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Photo caption: The Johnston County Visitors Bureau Visitor Spending Infographic showcases the five sectors of the tourism industry spending in the county.

In 2023 Johnston County Visitors Spent 4.9% More

(Smithfield, N.C., August 15, 2024) — Statewide, visitor spending in 2023 rose 6.9 percent to reach a record \$35.6 billion and direct tourism employment increased 4.8 percent to 227,224. These statistics come from the “Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2023” a study which can be accessed at partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies.

“The new study underscores the importance of tourism to every county in North Carolina,” said Wit Tuttell, Executive Director of Visit NC. “There’s a lot of competition for travelers’ time and money, and we owe our success to everything from the state’s scenic beauty and outdoor adventure, to our mix of tradition and innovation, and our welcoming spirit. Those qualities might be hard to measure, but we can follow the trail to a measurable impact on our workforce, our businesses, and our tax base. We look forward to continued success.”

In Johnston County, visitors spent **\$298.95 million** in 2023, which is a **4.9% increase** over 2022 spending. This places the county 28th in the state in total spending, and third in the Triangle behind Wake (\$3,288.36) and Durham (\$1,125.62), with Orange in fourth place (\$266.92).

“Johnston County’s tourism industry is certainly growing, with two new hotels opening soon in Benson and Smithfield and several under development in the county. We anticipate visitor spending to follow suit with the growth coming in 2024-25 and the opening of Eastfield Crossing in Selma,” stated Donna Bailey-Taylor, President/CEO, Johnston County Visitors Bureau.

What does \$298.95 million in visitor spending mean for Johnston County?

- Visitors to the county spend **\$819,041** a day in local businesses such as hotels, retail and outlet shopping, attractions, dining, and travel services.
- **\$12.4m** in state tax and **\$9.2m** in local tax receipts which provide county services and reduce the tax burden on every household in the county by approximately **\$145.00**.
- Room tax collection paid by visitors is the sole source of operating funds for the Visitors Bureau's marketing campaigns; no local county property taxes fund the bureau.
- More than 2,000 people are employed in the tourism sector, with labor income more than **\$76m**.

Based on tourism industry segments, visitors spent in these categories: (millions)

| | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022 (comparison)</u> |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Lodging | \$61.68 | \$59.77 |
| Food & Beverage | \$103.42 | \$96.83 |
| Recreation | \$40.18 | \$36.43 |
| Retail | \$23.81** | \$23.56** |
| Travel Services | \$69.86 | \$68.33 |
| Total | \$298.95 | \$284.93 |

*** (the VisitNC report excludes retail outlet spending, related sales tax from retail, and jobs at Carolina Premium Outlets as the research is not customized for Johnston County)*

The [visitor spending study](#), commissioned by [Visit NC](#) and conducted by Tourism Economics in collaboration with the U.S. Travel Association, provides preliminary estimates of domestic and international traveler expenditures as well as employment, payroll income, and state and local tax revenues directly generated by these expenditures.

To learn more about tourism in Johnston County, the Visitors Bureau provides additional information on the website, www.johnstoncountync.org/about. Residents and community leaders are encouraged to sign up for our monthly partner-facing newsletter, *"Tourism Does That"*, [here](#).

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