

FY 2020-21 CRISIS MARKETING PLAN



HOW TO MARKET THRU COVID-19

BY DONNA BAILEY-TAYLOR

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would have to say I haven't written a marketing plan quite like this one before in my nearly 40 years in the hospitality industry. Of course, I haven't experienced a "great depression" of our industry before either. The last four months have been spent in "crisis mode" for our entire staff. We focused entirely on our local tourism partners and how we could disseminate helpful information to be the voice for our industry by getting out visitor facing information on closings, cancellations, and regulations affecting our daily lives. I have watched **so many** webinars, participated in **so many** Zoom meetings, and read **so much research**, frankly, my head is spinning.



The Visitors Bureau staff managed our expenses immediately upon learning of the expected shutdowns, eliminating travel, getting refunds early on, and basically looking at reducing expenses in any and all line-items we could. In one of the first webinars we were in, a phrase stood out for us, "People over Programs", and we have been able to keep our staff intact for this Fiscal Year, and with God's grace we will all weather this crisis together. We are monitoring budgets and expenses on a monthly basis, and expect 2020-21 to be the same.

Every week we watch webinars on occupancy levels, travel sentiment, and forecasts for travel from many of our research partners across the country. Without providing volumes of information in this document, the most current data from June is presented. It's not a very positive outlook, as the country is now in the middle of social justice crisis with large crowds contributing to the increase of COVID-19 cases. More testing equals more positive results, the public's willingness to wear masks or practice social distancing, and destinations feeling positive about welcoming visitors who may bring COVID-19 to their doors continues to affect tourism. It's complicated and planning a marketing message as we slowly re-open in Johnston County -- is very challenging.

We have decided to focus on our strength, which has always been our location along two major interstates, I-95 and I-40, and our proximity to Raleigh/Wake County. All billboards under contract will stay in the budget, and our marketing messages will target travel within a 50-mile radius for day trips for shopping and weekend trips for culinary trails, girls weekends, and exploring our rural landscapes and recreation attractions. Johnston County has a strong agritourism brand and now more than ever buying from our local farmers and the NC Farms Apps to promote visits to our farms we feel will be very popular. As events and festivals will continue to be difficult to market with restrictions on attendance, we will be developing Weekend Itineraries and market those via Google, social media, and digital campaigns with VisitNC.com, *Our State Magazine*, and email marketing. We will be staying with marketing partners we have relationships with, so trying new avenues or vendors is not in the cards.

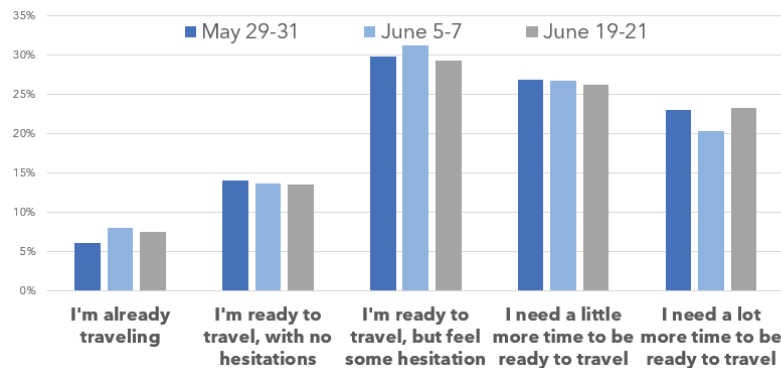
We know we must be nimble and creative this year to execute this marketing plan -- willing to quickly make changes as needed. We do have some hope for our future, with a new Hampton Inn opening in Smithfield in September/October and news that more hotel development is underway at the I-95, Exit 95 and 97 interchanges. We will also launch marketing support for the new Old North State Food Hall opening in Selma this fall. What the county-wide video project proved is our communities working together will continue to be a positive force!!

Respectfully yours,

Donna Bailey-Taylor

Key Findings to Know: Week of June 22

With cases rising in several areas of the country, Americans concern about personally or friends/family contracting COVID-19 increased this week. Now half of American travelers feel the coronavirus situation will get worse in the US in the next month and less than 20% feel it will get better. Americans' perceived safety of various travel activities also worsened this week, returning to the levels they were at 3 weeks ago, and this has caused some to reverse their travel readiness. However, the increase in outbreaks has not appeared to further rattle their sense of financial security, as concerns about the virus' impact on their personal finances and the national economy decreased. Baby Boomers do not feel as threatened by the virus in terms of their personal finances, but have graver concerns about its effect on the national economy.



Question: When it comes to getting back out and traveling again, which best describes your current state of mind? (Select one) (Base: All respondents, 1,205 completed surveys. Data collected June 19-21, 2020)

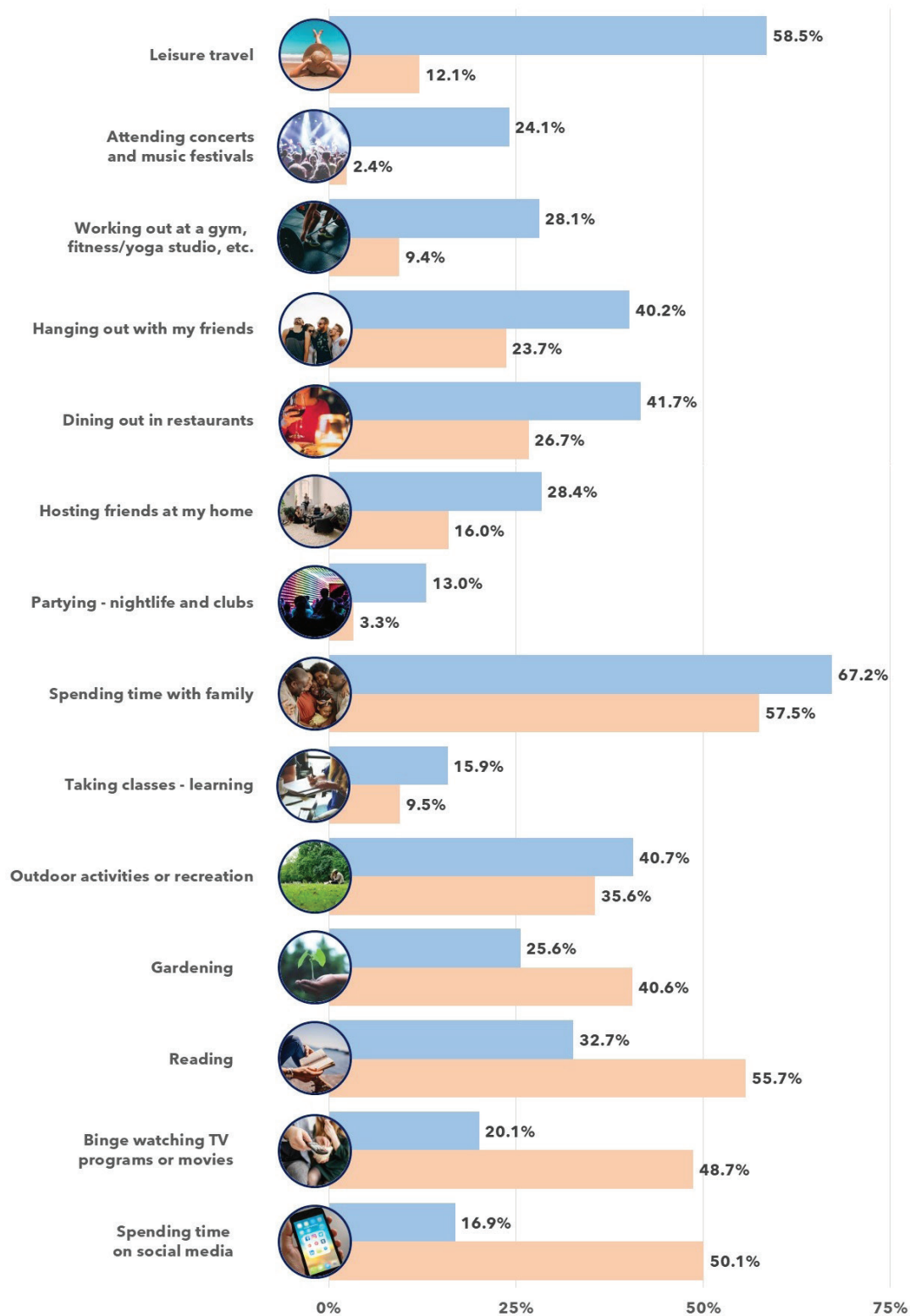
Destination Analysts
DO YOUR RESEARCH

The disproportionate havoc the pandemic has wreaked on travel can be seen in what activities Americans have been committing their leisure time to, relative to their pre-COVID 19 lifestyle priorities. Prior to the outbreak, 6 in 10 said that leisure travel was among their highest lifestyle priorities—only behind spending time with family. Yet only 12% report having done any leisure travel in the past month. Meanwhile, Americans have been busying themselves with activities that were far likelier to be a low priority in their lifestyles prior to COVID-19, from gardening to social media.

Meanwhile, a perceived lack of appropriate pandemic-etiquette behaviors within their own communities is affecting people's openness to tourists in town. While many American travelers have felt positive emotions around the reopening of the economy, anxiety and frustration remain present.



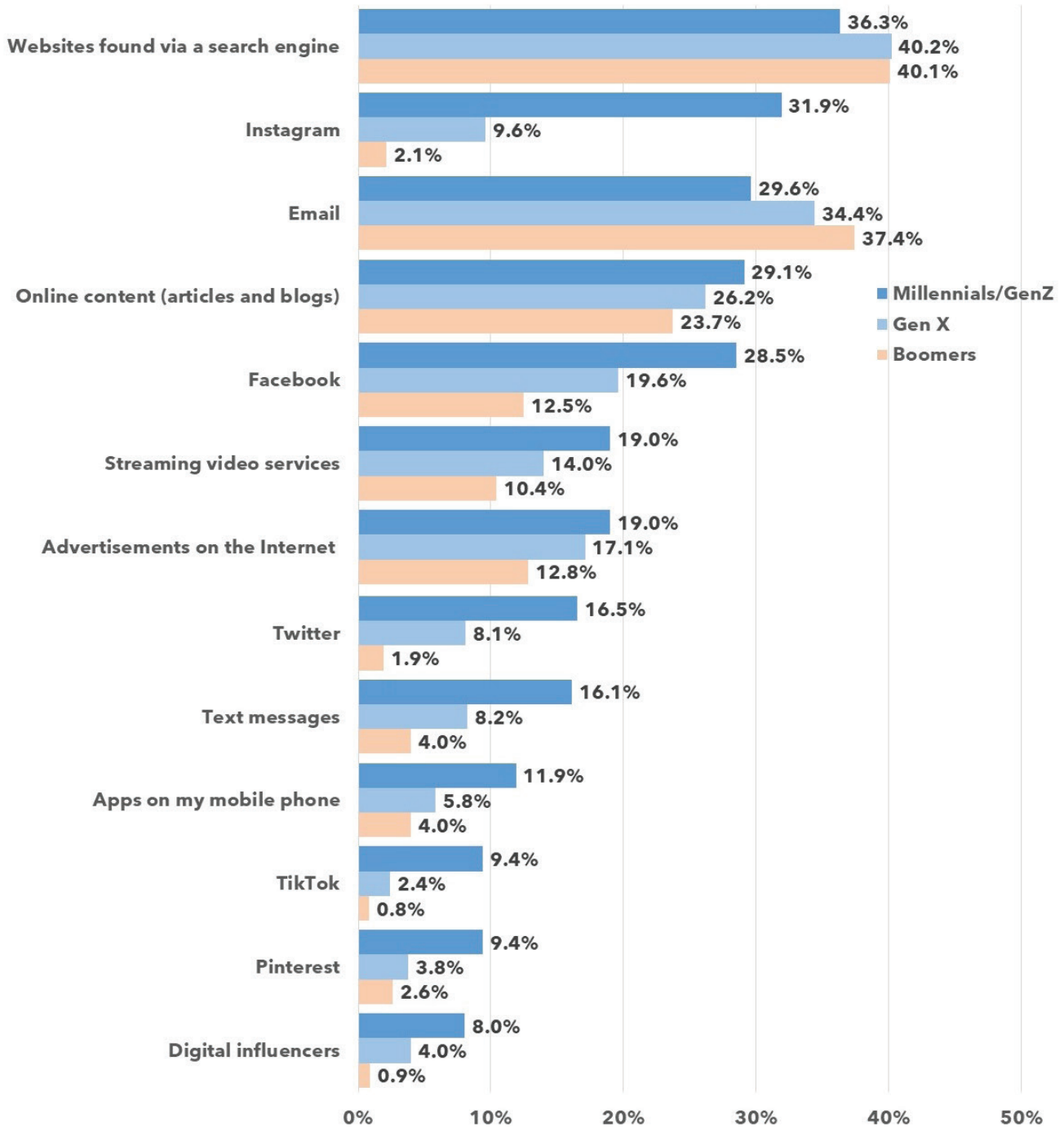
IMPORTANCE TO LIFESTYLE VERSUS RECENT ACTIVITIES DONE



Q: Please tell us about the activities that were important to your lifestyle.
(Use the scale below to express how important each was to your lifestyle)

Q: In the past PAST MONTH, which of the following have you personally done? (Select all that apply)

WHERE TRAVELERS ARE MOST RECEPTIVE TO DESTINATION MARKETING



Q: Please think about how travel destinations could best reach you with their messages right now. Where would you generally be MOST RECEPTIVE to learning about new destinations to visit? (Please select all that apply)

2020 Travel Forecast

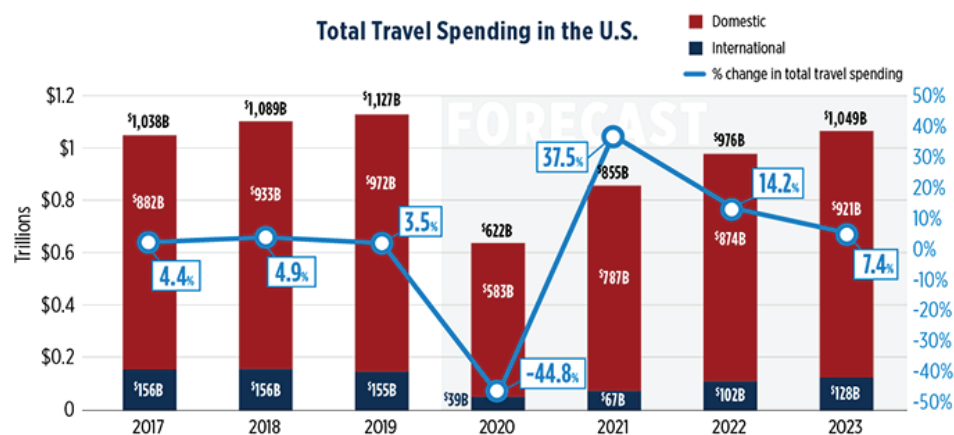
The latest forecast prepared for the U.S. Travel Association by Tourism Economics projects visitation and travel spending (both domestic and international).

Total travel spending in the U.S. is predicted to drop **45%** by the end of this year

Domestic travel spending is expected to fall **40%** (from \$972 billion in 2019 to \$583 billion in 2020)

International inbound spending is expected to fall **75%** (\$155 billion to \$39 billion)

New analysis reveals that while the economy is in the midst of a recession, the travel industry is in a depression: overall travel industry unemployment is **51%** — twice the unemployment of the worst year of the Great Depression.



Insights into Americans + Travel

This weekly survey by Destinations Analysts tracks key consumer perceptions, attitudes and behaviors of American business and leisure travelers.

Key findings from June 15:

- Expectations about the virus' course have dampened and some travelers that thought they would take trips this year have walked that back for now
- Among Americans who are expecting to travel in 2020, most say they will **avoid crowded destinations (53%)** and many say they will **avoid attending conferences (46%), air travel (34%) or cities/urban areas (25%)**
- Americans are feeling more comfortable about visiting familiar destinations than new destinations; **over 60%** say it is likely that the primary destination of their next leisure trip would be one they have visited before
- Poor "pandemic etiquette" behavior by others, as portrayed by the media, is affecting the desirability of travel destinations: **61% of American travelers** say such behavior would make a given destination less desirable

What has the COVID-19 crisis meant for tourism in Johnston County? The following is an outline of what the last four months have meant to the operations of the Visitors Bureau and some planning for the next 6-12 months, and then 12-24 months out as the world's economy and tourism industry recovers.

A MEANINGFUL LOOK AT REALIGNING DESTINATION LEADERSHIP CORE ROLES GIVEN THE CURRENT COVID-19 CRISIS

The current crisis has meant major changes for everyone, both personally and professionally. No industry has been immune, but there have been clearly visible implications and adjustments for destination marketing organizations across the country. Very quickly DMOs adjusted tactics and responsibilities as it relates to marketing, organizational needs, and relationships in the community.

The following look at DMO roles outlines and acknowledges the new normal of destination organizations at the local community level in these three core areas:

ORGANIZATION RESET PROMOTION & SALES PIVOT EXPERIENCE REFIT

Phase 1: Destination Maintained During the Crisis

Objective: Connect and engage with our community

The primary focus for destination marketers in this phase is to provide valuable communication to our communities and local businesses. Attention needs to be given to developing three types of new content: informational, utility, and entertainment.

Key Focus:

- Creating locally focused content
- SEO to optimize for new queries
- A/B Testing to optimize for a more seamless user journey
- Thoughtful email messaging to increase engagement
- Social Media to tell local stories

TIME FRAME: Now and until we reach recovered status. We will continue to build resiliency and engagement with our communities.

Goal - Building community and industry trust as a viable, highly performing partner.

- Short-term monetary and survival adjustments leading to core organization roles
- New organization value proposition relevant to community and industry needs
- Effective research and reporting program on visitor/stakeholder understanding, funding stability opportunities, tourism importance, and performance accountability
- Effective strategic and aligned operational/recovery planning along with crisis/contingency reserve allocations

Goal - Becoming a recognized and respected community leadership organization.

- Integrated partnership of destination organization(s), chamber(s) of commerce and/or economic development organization(s)

- Seamless approach to regional/community development and promotion to visitors, investors and residents, and trade/neighborhood allies
- Coordinated advocacy messaging to defined regional/community stakeholders
- Increased downtown/Main Street and other district involvement with parks & recreation/community development agencies

Activities launched during the COVID-10 Crisis included:

- Custom Landing Pages on the JCVB website, visitor facing information on closings, cancellations, and changes in services.
- Custom Landing Page on the JCVB website for tourism industry partners providing reliable resources on the COVID-19 concerning cleaning, PPE, Small Business Loans and PPP.
- Weekly Tourism Partner Newsletters with updates on the crisis, and providing vital information our partners needed.
- By-weekly phone calls to hotel partners to check status of staffing, occupancy, and ask if they needed assistance.
- Participation in state and national webinars on tourism research keeping up to date on trends, travel sentiment, and discussions on recovery marketing.
- Direct mail campaign for Count on Me NC certificate program as businesses re-open for Phase II, as a training program to assist them and to help market they are open for business.
- Created some digital experiences for the destination including a JoCo Coloring Book, crossword and word search puzzles, and Zoom Backgrounds.
- Worked with the Johnston County Economic Development Office, Chambers, and Towns of Benson, Smithfield and Clayton on a county-wide “JoCo is Open for Business” video.
- Searched for possible grant opportunities for the JCVB through CARES, PPP, EDA and other partnerships to continue to keep a full staff and engage in marketing campaigns in 2021.

Phase 2: Destination Rebound and Recovery Marketing

Objective: Rethink marketing for the new normal

Economic indicators and recent increases in DMO web traffic are starting to show signs of moving to recovery. Implement the learnings from the crisis phase into our marketing strategy to build toward sustained growth. Engineer thoughtful Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), drive market, and regional campaigns to leverage pent-up demand, and use paid media to amplify messaging tailored to safety.

Key Focus:

- Paid Media (PPC, video, social) to boost traffic
- SEO to optimize for new content opportunities
- Email Marketing to amplify messages to new audiences
- Social Media to connect with existing audiences

TIME FRAME: Approx. next 6-12 months

ENHANCED FOCUS ON REGIONAL DRIVE-IN MARKETS

Goal – Knowing customer behavior to choose close familiar travel places that alleviate safety and health concerns and build confidence.

- Up to a 3-hour drive/200-mile radius travel consideration
- Primary metropolitan area/city nearby visitor origin locations identification within 50-miles
- Key brand motivation understanding and messaging
- Getaway, day excursion, stay-cation and personal travel conversions and business-leisure programming with hospitality partners

CONCENTRATED EFFORT ON THE VISITING FRIENDS & RELATIVES (VFR) MARKET SEGMENT

Goal – Acknowledging VFR as typically the largest destination market segment requiring a dedicated promotional effort

- Local resident sentiment and information exchanges
- Resident oriented on-line presence and engagement
- Tie-in to university/college student/alumni communications within the Triangle
- New tourism/niche market segments relative to health/medical and law enforcement

NEW PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE AND SECURE CORPORATE, MEETING AND GROUP TRAVEL BUSINESS

Goal – Capitalizing on a reduced visitor industry marketing/sales force allowing potential to cover corporate and group markets.

- Stronger programming with hotel, sports and arts/cultural venue and convention/conference center partners
- New and/or expanded destination branded event development
- Event/meeting protocol standards setup and compliance
- Agreed-to destination-wide and cooperative event/meeting strategy and plans

INCREASED INVESTMENT IN DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PROGRAMMING AND CONVERSION

Goal – Focusing on primary on-line communications platform conveying influential information and setting purchase proposition.

- Brand research and strategy foundation
- Proactive content and specific on-line promotional strategies
- Community brand values communications
- Attractions and events as lead partner generators

Activities launched during the COVID-10 Crisis included:

- Consolidated key points from the webinars and the volumes of research information on the affects of COVID-19 on the tourism industry as it pertains to tourism marketing for Johnston County.
- Watched for indicators of visitors willing to travel again and what messages are important to them as our destination begins to open-up.
- Work began on all the content on our website to address the sentiment of visitors for open spaces, information on our partners following CDC guidelines, information on Count On Me NC ,and adding in virtual experiences for our visitors to experience from home.

- All social channels continued to be used for local messages for our tourism partners and promotion of the county video. All efforts were organic and non-paid during the crisis, and beginning in July staff will slowly start using paid methods.
- Prepared two budgets with reduced revenues and expenditures as “Best Case” and “Worse Case” scenarios, and monitored monthly reports from Smith Travel Research for trends in Johnston County. Our reduced occupancy and revenues are on par with national averages in the US.
- All marketing campaigns were paused in mid-March to conserve funds through the crisis.
- Plans are under development for drive market campaigns, with a focus on our rural beauty, off the beaten path activities, and culinary trails. Target will include a 50-mile radius up to 150 miles out from the county.
- We applied and received a \$10,000 matching grant with *Our State Magazine* to re-start marketing within North Carolina.
- An almost entirely digital campaign has been contracted with VisitNC for 2021, connecting to the buying power and exposure on the visitnc.com website.
- Billboards will remain in tact to reach the drive market along I-95 and I-40. Updates to the dates on boards for Bentonville Reenactment and 301 Endless Yard Sale have been completed.
- Public Relations and low-cost influencers for recreation, culinary trails, Ava Gardner, shopping and Bentonville Battlefield Reenactment will remain priorities in 2021.
- Grants are being written with the JoCo Grows Agriculture Marketing Committee, as well as, design assistance given to the committee for rack cards and trade show banners to share the importance of agriculture in the county with residents.
- Traditional print advertising has been on the decline for some years, and in the 2021 budget, it is scaled back even more. Some ads will run with *Our State Magazine*, *Southern Living* and *AAA Go Magazine*, with fewer placements.
- Creative for the destination will shift from events/festivals to holistic experiences like a Weekend in Benson, Smithfield/Selma or Clayton, which will showcase those activities that align with the rural experience, outside, driving our trails, etc., and unique landing pages with suggested itineraries, maps, special offers from our partners, and more will be developed.

Thoughts on visitors and travel sentiment and marketing initiatives.

How we move forward in this current environment comes with uncertainty and for sure we will have to be nimble if we again face a “shelter in place” or shut down of our industry. Budgets will have to be monitored on a monthly basis with projections and adjustments made each month as needed. If our crystal ball was more forthcoming, we would embark with a greater sense of confidence, however, we will keep the following guidelines in place in all we do to promote the county and support our partners.

Focus on value and needs

Things have shifted and consumers feel vulnerable and nervous about travel. Our target audience will evolve and change in these new times, and we will need to adapt. Focus on the factors that motivate visitors and inspire them using new marketing strategies that create a more loyal audience.

Let new travel behaviors guide our strategy

We should consider all interactions with travelers and let that guide our strategy. It's not only about booking and arrivals, but more importantly about re-engaging in meaningful ways that build relationships and trust over time. Messaging along all channels will have a consistent emotional appeal that we are preparing and following safety guidelines.

Make data-informed decisions

Data brings both opportunity and complexity to destination marketing. In travel, people often take weeks and even months to plan their vacations, often with dozens of digital touch-points along the way. We will simplify our marketing metrics to focus more on KPIs that drive overall growth and web visits. We will primarily use increases in website sessions and page views, Google keywords and campaigns goals, as well as, social insights on Facebook and Instagram as our key performance measures.

Rebuild relationships early in recovery with search

Research shows that web traffic is beginning to return and paid search is going to lead the way in getting traffic back to our website as quickly as possible. With new keyword opportunities and pent-up demand, we will use paid search as a top channel early in recovery.

Timing for New Messaging

From the most current research we are following, the hopefulness for fall travel is beginning to weaken as cases in North Carolina and the South are on the rise. Our first ads and messaging will begin in September with some “get outside the city” campaigns for those in the NC market looking to stay close to home and discover what’s in the state for short trips and excursions.

All complementary digital and social messaging will start in July, but with limited dollars to boost any posts at this time. Until visitors are willing to receive travel messages, putting dollars in campaigns will really be a waste of very precious resources.

Building up the JCVB website with new content, landing pages to support future ad campaigns, and the listings audit will continue through the first and second quarters of FY 2020-21.

New messaging proposed for 2021

Focus on big picture messaging for weekend trips, recreation opportunities, culinary trails, and shopping integrating this messaging into the website for consistency. The uncertainty about events/festivals will affect ad copy, social, SEM and all channels. Events are still very tentative when ad placements and deadlines are looming in late June, 2020. We will begin to reach out to media influencers now to pitch visits to the destination.

Our key message for 2021 will focus on some major events and take a holistic look at pitches:

Bentonville Reenactment Rescheduled – March 20-21, 2021
Ava Gardner Festival, Film Premiere of Pandora, October 16-18, 2020
Farm and Rural Experiences – 50 Miles from Home
Food & Culinary Inspiration – Food Trails, BWST excursions, New Food Hall
Shop & Save – weekends back to school, After Thanksgiving, Christmas Shopping

(1) Weekend in Benson

Visit Benson...A Small Town with Big Charm!

Create a unique weekend experience in the Benson area, including dog-friendly accommodations at the Hampton Inn, tours at Broadslab Distillery, a yummy waffle breakfast at Cornerstone Cafe, a wine tasting at Gregory Vineyards, shopping along Benson's Main Street followed by dinner at La Piazza and an evening of fun at Fainting Goat Brewery.

Branded messaging copy to use:

Dog-friendly messaging -- Don't forget your 4-legged friends who also need a "stretch your legs" break while traveling. Stop at I-95, Exit 79 in Benson at the 3-acre loose leash dog-park.

Benson - a great stop along the JoCo BBQ Trail where you will find the traditional NC 'que you expect, and competition BBQ presented in unexpected ways. Remember to stop along the way to enjoy local attractions, breweries, wineries, and distilleries. It's a tasty way to get outside the city for a while!

Three letter words to use in advertising/social: 'QUE, BBQ, DOG, FUN

Multi-channel campaign:

Target Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Porch at Gregory, Jeremy at Broadslab, Ken Tart Downtown Shot, Cornerstone, Redneck, Fainting Goat, and need great food shots from LaPiazza.

Billboards - All billboards now promoting Dog Park

Google Ads - Run daily campaign promoting VisitBenson.org/weekend-in-benson

Our State E-newsletter - September 3, **materials due August 13**

Social - Facebook post budget \$10 per post/once a month

Influencer Visit - NC Tripping or Travel to Blank when mural is installed

Public Relations - News Releases sent September for Mules Days, November for Meadow Lights, GALOT schedule, Benson Art Advisory Board Mural Project

Website Content: Article/Landing Page Needed, Weekend in Benson

Email campaigns: Place copy in the August events email blast promoting Benson weekend

(2) Weekend in Smithfield

Smithfield...For Fashion Inspiration, Visit Ava & Outlets!

Create a unique weekend experience in the Smithfield area, including outlet shopping at Carolina Premium Outlets and a stop at DeWayne's for sure! Visit Downtown Smithfield for a visit to the Ava Gardner Museum, a walk along the Neuse River Walk and some local shopping and lunch. After a full day, drop by Hinnant Vineyards if you are a wine drinker or Double Barley if you love craft beer. Check the calendar for shows at The Rudy Theatre, Paul A. Johnston Auditorium or the Neuse Little Theatre.

Branded messaging copy to use:

Discover our hidden gems just beyond the exit ramp, remember I-95, Exit 95.

Treat yourself to tours and tastings! Escape the hustle and bustle of the city and enjoy a weekend in Smithfield, NC. We're a rural county just a short drive from Raleigh, and less than two hours from Richmond, VA. While exploring the county, check out the events calendar for music, art, food festivals and other fun activities.

Set your GPS for savings in Smithfield, NC.

As you road trip along the east coast, stop and visit us at Exit 95 in Smithfield, the halfway point along I-95 in North Carolina. Stretch your legs and your dollars at Carolina Premium Outlets, rest your head at one of our amazing hotels, and treat yourself to a delicious meal at a variety of local restaurants. Add in the information on the new Hampton Inn & Suites opening in Smithfield, October, 2020.

Hey Triangle - What you don't know about Smithfield, NC.

Three letter words to use in ads/social: Stop on your WAY, Set your GPS for Smithfield, Get to know the real AVA Gardner, Weekends are FUN in Smithfield, Fill your shopping BAG with bargains

Multi-channel campaign:

Target Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Ava Museum, CPO Coach Shot, Kate Spade Purse

Billboards - Ava Gardner & Outlet Shopping

Google Ads - Run monthly campaigns, budget \$10 a day

Our State 1/3 Page Ad - September, **material due 6/29/20**

Social - Facebook post monthly \$20 promotion

Influencer Visit - Y Travel Weekend visit or Travel to Blank, for a feature on Dine Downtown Scene, Shopping Weekend

Public Relations - News Releases August about Ava Events

Visitnc.com - Featured Event Sept & October Ava Festival, or April for Ham & Yam

Website Content: Article/Landing Page

Other Print:

AAA Go, September/October - **materials due 7/2/20**

Garden & Gun, April/May, Ava Gardner, **materials due 12/18/20**

Southern Living, October - **materials due 7/1/20**

Email Campaigns:

Use Brasco list from Washington DC and Virginia for email blast in September

Include Weekend in Smithfield on the September Events email blast

(3) Weekend in Clayton

Clayton....It's all good!!!

Create a unique weekend experience in the Clayton area, including strolling through downtown along the sculpture trail, with stops for lunch at Jones Cafe, for the area's most famous hot dog! Bring your bike for a scenic ride along the Clayton Neuse River Walk, which connects to Wake County! Plan an evening out with dinner and a show at the Clayton Center or live hot jazz music at Revival 1869, A Drinkery. More great dinner options include a beer and food truck at Deep River for a casual night, or some upscale choices at The Clayton Steakhouse or Mannings!

Branded messaging copy to use:

The Clayton Sculpture trail is updated annually with new sculpture and locations to discover around town. You can even vote for your favorite - check out the video!

Three letter words to use in ads/social: Enjoy the ART in Clayton, Take a SIP on the BWST, Walk the MST in Clayton, Weekends are FUN in Clayton

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: sculpture, river walk, drone shots, farmer's market, Revival, Deep River, Clayton Center
Billboards - The Clayton Center and Clemmons Board

Google Ads - Run campaign to drive visits to VisitClayton.org

Social - Facebook post monthly post for Clayton - \$20.00

Influencer Visit - Travel to Blank

Public Relations - News Releases

Website Content: Article/Landing Page, Clayton Weekend

Print: Our State Magazine, 1/3 page, Clayton Sculpture Trail, April, **materials due 2/1/21**

Email marketing: **Include Weekend in Smithfield on the November Events email blast**

(4) Set Your GPS for Savings in Smithfield

Smithfield....Don't Pass Us by!

As you road trip along the east coast, stop and visit us at Exit 95 in Smithfield, the halfway point along I-95 in North Carolina. Stretch your legs and your dollars at Carolina Premium Outlets, rest your head at one of our amazing hotels, and treat yourself to a delicious meal at a variety of local restaurants.

Branded messaging copy to use:

Hit the brakes, and take a break at I-95, Exit 95.

Discover our hidden gems, just beyond the exit ramp, I-95, Exit 95.

Smithfield, your first night stop on vacation...shop, eat, rest on your way, I-95, Exit 95.

Make Smithfield a stop on your epic road trip...where I-95 and I-40 come together.

Three letter words to use in ads/social: OFF the beaten path, Stop on your WAY, Discover our hidden GEMs

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: new drone shots, Ava, River Walk, Hotel, Food shots, Outlets

Billboards - Ava and Outlets

Google Ads - Shopping, Ava

Social - Get Outside the City, Don't Pass us By

Website Content: drive traffic from Google to the Weekend page

Geofence campaign: Fence the Welcome Centers on I-95, North & South, and track all exits in the county to see where they stop.

(5) Girls Shopping Weekend

Smithfield....Shop Like A Local!

More than ever savings are important and shopping at Carolina Premium Outlets with your girlfriend is a great getaway! For back to school, after Thanksgiving or for the Holidays -- get a great discount at area hotels, and a gift bag with chocolates, coupons for dining and the Ava Gardner Museum, specialty shops, and more for a fun weekend!

Branded messaging copy to use:

Name brand holiday gifts for everyone on your list at outlet prices you can be jolly about this season.

Set your GPS for savings in Smithfield - call your girlfriends and make it a weekend!

Wine tasting, shopping, a spa day, and more -- book our Girls Weekend package and spend some much needed time with friends.

Stretch your legs...stretch your dollars at Carolina Premium Outlets, I-95, Exit 95.

Shop & Save for back to school, after Thanksgiving and Christmas

Three letter words to use in ads/social: Bring TWO or more friends to shop in Smithfield, Fill your shopping BAG with bargains, Weekends are FUN in Smithfield

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Holiday shopping, Outlets, Ava, hotel, Hinnant, Double Barley

Billboards - Ava & Outlets

Google Ads - Hotel Packages

Our State 1/3 Page Ad - March placement, **materials due 2/15/21**

Our State E-newsletter - October, Girls Trip, **materials due 9/10/20**

Social - Facebook post

Influencer Visit - Karen Dawkins with her daughter

Public Relations - News releases on After Thanksgiving Sale

VisitNC Instagram Story Feature: Ava and Outlets April, **materials due 3/1/21**

Website Content: Add visitsmithfield.org/girls

Southern Living, April placement, **materials due 2/1/21**

AAA Go Magazine, March/April placement, **materials due 1/8/21**

Digital: TripAdvisor

Washingtonian.com Sponsored Content, Smithfield/Ava Festival (30 days out deadline)

Email marketing: **Include Girls Weekend for the holidays in the December Events email blast**

(6) Beer Wine Shine Trail Weekend

See you on the Craft Beverage Trail in JoCo!

Maybe you can't do the entire BWST in a weekend, so we invite you to visit us twice or three times! We think you will find your favorites and become regulars in Johnston County. We offer a Sip & Stay hotel package with suggested itineraries, and gift bag with additional coupons from area restaurants and specialty shops.

Branded messaging copy to use:

Treat yourself to tours and tastings! Escape the hustle and bustle of the city and enjoy a weekend in Smithfield or Clayton on the Sip & Stay package.

Visit the largest muscadine vineyard in North Carolina, wine-down from the stress of the road at Hinant's Winery, I-95, Exit 97.

Five generations have worked to perfect Broadslab Distillery's signature shine. Take a tour and taste for yourself!

Wine tasting, a beer flight, and a shot of moonshine combined with shopping, great BBQ along the trail, or farm to table fine dining, and it's a weekend for two on the Sip & Stay package.

Tours, taste, and treat yourself and bring a few friends...to travel along the JoCo Beer, Wine, and Shine Trail. Seven stops and we'll send you a FREE gift!

Three letter words for ads/social: SIP and Stay the weekend on the BSWT, Give JoCo a TRY, Discover the ART in JoCo, Treat yourself with awarding BBQ, or 'QUE

Culinary messaging: Art on a Plate

What's a hog cake? Visit us along the BBQ trail and find out!

Travel along the JoCo BBQ trail for a taste of the unexpected.

Local chef-owned restaurants with dishes are truly works of art on a plate!

Visit for dishes good enough to share on-line, but too good to share in person.

Our chefs craft masterpieces just for you from farm-fresh ingredients.

Try a red hot dog, or old-fashion fountain orange-aid or enjoy hush puppies and butter.

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Several

Billboards - Locations on I-95

Google Ads - Sip & Stay Package

Our State Directory Ad - January, **materials due 10/26/20**

Social - promote posts on BWST facebook page

Influencer Visit - Travel to Blank

Public Relations - BWST is dog-friendly

Website Content: Main navigation, headers, blogs, map publisher

Digital: TripAdvisor

Email marketing: **Include BWST and Sip & Stay package in January email blast**

(7) JoCo BBQ Trail

BBQ is a noun in JoCo!

Are you a BBQ connoisseur or just love the tradition of slow-cooked pork? We have local favorites around the county, and some new competition-style chefs you will love to try. New dishes or old standards, drive along the BBQ Trail and Johnston County, stopping along the way to enjoy local attractions, breweries, wineries and distilleries. It's all a tasty way to get out for a while!

Branded messaging copy to use:

The NC 'que you expect, presented in unexpected ways.
Whether you want barbecue, BBQ, or 'que - we'll answer your call for award-winning taste!
Don't let the name fool you, the Redneck BBQ Scientific Lab is no experiment!
JoCo barbecue has reached award-winning perfection!

Three letter words to use with ads/social: North Carolina BBQ, (or)'QUE you expect

Digital and Social Media:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Redneck images, Jerry Stephenson photo, SoDoSoPa hog cakes

Social - Facebook post

Website Content: map publisher trail landing page, www.johnstoncountync.org/bbqtrail

hashtags: foodie for life, eat like a local

Experiences/firsts: Try a hog cake, travel for burnt ends

Google ad: JoCo Dining & Food

(8) Family On-Farm Fun

Making memories on a farm in JoCo!

Get outside the city to experience our rural attractions, whether it's Strawberry Pickin' Time or letting the kids run through a corn maze, or fresh produce is abundant on our area farms, Johnston County offers your family great outdoor fun! Enjoy a selection of suggested itineraries or some driving trails around the county!

Digital and Social Media:

Leisure Market: 50 miles

Image assets: Smith's Farm, Sonlight, Creekside, Boyette, Pace Farms

Google Ads - Family Fun, Buy from Local Farmers

Our State E-newsletter - April placement, **materials due 3/10/21**

Social - Facebook post - Farm App, Swag Give-a-way

Influencer Visit - NC Tripping, seasonal Fall and Spring

Public Relations - Strawberry Picking is here, Get to a farm for Fall Fun

Website Content: landing pages already exist, Agritourism, U-Pick Seasons, Farm Family Fun

(9) **Holiday Music & Lights**

The holidays are a magical time for the whole family with concerts around the county at Paul A. Johnston Auditorium, The Clayton Center, and daily shows at Live @ The Rudy Christmas Show. For even more fun, enjoy local holiday light shows, Meadow Lights, a tradition for more than 30 years or the Boyette Family Farm, Lights on the Neuse hayride by the river.

Three letter words for ads/social: Discover the JOY of the Holidays

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50 miles

Image assets: Meadow Lights, Lights on the Neuse

Google Ads - Christmas events in JoCo

Our State Directory Ad - December placement, **materials due 9/28/20**

Social - Facebook posts

Public Relations - Holiday Events in 2020, send out October 15th to local/regional/state media

Visitnc.com - Featured Event, November /December: Live @ The Rudy Christmas Show, **due 30 days out**

VisitNC Featured Event E-Newsletter Spotlight: Live @ The Rudy Christmas Show, **materials due 10/1/20**

VisitNC Instagram Story Feature: Holiday Light Shows, December, **materials due 10/30/20**

VisitNC Social Media Spotlight: Holiday Shopping in JoCo, November, **materials due 9/15/20**

Website Content: Holiday landing page already in place

Other Print: AAA Go Magazine, November/December for Live @ The Rudy, **materials due 8/28/20**

Applause Magazine for The Rudy

(10) **Bentonville Battlefield Reenactment March 2021**

Experience Living History at the State's Largest Civil War Battlefield

Rescheduled from 2020, this reenactment remains the largest history-related event held in North Carolina, with living history programs, nationally acclaimed speakers, and battle scene historic accounts from this 3-day battle. The community of Bentonville has driving trails and hiking trails, over this 6,000 acre battlefield, the largest in the state of NC.

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Cannon shooting, Banjo Man, Living History demos

Billboards - Exit 95 Southbound, Exit 80 Northbound (need to flip in March, 2021)

Google Ads - Run campaign Jan, Feb, March 15

Our State E-newsletter - February 18, **materials due January 15**

Social - Facebook post for Tickets on Sale, budget \$100

Influencer Visit - Penny & Ron, Six Legs will Travel

Public Relations - News Releases sent January and February

Visitnc.com - Featured Event Feb, March, materials due 30 days out

VisitNC Facebook Event Promotion - February (*may switch to Spring Event*)

VisitNC Featured Event E-Newsletter Spotlight - February (*may switch to Spring Event*)

Digital: Civil War Courier, Jan/Feb 2021, email blast, ticket sales open, **need 30 day notice**

(11) 301 Endless Yard Sale Weekend, June 2021

It's Back....North Carolina's Largest Yard Sale

Rescheduled from 2020, yard sale shoppers are eager to return to this five-county and multi-venue yard sale that runs from Halifax County to Dunn, NC. Join in the fun looking for bargains and the sublime! There is no telling what you will find on this 100+ mile yard sale. Bring your van, running shoes, water bottle and bag of snacks!

Branded messaging copy to use:

This ain't your neighbors yard sale. This is over 100 miles of shopping on the 301 Endless Yard Sale. Take home a unique piece of history, shop the Selma antiques district for furniture, collectibles and the top spot for the 301 Endless Yard Sale.

#hashtags: 301 Endless Yard Sale

Three letter words for ads/social: Stop for bargains on 301, It's the BIG-est Yard Sale in NC

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Select best photos from Jamaal

Billboards - Exit 101, comp billboard from Interstate, dates changed in June 2021.

Google Ads - Run campaign April, May, June 15th, 301 Endless Yard Sale

Our State Directory Ad - February

Our State E-newsletter - February 18 (30 days out)

Social - Facebook post for Tickets on Sale, budget \$100

Influencer Visit - Look through Travel Media contacts, VisitNC, Canada contacts

Public Relations - News Releases sent March, "It's Back"

Visitnc.com - Featured Event May, materials due 30 days out

Website Content: landing page exists, microsite

Other Print: Antique Week Magazine, Selma Antiques/301 **materials due 6/29/20 and 3/29/21**

(12) Hey Triangle – What you don't know about Johnston County!

JoCo - we are closer than you think!!

How far away is Johnston County, you may wonder? It's closer to Raleigh than you think, only 20 minutes from downtown to Clayton, so why not discover what you don't know about JoCo?

Shop like a local at Carolina Premium Outlets, or discover North Carolina's most famous actress, Ava Gardner, and the museum dedicated to her life and career in Smithfield. Just love to get outdoors? Then stretch your legs along the many hiking trails, greenways from Clayton to Smithfield, or take the kids to Howell Woods for the day for hiking, the bird of prey sanctuary, or get a little scared in the reptile display! While in the county, enjoy the dining options and craft beverage scene at Deep River, Double Barley, or Fainting Goat Breweries, or walk the vineyard and sip wines at Gregory or Hinnant Wineries. Don't leave JoCo until you meet Jeremy Norris at Broadslab Distillery -- he's a real character! And did we mention the BBQ? Get outside the city -- head to JoCo!

Branded messaging copy to use:

Be our guest as you stay closer to home -- just 30 miles east of Raleigh. Welcome to our home. Did you know JoCo has Hollywood history? Visit the Ava Gardner Museum to learn more about this leading lady who grew up just outside Smithfield.

Experience the toe-tappin fun and entertainment that is Live @ The Rudy - comedy, music, and more! From theaters to coffee shops, concert halls to taverns, JoCo is filled with the sounds of music! Discover that lies outside the city, just minutes from the busy streets of Raleigh.

Three letter words for ads/social: Spend the DAY in JoCo, Got to say HEY, I didn't know that!, Why not GET outside the city, Weekends are FUN in JoCo, Discover AVA Gardner, our Hollywood Legend

Digital and Social Media:

Leisure Market: 50 miles

Image assets: Howell Woods, Trails, Broadslab, Biking, Beer Garden/patio

Channels: Social, Influencer Visit

Website Content: Article/Landing Page Needed

Google Ads: JoCo Things to Do

(13) Celebrate the arts in person or virtually

Art Inspires Us -- don't forget the Arts in JoCo!

So we are doing things a little differently now -- but our artists are still performing for you! Tune into a Facebook live performance at The Clayton Center, or visit the Live @ The Rudy shows this fall and holiday season. Make it an artful visit to Johnston County with more fun excursions like walking the Clayton Sculpture Trail, or buying some local art in our charming downtowns!

Three letter words to use for ads/social: Let ART inspire you, Art is FUN in JoCo

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50 miles

Image assets: Clayton Sculpture Trail (need new photos)

Billboards: Clayton Center flip board with Clemmons

Social: Facebook and Instagram posts

Website Content: Article/Landing Page Needed, Joco-Art

Print: Our State Magazine, 1/3 page, Clayton Sculpture Trail, April, **materials due 2/1/21**

Email marketing: Add Clayton Arts to the April JCVB email events blast

(14) Treat yourself to tours and tastings!

Seek your adventure on our Trails in JoCo!

Escape the hustle and bustle of the city and enjoy a weekend in Smithfield/Johnston County, NC. We're a rural county just a short drive from Virginia, down I-95 at Exit 95. While exploring the county,

check out the events calendar for music, art, food festivals, and other fun activities. Shop for great discounts at Carolina Premium Outlets, taste sweet wines at Hinnant's Vineyards or enjoy a flight at the beer garden at Double Barley Brewery.

If exploring is on your list of favorite things to do -- strike out on the BBQ Trail in JoCo, the Ava Gardner Heritage Trail, or the Beer, Wine and Shine Trail. So much to do -- so little time!

Three letter words to use in ads/social: Get OFF the beaten path, We invite you GET outside the city , Take a SIP of award-winning craft beverages, Drive the JoCo BBQ, ('QUE) trail

Digital and Social Media:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Redneck, BWST partners, Sodo SoPa food shots

Channels: Google Ads, Social

Website Content: Article/Landing Page Needed

Google Ads: JoCo Dining & Food, BWST

(15) Our Stories Take Generations to Tell

History, Heritage and Hollywood...

Get off the beaten path and discover our communities' roots in agriculture by visiting area museums like the Tobacco Farm Life Museum, the Heritage Center, or the Benson Museum of Local History. For a history lesson from the Civil War, drive along the Carolina's Campaign from Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site all the way to Clayton.

Of course, enjoy the farms, markets, attractions, and BBQ along the way!

Branded messaging copy to use: Rooted in History

Stand in the echo of battles fought at the largest Civil War battlefield in North Carolina.
Our roots run deep. Learn about JoCo's farming heritage at the Tobacco Farm Life Museum.
Visit the town where Vick's Vapor Rub was invented.

#hashtags: learn by doing

Three letter words to use for ads/social: Get OFF the beaten path, She was AVA, a Hollywood Legend, Weekends are FUN in JoCo

Digital and Social Media:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Atkinson's, Steven's, Jeremy, Ava, Bentonville

Channels: Social, Podcast

Website Content: Article on family history, Historic Marker Trail

Print: Our State Magazine, Local Products, November, **materials due 8/31/20**

(16) It's New...It's Food...Don't Pass Us By!

Hit the brakes for Exits 97 and 95 on your next road trip!

The first ever interstate food hall has opened in Selma, I-95, Exit 97 with 10 food vendors offering the variety of culinary flavors your family will love. Also, don't miss North Carolina BBQ, great burgers by _____, Asian fusion dishes by _____, etc. **(need info here)**

The exits of Smithfield and Selma along I-95 offer great savings on hotels, shopping, attractions and more!

Three letter words to use with ads/social: Hear your family say...YUM!

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Need photos of Food Hall

Google Ads - Run campaigns when open, Selma and/or JoCo Dining & Food

Our State E-newsletter - March (small towns, big bites issue), **materials due 2/10/21**

Social - Facebook & Instagram posts

Influencer Visit: Need list of media/writers we want to invite, NC Weekend, NC Tripping, Jenn Rice

Public Relations - News Releases sent as provided by Larry, Opening Announcements

Website Content: Article needed

Digital:

PhillyVoice.com Sponsored Content, Food Hall Opening, Exit 95 & 97 Food Scene (October would be best if we think they will open in November)

Local Palate (need to decide on issue)

Email marketing: Use Brasco list for a second time, all lists for announcement of opening

Motorcoach email blast about opening, and driver eats free program

(17) Get Outside the City for Hiking, Biking and Birds - Oh My!

Get the whole family out for a walk!

Treat yourself to beautiful rural landscapes for your next road trip. Take one of four JoCo Bike Routes, enjoying the attractions and stops along the way, or head for Clemmons State Forest or Howell Woods, for hiking trails, bird watching and a selection of programs and events. JoCo now has two sections of the Mountains to the Sea Trail, in Clayton and Smithfield offering a great place to stretch your legs!

Branded messaging copy to use: Get outside the city

Untouched landscapes. Picture perfect sunsets. Fields of sunflower along the interstate.

The only traffic out here is found behind a tractor -- go slow and enjoy the view.

In JoCo, the land calls to us...let it call to you!

We have drive-able weekend itineraries -- BBQ trails, heritage trails, BWST trails...pick what interests you!

Stop and smell the roses, or the honey suckle, or magnolias, we've got them all just off I-95, Exit 95.

Walk our local greenways and you've hiked the Mountains to the Sea Trail. Check that off the bucket list. And don't forget your 4-legged friends who need to stretch their legs too. Make you stop at I-95, Exit 79 at the Benson Dog Park.

Three letter words for ads/social: Walk, Bike and GET outside the city, Take a hike or bike MST in JoCo Bring your DOG too!

Multi-channel campaign:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Need photos like landscapes, farmland, Howell Woods

Google Ads - Run campaigns, JoCo Things to Do

Our State Directory Ad, Fall Hiking/Biking in JoCo - October placement, **materials due 7/30/20**

Our State Directory Ad - Howell Woods (NC Birding Trail) May placement, **materials due 3/1/21**

Social - Facebook post

Public Relations - Bike from Raleigh to Joco, re-pitch the Bike Routes

VisitNC Featured Content Sponsorship - Summer: Fun and Unique Spots, Howell Woods & Raleigh Oaks, **materials we provide, due 4/12/21**

Website Content: Article needed

TripAdvisor, Fall Travel Camping at Howell Woods

#hashtags: rural living, take a back road, JoCo grows

(18) Don't Pass by Selma -- Make a Pit Stop at Exit 97!

The exit that you don't want to miss.

Have you been on the road for hours and need a break from the road, make I-95, exit 97 your favorite pit stop. If you only have 30 minutes to stretch your legs, get a bite to eat, and give the dog a walk, then Selma, NC is the exit to remember.

The new Old North State Food Hall.....

Digital and Social Media:

Leisure Market: 50-150 miles

Image assets: Need photos of Food Hall

Google Ads - Run campaigns - Selma

Social - Facebook post s

Website Content: Article needed

Geofence campaign to target areas for Food Hall

*Work with Food Hall agency, Sprout, for PR, creative, and photography supporting their campaign.

Phase 3: Destination Growth and reinvestment in tourism development

Objective: Re-establish brand authority

After we have adjusted your strategy to account for new behaviors and traveler needs, the shift to growth should occur. Leverage the learnings from Phase 2 to increase budget in effective channels, build an A/B testing road-map for continuous optimization, and engineer new marketing automation funnels to begin fine-tuning our efforts.

Key Focus:

- A/B Testing to balance website intentions with new user behaviors
- Re-marketing to leverage new conversion insights
- Marketing Automation to streamline new processes
- App Promotion to provide better trip personalization, NC Farms App, and Bentonville App

TIME FRAME: Approx. next 12-24 months

REINFORCED EMPHASIS ON SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Goal – Delivering a safe, enjoyable and productive customer experience with subsequent repeats, referrals, and gains to all affected audiences.

- Community, attraction, and event carrying capacity limitations
- Safety and health protocols and enforcement
- Resident and business readiness acceptance
- Selective destination development/tourism experience master and project planning

Suggestions moving forward on tourism development:

With more time in the office the staff will devote efforts to research on social and website data and testing what messages gain the most traction. After a year of using new creative, the staff will determine which performed the best using insights from Google, our website, and social channels to double-down on the most productive message and creative for the county.

Improvements to the website design, graphics, fonts, and colors are currently underway to keep our most powerful marketing tool competitive and useful for visitors, residents, groups, sports, and other partners in Johnston County, whether they be our partners, retirement communities, chambers, or economic development office.

Conversations with Simpleview on the use of microsites, and the above website improvements will cost us marketing funds, but as more marketing moves to our digital platform, it's our most important investment.

Work on digital publications will be completed within the next few months, including a 2021 Digital Visitors Guide if print funds are not available by January of this year.

All matching marketing grants have been suspended in 2021 for events and festivals. Almost all events/festivals will be canceled and the future of mass gatherings may be different with more virtual concerts. This may present us with an opportunity to re-think how we support the marketing of festivals and events in the county. For example, this virtual event is brought to you by the Johnston County Visitors Bureau, the official source of travel information for JoCo.

Investment of marketing dollars with agritourism, on-farm experiences, rural excursions, farm to table dining, buying local products, are all opportunities for Johnston County, and aligns with our brand. Staff will continue to work with JoCo Grows Agritourism and pursue grants to step up the marketing campaign outlined in the 2019 plan.

Thoughts for the long-term future for tourism in Johnston County.

Over the next 24 months, the strength and reach of our marketing message(s) has the opportunity to create new partnerships as our tourism partners, towns, and the county strive to survive this pandemic.

Investment in video and photography is still a key component as more than ever before, a visual experience and message will be needed to promote the destination.

How our recreation assets grow in the next 2 years under the leadership of Adrian O'Neil with open space, trail development, Howell Woods, and more will build on our appeal for "getting outside the city", for rural experiences.

Tourism development grants have been suspended in 2021 and to build up the bureau reserves, may be reduced in 2022. This all depends on the time-frame of recovery for the tourism industry and strength of the bureau's budget.

The bureau's role in the community as it pertains to attraction management, trails, packaging, the Hospitality Association, the Recreation & Sports Council, the JoCo Grows Agritourism, and other county organizations remains critical to our county's growth.

Phase 4: Destination Thrive with Plans for the Future

Objective: Create omni-channel synergy

This is the time to fully leverage the hard work of the last 24 months and thrive. During this phase, attention should be given to creating omni-channel synergy, syncing our messaging and channels from top to bottom. Scale high performing channels and fully harvest the demand of our top of funnel awareness campaigns have been creating. Use insights gained from your contact lists, data, and web analytics to do prospecting and build look-a-like audiences for incremental growth.

Key Focus:

- Harvesting the demand created by your content marketing efforts
- Scale paid media and social efforts
- Leverage your new audiences
- Omni-channel synergy

TIME FRAME: Approx. next 24 months and beyond

What the future of digital marketing will look like for Johnston County.

Our goal is to have the best message and information for visitors on all channels with the desired content whether they are on travel apps, our website, social and third-party platforms, via email marketing, or while actually in the destination is critical.

Johnston County's diversity, sheer size, number of attractions, and eleven municipalities has made this synergy the most challenging mission of the bureau. Landing on precise messaging for all target markets and getting the omni-channel experience dialed in for the destination is critical.

Staff will need to take a hard-look at how all our channels are currently working together and use the data from all our channels to give the customer the path and inspiration to travel to the county.

It is our hope that over the next 24 months, the brand of Johnston County as a rural landscape deserving to be explored will be solidified, and that elusive tag that pulls us all together may surface.

COVID-19 U.S. Travel Sentiment Survey

Thirteenth Edition: June 9, 2020

Longwoods International, with the support of Miles Partnership, is undertaking a tracking survey of U.S. travelers' intentions. This summarizes four critical data points from our survey using a national sample of 1,000 adults on June 3, 2020.

[View the full report.](#)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTENTIONS

U.S. travelers continue to slowly build confidence in traveling. As of early June, only 69% of American travelers say they are changing their travel plans in the next six months because of the coronavirus pandemic, down from a peak of 85% on April 8 and the lowest level since mid-March.

IMPACT

The percentage of Americans travelers who say the pandemic has greatly impacted their travel plans in the next six months also continues to decline, from a peak of 67% of travelers on April 1 to 46% in the most recent survey, the lowest level since March 11.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE SUMMER

When asked what activities U.S. travelers planned to pursue over the summer, dining (57%) and shopping (52%) were the first and second most popular activities. Outdoor activities including water and beach recreation and relaxation (50%) and visiting National & State Parks (34%) are also very popular. One-in-five Americans want to visit an amusement or theme park, or museum/art gallery during their summer outings.

PERCEPTION OF TRAVEL & SAFETY

Americans continued to build confidence in their own travel and in welcoming visitors to their communities. When asked if they support reopening their community to visitors, 46% agreed or strongly agreed, up from 31% three weeks ago. 44% indicated they feel safe traveling outside of their community, up from 35% three weeks ago. Locals are also feeling more confident with 44% feeling safe to dine in local restaurants and shop in the community, up from 37% just last week. This continued strengthening in confidence remains critical to the strength and timing of travel and tourism's recovery.

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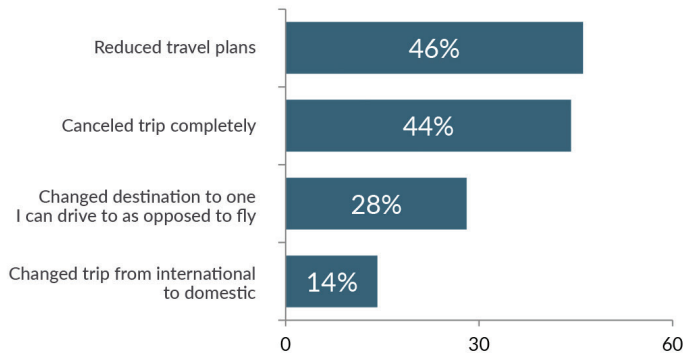
COVID-19 U.S. Travel Sentiment Survey

Thirteenth Edition: June 9, 2020

TRAVEL PLANS

As the summer travel season continues, the impact of COVID-19 continues a slow decline but remains an impediment impacting summer and fall travel. The proportion of travelers who have canceled a trip, reduced travel or made other changes in the next six months is on a slight decline after its peak in April.

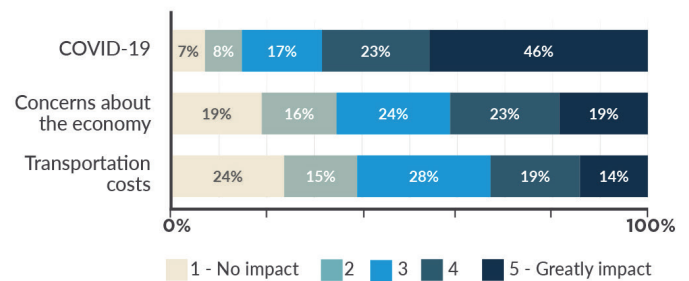
HOW DID YOU CHANGE YOUR PLANS?



FACTORS IMPACTING TRAVEL

COVID-19 concerns plateaued with 46% U.S. travelers indicating it was "greatly impacting" travel, down from 60% three weeks ago. There continues to be no significant economic fallout of COVID-19 with only 19% citing major concerns about the economy influencing their travel plans, the lowest level since early March.

FACTORS IMPACTING DECISIONS TO TRAVEL IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS



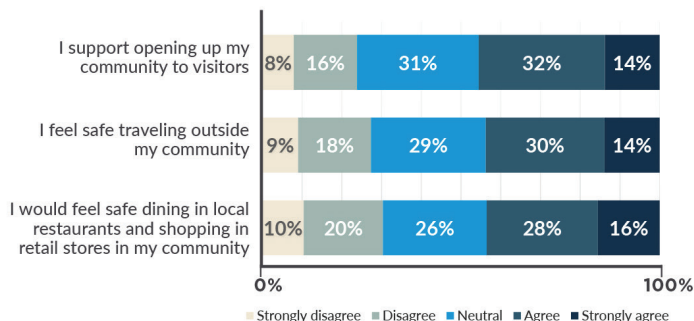
69%

of U.S. travelers indicate they will change their travel plans in the next six months due to COVID-19, sharply down from last week (75%) and the peak levels near 85% in late March/early April.

CONFIDENCE IN TRAVEL & TRAVELERS

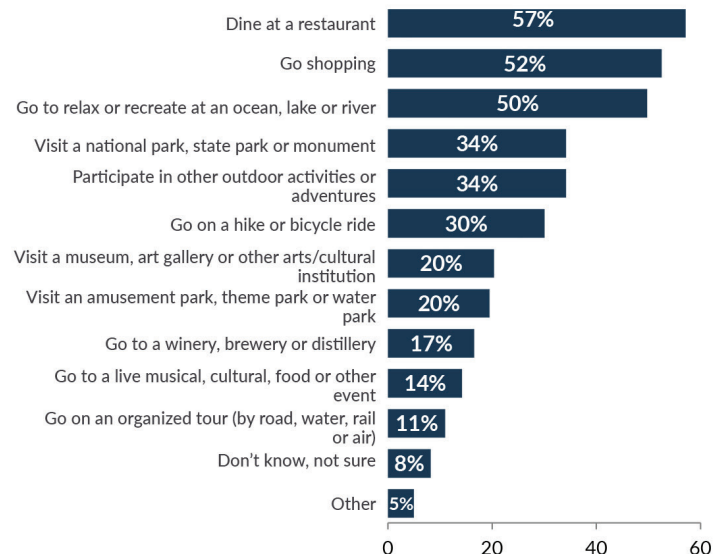
There have been significant improvements in the confidence and perception of safety in travel among U.S. travelers over the last 3 weeks, both in traveling themselves and in welcoming visitors back to their community. However, significant minorities (24-30%) do not feel safe and a similar proportion (26-31%) are neutral or unsure on if they feel safe. Continued improvement in confidence and perception of safety is key for a wider recovery in travel to begin.

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND TRAVEL



SUMMER TRAVEL ACTIVITIES

Americans want to dine and shop during their summer travels with a wide range of outdoor activities also extremely popular. A large percent of Americans want to be outdoors, heading to the ocean, lake or a river or visiting a national or state park. Significant proportions are also keen on activities such as theme parks, breweries/wineries or events where social distancing could be more difficult.



Research by:

Longwoods
INTERNATIONAL

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2020-21 Budget Detail

The following expense line-item represents some of the larger marketing expenses and the following are explained for the 2021 budget. As we move month to month, any adjustments will be vetted with staff and board as needed. Many of our expenses are set such as HR, building lease, core marketing expenses like billboards and Simpleview website costs. Where we could, we reduced all budget items for 2021.

Printing - 1200

Based on trends across the United States - the 2021 Visitors Guide update will be digital only. Our current inventory of guides is approximately 25,000, so we expect that to last us until December. The only brochure that may need to be printed is the Beer, Wine, and Shine Trail brochure, and that will be determined when the time presents itself.

Budget - \$13,500

Koozies	500
Calendar Strips	1,000
Mugs	1,000
General	2,000
Beer, Wine, Shine	5,000
Supplies	1,000
JoCo Run (if needed)	1,000
Cycle NC Smithfield	1,000
JoCo Works	1,000

Travel and Tradeshow - 1412

For the first six months of FY 20-21, all travel has been canceled except minor travel mileage due to continued operations for in-county business. Some projects like the JoCo Works program for October 2020 is being planned with JCS and JCC, so we have budgeted to be the Hospitality World, and Spring travel shows and media missions are funded.

Budget - \$18,100

JoCo Works Show Expenses	2,500
VisitNC 365	1,000
Cycle NC Transportation	1,000
1-800 Call Center	500
Welcome Center/Christmas	500
Wash, DC Travel & Adventure Show	2,200
Staff Mileage	3,000
Visit NC in-state media	500
National Tourism Week	500
Southern Women's Show	1,700
IMM (Int's Media Marketplace)	2,700
Influencer Fams	1,000
Traditional Media Fam	1,000

Advertising - 2600

The largest line item for the Visitors Bureau is advertising, as our primary mission is marketing our destinations, so we have reduced as much as possible, but maintaining our billboard campaigns, website, and some digital messages targeted to a 100-150 mile radius for short trips and drive markets. We applied and received a \$10,000 grant with Our State Magazine to match our ad buy, therefore extending our messaging in North Carolina. VisitNC will also be offering some type of grant for advertising programs.

Budget - \$150,000

Billboards

Interstate Outdoor	46,000
Local Media Outdoor	9,000
Capital Outdoor	4,500
Coastal Billboard	7,020
Billboard Vinyl Expenses	1,200

Web/Digital

Google Adwords	12,000
Joco Grows Website Host	300
Google Maps Fee	190
Bentonville Website Host	200
Mailchimp Service	2,100
NC Farms App - Yellow Dog	1,800
Facebook	6,000
Civil War Courier	500
Simpleview maintenance	1,000
Simpleview Annual Hosting	15,000

Distribution

Hughes Publishing	
RDU display	1,190

Print

LGA/VisitNC Campaigns	5,250
Our State Magazine	7,600

Photo/Video

Jamaal Porter - Retainer	3,900
Other drone/photos	2,000

Influencers

NC Tripping Podcast	1,000
Culinary PR Campaign	1,000

Other

NC Retirement Program	3,000
Bentonville On-Cell App	2,500
Reach Local Geofencing	10,000
Email Marketing	5,000

Town of Benson - 4601

The Town of Benson basic advertising plan includes billboards, website, Google Adwords and promotion of the 301 Endless Yard Sale. This year the Benson Art Advisory Board will contract for a mural project in Historic Downtown Benson.

Budget - \$40,000

Billboards

Interstate Outdoor Billboards	10,800
Outfront Billboards	6,300
Lamar Billboards	6,600
New Billboard Vinyl	1,700

Other Tourism Related Projects

Public Art Project	10,000
301 Endless Yard Sale	500

Digital Advertising

Simpleview Website services	2,500
Google Adwords	600
Influencer Visit/Social Takeover	1,000 (following mural installation)

Town of Kenly - 4602

The Town of Kenly's basic advertising plan includes billboards, website, Google Adwords and promotion of the 301 Endless Yard Sale. This year the Town of Kenly will contract for a digital sign project, which funds will need to be used from the reserves.

Budget - \$22,500

Billboards

Interstate Outdoor Billboards	6,000
Speedy Billboards	5,400

Other Tourism Related Projects

Digital Sign Project	6,000
301 Endless Yard Sale	500
Tobacco Farm Life Museum	1,500

Digital Advertising

Simpleview Website services	2,500
Google Adwords	600

Town of Selma - 4608

The Town of Selma basic advertising plan includes billboards, website expenses, Google Adwords and promotion of the 301 Endless Yard Sale. This year with reduced revenues expected not only with the COVID-19 crisis, but the loss of the Hampton Inn brand, the budget reflects reduced advertising dollars available to spend and use of reserves.

Budget - \$65,895

Billboards

Interstate Outdoor Billboards	25,870
Interstate Outdoor Billboard	3,000
Lamar Billboards	4,800
New Billboard Vinyl	1,000

Print Advertising

The Rudy Theatre Applause Mag	700
Antique Week Magazine	2,400
Hotel Coupon Book	3,240
AAA Go Magazine	3,485
Reid's Building Wrap	1,500

Other Tourism Related Projects

NC Civil War Trail Marker	200
301 Endless Yard Sale	500
Rudy Theatre Sponsorship	7,200

Digital Advertising

Simpleview Website services	2,500
Google Adwords	1,000
Facebook Ads	1,000
Local Palate (Food Hall opening)	2,600
Food Hall Opening Influencers	2,000

Misc. Print Services

Brochures or flyers	500
You Are Here Map	2,500

Town of Smithfield - 4609

The Town of Smithfield basic advertising plan includes billboards, website, Google Adwords, limited print ads, and promotion of the 301 Endless Yard Sale. This next year work will continue with Wayfinding signage needs and some tourism related projects to support the town's greenway projects. The Neuse Amphitheater project continues to get lukewarm reception, therefore, there is no need to budget planning dollars for moving this project forward.

Budget - \$170,000

Billboards

Interstate Outdoor Billboards	34,500
Capital Outdoor	4,500
New Billboard Vinyl	2,520

Print Advertising

Our State Magazine	7,600
VisitNC coop plan	4,100
Hotel Coupon Book	6,000
AAA Go Magazine	6,970
Southern Living	8,760

Other Tourism Related Projects

NC Civil War Trail Marker	400
301 Endless Yard Sale	500
Wayfinding Signs	32,000
Greenway Projects	15,000

Digital Advertising

Simpleview Website services	5,000
Google Adwords	18,000
Facebook Ads	5,000
Website Domain Expenses	500
Philly Voice	1,750
TripAdvisor	5,400
Local Palate (Dine Downtown)	2,600
Travel Media Subscription/PR	2,400
Visit Smithfield Influencers	3,500

Misc. Print Services

Brochures or flyers	500
You Are Here Map	2,500