

# ANNUAL REPORT

*Johnston  
County*  
VISITORS BUREAU

FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020



REVIEW OF MARKETING PROGRAMS





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ALL GAVE SOME - SO



Dedicated to the memory of all who  
proudly served and protected their country





# A YEAR CUT SHORT BY COVID

WRITTEN BY DONNA BAILEY-TAYLOR

Usually we recount to our industry partners the success and highlights of our marketing programs, and our next year's projections for tourism in Johnston County. This year's Annual Report will not be like ones that have come before. Although, we are happy to announce our 2019 tourism spending numbers reported by the VisitNC team were up 7.83%, we also need to point out this Fiscal Year's

programs were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. By March 20th, all marketing programs that could be halted were done so to save the bureau's budget as best we could. We will share with you some highlights before the crisis, and keep the report short this year. We will continue our work to market through the crisis, and we look forward to the day when we all can say -- tourism is on the rise!





# 2019 VISITOR SPENDING

CALENDAR YEAR DATA FOR 2019

Expenditures	\$276.08 M
Percentage Increase	7.83%
Payroll	\$44.99 M
Employment	2,000
State Tax Receipts	\$15.26 M
Local Tax Receipts	\$6.92 M
Tax savings per resident	\$107.67





# TAX COLLECTIONS

## 3% County Tax Collections

	2019-2020	2018-19	Variance (+/-)	Percent
July	\$95,891.37	\$84,407.80	\$11,483.57	
August	\$90,392.71	\$81,467.98	\$8,924.73	
September	\$84,917.39	\$110,798.78	(\$25,881.39)*	
October	\$85,663.26	\$109,866.73	(\$24,203.47)*	
November	\$79,913.11	\$88,976.50	(\$9,093.39)*	
December	\$70,584.71	\$73,053.80	(\$2,469.09)	
January	\$61,938.56	\$66,924.40	(\$4,985.84)	
February	\$61,938.56	\$66,040.66	(\$4,777.68)	
March	\$65,425.36	\$97,464.59	(\$25,134.26)**	
April	\$31,615.63	\$81,854.18	(\$65,848.96)**	
May	\$41,952.76	\$97,165.22	(\$55,212.46)**	
June	\$61,115.12	\$88,703.01	(\$27,587.89)**	
	\$830,672.96	\$1,055,429.09	(\$224,756.13)	-19.36%

## Towns 2% Tax

	2019-2020	2018-19	Variance (+/-)	Percent
Smithfield	\$225,777.99	\$287,587.55	(\$61,809.56)	-18.93%
Selma	\$87,195.52	\$133,162.70	(\$45,967.18)	-33.63%
Benson	\$54,565.30	\$63,178.37	(\$8,613.07)	-10.83%
Kenly	\$27,440.85	\$35,460.96	(\$8,020.11)	-19.15%

\*Variance due to hurricane revenues from 2018, and \*\* reflects impact of COVID-19.



# EXPENSES

	FY 2020	FY 2019	VARIANCE
SALARY & WAGES	389,294.44	310,946.75	78,347.69
LONGEVITY PAY	4,500.00	3,360.00	1,140.00
SALARIES/PART-TIME	-0-	2,654.08	(2,654.08)
TRAVEL PER DIEM	6,000.00	6,000.00	-0-
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>399,794.44</b>	<b>322,960.83</b>	<b>76,833.61</b>
SOCIAL SECURITY	29,078.85	23,069.74	6,009.11
HEALTH INSURANCE	59,304.00	44,478.00	14,826.00
LIFE INSURANCE	824.96	651.00	173.96
125 ADMIN. FEE	264.00	198.00	66.00
RETIREMENT	35,441.56	24,515.88	10,925.68
401K	13,389.32	11,775.00	1,614.32
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>138,302.69</b>	<b>104,668.30</b>	<b>33,634.39</b>
<b>OPERATIONS</b>			
LEGAL FEES	2,500.00	2,000.00	500.00
TELEPHONE	7,521.49	6,802.51	718.98
POSTAGE	8,776.17	9,178.62	(402.45)
PRINTING	37,042.96	31,846.54	(5,196.42)
UTILITIES	5,144.57	5,097.51	47.06
TRAVEL & TRADE SHOWS	35,332.88	44,953.30	(9,620.42)
MAINTENANCE & REPAIR	3,350.00	4,960.00	(1,610.00)
EQUIP/BUILDING LEASE	40,809.93	41,747.83	(937.90)
ADVERTISING	226,451.89	252,914.07	(26,462.18)
COOP MARKETING	2,234.96	3,981.39	(1,746.43)
RESEARCH	5,700.00	10,000.00	(4,300.00)
PROSPECT DEVELOPMENT	2,329.00	5,440.03	(3,111.03)
PURCHASES FOR RESALE	365.50	808.00	(442.50)
OFFICE SUPPLIES	7,559.36	9,126.73	(1,567.37)
DEPARTMENT SUPPLIES	1,777.17	3,337.65	(1,560.48)
SOFTWARE PURCHASES	10,552.69	6,754.26	3,798.43
TOWN OF BENSON	24,930.71	44,879.93	(19,949.22)
TOWN OF KENLY	17,186.51	20,847.01	(3,060.50)
SPECIAL EVENTS	469.78	-0-	469.78
MARKETING GRANTS	13,750.00	17,500.00	(3,750.00)
TOWN OF SELMA	101,480.66	67,530.54	33,950.12
TOWN OF SMITHFIELD	114,219.09	246,356.76	(132,137.67)
DUES/SUBSCRIPTIONS	13,750.00	22,351.46	(8,601.46)
INSURANCE/BONDS	647.00	672.00	(25.00)
5% JOCO FEE	-0-	52,615.27	(52,615.27)
STATE GRANT EXPEND.	-0-	7,000.00	(7,000.00)
NON-MAJOR CAPITAL ASSETS	2,199.00	2,454.18	(255.18)
CAPITAL GRANTS	115,242.75	169,063.91	(53,821.16)
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>801,333.54</b>	<b>1,090,257.65</b>	<b>(288,924.11)</b>
<b>REVENUE TOTALS</b>	<b>1,286,819.62</b>	<b>1,571,630.95</b>	<b>(284,811.33)</b>
<b>EXPENSE TOTALS</b>	<b>1,339,431.67</b>	<b>1,517,906.78</b>	<b>(178,475.11)</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>(52,612.05)</b>	<b>53,724.17</b>	



# MARKETING

Marketing and communications is a combination of paid advertising, social media campaigns, hosting media in-market and attending media shows pitching stories on Johnston County's attractions and events.

## # News Releases sent: 40

**Website:** Built new 301 Endless Yard Sale, Bentonville Reenactment, Ava Gardner, & JoCo Grows Agriculture microsites

**Video Production:** Redneck BBQ Competition video, (10) 45 second videos for attractions, Blueberry Picking Video

## Media Placements:

- Welcome Home Downtown: Clayton in *Our State Magazine*
- Ava Gardner Museum, *Sunday Travel, Boston Globe*
- Ava Gardner Museum Traces the Barefoot Contessa's Carolina Roots – *Backroad Planet*
- Country Wedding Weekend in JoCo – *Southern Bride & Groom*
- Hills of Snow – 10 of the South's Best Road Trip Stops, *Garden and Gun*
- Ava Gardner Museum – 10 Off-the-Beaten Path Picks for Museum Day, *Washington Post*
- Ava Gardner Museum – Be Amused on Museum Day, *Toronto Sun*
- Double Barley Fall Beer – *Food + Wine* Online video

## COVID Media coverage:

- Ava Gardner Virtual tours, *Forbes.com* article
- Clayton Parks & Recreation FB Video series, *TV Traveler* site
- Deep River safety efforts, *Triangle Around Town*
- SoDoSoPa on ABC11, with tips by Nathan Wayne to restaurant staff
- Oak City Collection on *WRAL* on how businesses are handling retail during COVID
- InStill, Clayton Beverage, and Broadslab, featured for making hand sanitizer, *WRAL*

Facebook followers: **17,320**

Instagram followers: **2,308**



# WEB

## SESSIONS

317,020 up 22.82%

## PAGE VIEWS

561,425 up 4.3%

## SESSION DURATION

1:28 up 6.19%

## BOUNCE RATE

62.66 down 6.24%

## Top 10 Landing Pages:

Bentonville Reenactment - 61,055  
Ava Gardner Museum - 24,628  
Events Page - 10,743  
Rvacation RV Park - 9,271  
JoCo Strong/COVID - 9,236  
301 Endless Yard Sale - 8,604  
Skyfest Event - 6,272  
Carolina Premium Outlets - 6,071  
Meadow Lights - 4,797  
Town of Clayton - 4,784





# SALES & SERVICE

The JCVB staff participates in several sales missions throughout the year, including serving on boards with professional organizations that book small meetings in the Triangle region. Staff attended the **Association Executives of North Carolina's** annual trade show to promote meeting facilities and hotel spaces with our partner, Simple Twist Restaurant who showcased their catering selections.

National leisure and group shows included the **Washington DC Travel & Adventure Show** with 11,323 attendees and the **New York Times Travel Show** with 34,015 attendees. Staff also attended the **Travel South Domestic Showcase** in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where one-on-one appointments were held with motor coach tour operators.

**Bookings** (many rescheduled due to COVID) – Cycle NC 2019, Shriners Convention, NC Water Ski Association State Championship, Cycle NC October 2020, ride (returning in 2021), Cotton Town 7's Rugby Tournament, and the Small College Rugby Organization National Tournament.

**Fams:** Welcome Center Managers – July 2019

## **Simpleview Top ten listings hits:**

RVacation - 9,649  
New Jumbo China - 5,785  
Clayton Parks & Recreation - 4,554  
Smithfield Parks & Recreation - 4,210  
No. 1 Chinese - 2,450  
Bentonville Battlefield - 2,185  
Langdon's Fishing - 2,050  
Ava Gardner Museum - 1,885  
252 Kicks - 1,851

## **Brochure Distribution**

Visitor Guides - 19,812  
Beer, Wine, Shine Trail - 19,465  
You Are Here – Smithfield Selma - 16,035  
Geocaching Trail - 1,580  
Bike Routes - 4,623  
301 Endless Yard Sale - 5,950  
JoCo Runs Rack Card - 2,860



# TOURISM GRANTS

The JCVB continues to invest in community projects building our tourism product for visitors and residents to enjoy! The following projects were awarded grants in 2019-2020, totally \$209,000 in funding. (alpha order)

**Ava Gardner Museum - \$10,000**

The Ava Gardner Museum is updating and streamlining archival practices to digitize the collecting and complete a finding aid for more than 10,000 items in the museum's storage.

**Clayton Rugby Association - Wilson's Mills Parks & Recreation - \$35,000**

This second request for funding will complete the rugby fields at the Wilson's Mills Park, to be able to host additional state and international tournaments.

**Historic Smithfield Foundation - \$25,000**

Funds will be used to restore and preserve the only known Freedmen's Schoolhouse in North Carolina. The building is located at 308 N. Fourth Street, and was built in 1868-69 as a school for freed slaves and was used as a school for African Americans until 1912.

**Johnston Community College - Paul A. Johnston Auditorium - \$16,500**

The renovation project for the auditorium includes a new fire curtain, and this additional request for grant funds will help pay for this much needed equipment. Total grant was \$50,000 for this project.

**Johnston County Heritage Center - \$10,000**

The Johnston County Heritage Center is updating and streamlining archival practices to have every item in the museum stored in a specially treated box or folder that is used specifically for artifact preservation.

**Smithfield Parks & Recreation - \$15,000**

Grant funds will be used to construct a picnic shelter at the new Town Commons Boat Ramp in Downtown Smithfield.

**Tobacco Farm Life Museum - \$10,000**

The Tobacco Farm Life Museum is hiring an archivist to work on the museum's extensive collection and funds will help pay for this position and purchase conservation supplies.

**Town of Kenly - \$50,000**

The old Kenly school is slated to be torn down and become a multi-purpose community building for meetings and parks and recreation activities. The first phase funding is for demolition.

**Town of Princeton - \$37,500**

This project is to renovate the Princeton Community Building as a part of Princeton's downtown gateway to encourage increased utilization as a small event center and public library; ultimately drawing more visitors to Princeton and Johnston County.





TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AND ENGAGE IN  
THE MARKETING PROGRAMS IN  
FY 2020-21, THE JCVB MARKETING PLAN  
IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
[JOHNSTONCOUNTYNC.ORG/ABOUT](http://JOHNSTONCOUNTYNC.ORG/ABOUT)





# CONTACT

## Visitors Bureau Staff

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President/CEO

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Office/Visitor Center Manager

Eric Dean  
Creative Director

Ashby Brame  
Director of Marketing

Sarah Lagasse  
Sales Manager

Jenna Andreasen  
Content Manager

Kristin Radford  
Visitor Center Assistant

## Tourism Authority Board

Scotty Henley, Chairperson

Rick Childrey, Vice-Chairperson

Cheryl Lane, Secretary

Randy Capps, Special Projects Chair

Rick Heilmann, Marketing Committee Chair

Ben Cook, Sports Council Representative

Melody Worthington

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# SOCIAL

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