AL.

**Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association**  
**402 Sherman Street, SE • P.O. Box 2537 • Decatur, AL 35602 • 256-350-3500/ 800-648-5381 • Fax: 256-350-3519**  
**[www.northalabama.org](http://www.northalabama.org) • [www.amla4tourism.com](http://www.amla4tourism.com)**

**NORTH ALABAMA COUNTIES SERVED BY AMLA:**  
Blount, Cherokee, Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Franklin, Jackson,  
Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, Winston

**AFFILIATE GROUPS:**  
Southeast Tourism Society, SEOPA, Professional Outdoor Media Association,  
Alabama Destination Marketing Organization, Alabama Hospitality Association,  
Alabama Travel Council, Appalachian Regional Commission, US Travel Assn., National Tour Assn.,  
American Assn. of Retirement Communities, Leave No Trace, Harvest Host,  
Tennessee River Valley Council