TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
- Message from the President 4

OVERVIEW OF 2021 SPENDING
- Visitor Spending Report At a Glance 6

INTERESTING FACTS
- Short History of the Tourism Authority 7

STAFF AND BOARD
- JCVB Vision & Mission 8
- JCVB Core Values 9
- Board of Directors 10
- JCVB Staff and Job Descriptions 11

CAPITAL GRANTS
- Changes with Capital Grants 13

FINANCIAL
- Financial Report Review 14

STAFF ENGAGEMENT
- Volunteering on Boards 16
- NC Tobacco Trust Fund Grant 17

MARKETING & PR
- Highlights of FY 22 Campaigns 18

SALES & SERVICES
- Highlights of FY 22 Projects 26

Inside cover: Chloe Gutierrez poses in front of the recently commissioned Ava Mural and Rose Garden in downtown Smithfield.
Dear Community Partners:

This year’s Annual Report, as in past years, will include the numbers and highlights, but will provide educational content for residents and the tourism related businesses in Johnston County on how the Visitors Bureau works on behalf of the county. Being in my job for over 25 years, it occurred to me recently, that I can not assume new business owners, residents, and community leaders know who we are, what we do, and why tourism is an important economic development sector for the county. Tourism marketing campaigns launched by the Bureau invites visitors to experience our attractions, stay in our

TEAM WORK 2022 proved to be a year of much adapting and a staff reorganization with one less team member. All things are not back to normal, but the JCVB team is hard at work.
hotels, shop and dine with our partners, explore our unique downtowns, attend our festivals, and the result is these visitors bring new revenues to the county as visitor spending.

**RESEARCH** More than ever in a changing world, tourism agencies are relying on research to gauge visitor sentiment for travel and what messages resonate and align with travelers. We use research to promote our tourism assets in Johnston County to the right market with the right message to attract more visitors.

In 2021, Visitors to the county spent **$255 million**, which is a 40% increase over 2020 numbers which were ravaged by the pandemic. Last year definitely was a “recovery” year, and already 2022 business is on the rise. The looming recession and high price of gas is slightly affecting travel, however, there remains a great deal of pent-up demand to get back on the road and travel following the pandemic.

**QUALITY FIRST** With uncertainty on the rebounding of the budget in 2021, several projects were cut, but the quality of marketing materials, assets, and messaging remained a top priority for the Visitors Bureau.

We invite everyone to sign up for our “Tourism Does That?!“ newsletter, which is sent out to share what’s happening with the bureau each and every month. It’s a new tool and very informative!

---

Donna Bailey-Taylor  
President/CEO
In 2021, visitors to Johnston County spent $255.47 million, which was an increase of 40.5% from 2020 spending. Breaking it down, that equates to visitors spending nearly $700,000 a day in our county on lodging, dining, attractions, recreation, retail shopping, and travel services.

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. The statistical model draws on detailed data from VisitNC as well as data derived from federal and state government sources, nationally known private and non-profit travel organizations, and other travel industry sources.**

The study suggested strong recovery was seen statewide compared to 2020 with visitor spending across the state up 45 percent. Each of the state’s 100 counties experienced increases in spending from 2020 to 2021.

Tourism spending generated $11.7m in state tax and $9m in local tax receipts to the county’s general fund. Taxes saved per Johnston County resident are $92.34. More than 2,000 people are employed in tourism sector jobs, with an annual payroll of $65.9m.

**The VisitNC report excludes retail outlet spending, sales tax, and jobs at Carolina Premium Outlets as the research is not customized for Johnston County.
A Short history on the formation of the Johnston County Tourism Authority.

In 1987, the NC General Assembly approved HB 893 allowing Johnston County to levy a room tax. In November of that year, the Johnston County Commissioners levied a 3% county-wide occupancy tax, and the Tourism Authority was formed to promote tourism.

The legislation also established the format by which the Board of Directors was created. The Tourism Authority is a 11-member board composed of five representatives appointed by Chambers of Commerce in Benson, Clayton, Four Oaks, Kenly, Smithfield/Selma, five representatives appointed by the County Commissioners that are involved in tourism, and one ex-officio member, the County Finance Officer as the treasurer. There are Occupancy Tax Uniform Provisions established which outline how funds may be used to promote the county.

With the creation of the Tourism Authority there was a mandate in the legislation to give 50% of the tax collection for the first two years to the Johnston Community College Auditorium building fund which amounted to approximately $235,000. In addition, the tourism authority contributed $30,000 a year for five years to the Smithfield/Selma Chamber of Commerce Lee House Renovation project which created the Visitor Information Center for the county, and provided office space for the Visitors Bureau staff. So for the early years of the Tourism Authority funds were dedicated to development projects before a majority of funding was available for marketing.

Johnston County tourism revenue has been generated mainly by the leisure traveler passing through on I-95 and I-40 to other destinations. In the last several years, the Visitors Bureau has been dedicated to creating packages and tourism product to create reasons for visitors to choose our destinations for girlfriend shopping trips, golf vacations, and culinary trail packages. Current efforts continue to build awareness of Johnston County for several niche markets including agritourism, recreation, sports tournaments, destination weddings, and civil war history.

What is a tourism authority?

In North Carolina General Statutes, the term “authority” is used to refer to many different kinds of entities that are created by government to perform specific functions or services. Authorities are quasi-government agencies following G.S. 159 Local Government Finance rules.
MISSION & VISION

MISSION

The mission of the Johnston County Visitors Bureau is the marketing and development of the destination’s brand experiences to targeted visitor markets for economic growth and quality of place.

VISION

Johnston County Visitors Bureau is the recognized and influential community tourism leader through its successful productive and technology savvy marketing, development, and advocacy partnerships.

5 STRATEGIC GOALS

Strive to achieve excellence in destination marketing utilizing the highest industry standards set forth by Destinations International.

Position Johnston County as the preferred visitor, group tour, and meeting destination along the I-95 and I-40 corridors targeting select visitor markets along the East Coast and Canada.

Stress the importance of educational opportunities for the visitor industry with the purpose of encouraging quality visitor services for leisure, meeting, and group tour travelers to Johnston County.

Work cooperatively with municipalities, chambers of commerce, and visitor industry partners both locally and statewide to achieve an effective and comprehensive marketing program.

Proactively pursue economic development projects that benefit the tourism industry in Johnston County.
CORE VALUES

As the official destination marketing organization for the county of Johnston, the Tourism Authority Board adopted the following core values to guide the decisions which manage the organization. We aspire to operate at the highest level of excellence in marketing, benchmarking our performance against top performing CVBs in the United States.

• We promise to exceed expectations in the delivery of public services for our stakeholders;

• We are professionals, committed to serving with honesty and integrity;

• We are committed to solving problems;

• We are committed to achieving real results that earn the public’s trust;

• We are committed to working cooperatively with the visitor industry for the overall good of the county;

• We encourage and value open and honest communication;

• We are committed to continual learning and the pursuit of excellence;

• We are committed to being active partners with all municipalities, county government, and the Chambers of Commerce;

• We are committed to being good stewards of our natural environment and the preservation of the county’s cultural, agricultural, and Civil War heritage;

• We are committed to development of partnerships and alliances both in the county and statewide.
Meet the Johnston County Tourism Authority members who served for the Fiscal Year 2021-22. Five members are appointed by County Commissioners and five from local chambers of commerce.

**APPOINTED BY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**Rick Childrey, Chairperson**  
Retired from the Smithfield/Selma Chamber of Commerce.

**Paul Boucher, Marketing Committee Chairperson**  
Operates a family-owned travel agency, Small World Travel, in Benson.

**W.E. "Bud" Andrews**  
Retired from First Citizens Bank, and a previous Tourism Authority board chairman.

**Jeff Jennings**  
Works for Representative Donna White, and previously for the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission.

**Mark McDonnell**  
Works with the Eastfield Development group which opened the Old North State Food Hall in Selma.

**APPOINTED BY LOCAL CHAMBERS**

**Ben Cook, Vice-Chairperson**  
Owner of Benton Card Company and Grndhaus printing company in Benson.

**Melody Worthington, Secretary/Treasurer**  
Community member in Kenly, previously with the Tobacco Farm Life Museum.

**Randy Capps, Special Projects Chairperson**  
Co-owner of Johnston Now Magazine and JNow Digital Marketing.

**Maria Smith**  
Works for the Clayton Area Chamber of Commerce as Director of Events and Operations.

**Colleen Roby**  
Co-owner of three Simple Twist Restaurants located in Smithfield, Garner (I-40, Exit 312), and Clayton.

**Chad McLamb, County Finance Officer**  
Ex-Officio Member of the Tourism Authority.
How many employees work at the bureau and what do they do?

The Visitors Bureau has six employees, and their short job description summaries are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ROLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>DONNA BAILEY-TAYLOR</td>
<td>President/CEO</td>
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<td>Directs and leads the Bureau toward its mission. Works with the JCVB Board on policy making and strategies for the organization. Serves as the key executive within Johnston County to represent the interests of the travel and tourism industry. Speaks at public events and other meetings on tourism as well as other matters pertaining to the industry and the JCVB. Participates in industry associations and travel and tourism boards. Acts as the primary spokesperson for the organization.</td>
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<td>02</td>
<td>ERIC DEAN</td>
<td>Creative Director</td>
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<td>Helps execute the vision of the Johnston County Visitors Bureau while supporting the needs of the marketing, sales, and services departments. Develops all creative aspects and direction of the Bureau’s marketing platforms including graphic design, advertising, print materials, social and digital campaigns, and publications. Manages all technical aspects of the Bureau’s websites, including design, layout, and functionality.</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>ANGEL PHILLIPS</td>
<td>Office Manager</td>
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<td>Performs accounting functions in accordance with County Finance Purchasing Procedures, and assists the President/CEO with the overall financial operation of the Bureau. This position will also assist in the management and operation of the administrative offices, IT duties, and oversees the operation of the visitor center providing visitor services for leisure and group markets.</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>ASHBY BRAME</td>
<td>Director of Marketing</td>
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<td>Responsible for identifying market opportunities and developing short and long-term marketing strategies with the objective of attracting overnight business. These strategies should include advertising, public relations, direct sales, trade shows/industry meetings, familiarization tours, group services, research, and special promotions. Responsible for strategically planning, implementing, and reviewing internal and external communication programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>JENNA ANDREASEN</td>
<td>Digital Marketing Manager</td>
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<td>Helps promote the vision of the Johnston County Visitors Bureau while supporting the needs of the marketing department. This position drives all digital marketing programs within all levels of the organization and engages with vendors and partners. Duties include management of social media content, website updates, publication inventory, and email marketing.</td>
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<td>06</td>
<td>KRISTIN RADFORD</td>
<td>Leisure Sales &amp; Service Manager</td>
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<td>Welcomes and provides relevant and helpful information about Johnston County to all Visitors to the Visitor Center, while providing superior customer service. Assist all walk-in visitors, phone call inquiries and email inquiries promptly and informatively. Manages the CRM and the Extranet for the tourism industry partners, events, and all brochure distribution in the county.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In 1997, the General Assembly enacted uniform municipal and county administrative provisions for occupancy tax legislation – G.S. 153A-155 and G.S. 160A-215. These provisions provide uniformity in the areas of levy, administration, collection, repeal, and penalties. Subsequently, the House Finance Committee established the Occupancy Tax Subcommittee, which regularly reviews occupancy tax legislation and looks for the inclusion of the following uniform provisions in the bills it considers:

**RATE** – The county tax rate cannot exceed 6% and the city tax rate, when combined with the county rate, cannot exceed 6%.

**USE** – At least two-thirds of the proceeds must be used to promote travel and tourism and the remainder must be used for tourism-related expenditures, which may include beach nourishment. However, local governments in coastal counties may allocate up to 50% of occupancy tax proceeds for beach nourishment, so long as all remaining proceeds are used for tourism promotion and provided that the use of occupancy tax proceeds for beach nourishment is limited by either a statutory cap or sunset provision.

**DEFINITIONS** – The terms “net proceeds”, “promote travel and tourism”, “tourism-related expenditures” are defined terms:

**NET PROCEEDS** – Gross proceeds less the costs to the city/county of administering and collecting the tax, as determined by the finance officer, not to exceed 3% of the first $500,000 of gross proceeds collected each year and 1% of the remaining gross receipts collected each year.

**PROMOTE TRAVEL AND TOURISM** – To advertise or market an area or activity, publish and distribute pamphlets and other materials, conduct market research, or engage in similar promotional activities that attract tourists or business travelers to the area; the term includes administrative expenses incurred in engaging in these activities.

**TOURISM-RELATED EXPENDITURES** – Expenditures that, in the judgment of the Tourism Development Authority, are designed to increase the use of lodging facilities, meeting facilities, and convention facilities in a city/county.

**ADMINISTRATION** – The net revenues must be administered by a local tourism promotion agency, typically referred to as a “Tourism Development Authority,” that has the authority to determine how the tax proceeds will be used, is created by a local ordinance, and at least 1/2 of the members must be currently active in the promotion of travel and tourism in the taxing district and 1/3 of the members must be affiliated with organizations that collect the tax.

**COSTS OF COLLECTION** – The taxing authority may retain from the revenues its actual costs of collection, not to exceed 3% of the first $500,000 collected each year plus 1% of the remainder collected each year.
**UPDATE:** SOME CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE CAPITAL GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY THE TOURISM AUTHORITY.

The five-year reset button for all grant recipients has been extended through FY 23, to allow organizations that could not apply last year, a chance to apply in the last round. In FY 23-24, the $50,000 cap per organization will reset for another 5 year period.

As the Tourism Authority reopened the application process for the Capital Grants program for FY 23, the application deadlines and decisions were moved up to align with the budget season. In the budget for FY 23, the Tourism Authority approved **$123,513** in grants.

Since 1987, the Tourism Authority has invested **$1.9 million dollars** in tourism development projects throughout the county. Below is a list of projects supported by the Tourism Authority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Projects</th>
<th>Town of Kenly</th>
<th>Town of Clayton</th>
<th>Town of Four Oaks</th>
<th>Town of Archer Lodge</th>
<th>Town of Wilson's Mills</th>
<th>Town of Pine Level</th>
<th>Town of Princeton</th>
<th>JCVB Research Projects</th>
<th>Total Grants Awarded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends of Bentonville Battleground</td>
<td>Tobacco Farm Life Museum</td>
<td>Clayton Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>I-95 Lighting Town of Four Oaks</td>
<td>Archer Lodge Community Center</td>
<td>Wilson's Mills Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>Sam Godwin Park Restoration</td>
<td>Town of Princeton Community Center</td>
<td>Convention Center Feasibility Study</td>
<td><strong>$1,905,677</strong></td>
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<td>Johnston County Heritage Center</td>
<td>I-95 Lighting Town of Kenly</td>
<td>Clayton Parks &amp; Recreation Depart.</td>
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<td>Johnston County 250th Anniversary Celebration</td>
<td>I-95 Beautification Town of Kenly</td>
<td>US 70 Beautification Town of Clayton</td>
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<td>W.J. Barefoot Auditorium/Town Hall</td>
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<td>Benson Museum of Local History</td>
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</table>

Since 1987, the Tourism Authority has invested **$1.9 million dollars** in tourism development projects throughout the county. Below is a list of projects supported by the Tourism Authority.
The following is an overview of the Johnston County Visitors Bureau financial data for the year 2021-22.

**NET INCOME**

The Johnston County Visitors Bureau is funded by a county-wide 3% Room Tax paid by visitors staying in accommodations in the county, which generated $1,188,556 in net revenues for FY 21-22 which were greater than FY 2019, signifying the hotel industry’s recovery in Johnston County.

Month-by-month Johnston County 3% gross collections for Comparison FY 2019 to FY 2022:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2018-19</th>
<th>FY 2019-20</th>
<th>FY 2020-21</th>
<th>FY 2021-22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>$84,407.80</td>
<td>$95,891.37</td>
<td>$59,446.47</td>
<td>$113,888.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>$81,467.98</td>
<td>$90,392.71</td>
<td>$59,624.08</td>
<td>$97,158.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>$110,798.78</td>
<td>$84,917.39</td>
<td>$52,954.70</td>
<td>$84,940.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>$109,866.73</td>
<td>$85,663.26</td>
<td>$60,262.55</td>
<td>$95,970.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>$88,976.50</td>
<td>$79,913.11</td>
<td>$59,937.52</td>
<td>$97,816.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>$73,053.80</td>
<td>$70,584.71</td>
<td>$49,468.60</td>
<td>$77,551.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>$66,924.40</td>
<td>$61,938.56</td>
<td>$50,251.91</td>
<td>$90,469.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>$66,040.66</td>
<td>$61,262.98</td>
<td>$52,995.15</td>
<td>$81,157.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>$97,464.59</td>
<td>$65,425.36</td>
<td>$80,289.83</td>
<td>$105,402.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>$81,854.18</td>
<td>$31,615.63</td>
<td>$77,827.48</td>
<td>$117,545.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>$97,165.22</td>
<td>$41,952.76</td>
<td>$97,434.79</td>
<td>$112,479.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>$88,703.01</td>
<td>$61,115.12</td>
<td>$83,109.70</td>
<td>$114,175.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,055,429.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>$830,672.96</strong></td>
<td><strong>$783,602.78</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,188,556.50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JCBV 2021 financials are audited by the Johnston County Finance Department under a 3-party contract and a completed audit will be available in December.

The Towns of Smithfield, Selma, Kenly, and Benson also have a 2% Room Tax which is dedicated to each town’s individual marketing campaigns. The following collections represents the gross dollar amounts reported by the towns to the Tourism Authority in FY 2018-19 through FY 2021-22:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>FY 2018-19</th>
<th>FY 2019-20</th>
<th>FY 2020-21</th>
<th>FY 2021-22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smithfield</td>
<td>$287,587.55</td>
<td>$225,777.99</td>
<td>$235,251.98</td>
<td>$373,147.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selma</td>
<td>$133,162.70</td>
<td>$87,195.52</td>
<td>$56,276.72</td>
<td>$90,653.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenly</td>
<td>$35,460.96</td>
<td>$27,440.85</td>
<td>$26,980.08</td>
<td>$28,776.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benson</td>
<td>$63,175.31</td>
<td>$54,565.30</td>
<td>$57,928.00</td>
<td>$80,021.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revenues not spent on marketing programs on behalf of each town are held in Fund Balance Reserves for future marketing or tourism-related projects approved by each town’s tourism committee or by Town Council’s request. The President/CEO of the Visitors Bureau works directly with Town Managers and/or serves on committees established by the town to spend the 2% room tax.

The Town's have the following reserves as of 6/30/22:

- **Smithfield** - $604,910.58
- **Selma** - $171,531.37
- **Benson** - $65,254.92
- **Kenly** - $19,694.00
## INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021-22</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>Var. 22 vs 21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johnston 3% Tax</td>
<td>1,169,945.48</td>
<td>748,522.51</td>
<td>910,717.82</td>
<td>1,052,304.93</td>
<td>421,422.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Benson</td>
<td>76,689.16</td>
<td>57,796.17</td>
<td>63,884.69</td>
<td>61,283.08</td>
<td>18,892.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Kenly</td>
<td>28,849.54</td>
<td>27,780.62</td>
<td>30,541.07</td>
<td>35,460.96</td>
<td>1,068.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Selma</td>
<td>86,502.14</td>
<td>55,976.47</td>
<td>105,516.39</td>
<td>129,437.82</td>
<td>30,525.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Smithfield</td>
<td>354,448.30</td>
<td>200,850.34</td>
<td>267,898.05</td>
<td>278,959.91</td>
<td>153,597.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Revenue</td>
<td>4402.00</td>
<td>6,565.00</td>
<td>5,104.43</td>
<td>2,931.11</td>
<td>-2,163.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursements</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2082.02</td>
<td>2,269.29</td>
<td>3,284.72</td>
<td>-2,082.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>394.15</td>
<td>356.48</td>
<td>821.63</td>
<td>968.42</td>
<td>37.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>3,000.00</td>
<td>121,750.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>7,000.00</td>
<td>-118,750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,724,230.77</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,226,879.61</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,386,753.20</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,571,630.95</strong></td>
<td><strong>497,351.16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## HR EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021-22</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>Var. 22 vs 21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries &amp; Wages</td>
<td>380,066.61</td>
<td>363,005.82</td>
<td>389,294.44</td>
<td>313,600.83</td>
<td>17,060.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longevity Pay</td>
<td>5,700.00</td>
<td>5,300.00</td>
<td>4,500.00</td>
<td>3,360.00</td>
<td>400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Per Diem</td>
<td>6000.00</td>
<td>6,000.00</td>
<td>6000.00</td>
<td>6,000.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>144,154.62</td>
<td>137,676.42</td>
<td>138,302.69</td>
<td>104,688.30</td>
<td>6,478.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total HR Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>535,921.23</strong></td>
<td><strong>511,982.24</strong></td>
<td><strong>538,097.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>427,649.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,938.99</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## OPERATING EXP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021-22</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>Var. 22 vs 21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional fees</td>
<td>2250.00</td>
<td>3,500.00</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
<td>-1,250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>7,526.47</td>
<td>7,969.47</td>
<td>7,521.49</td>
<td>6,802.51</td>
<td>-443.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>5,917.26</td>
<td>8,189.37</td>
<td>8,776.17</td>
<td>9,178.62</td>
<td>-2,272.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>20,389.25</td>
<td>13,188.24</td>
<td>37,042.96</td>
<td>31,846.54</td>
<td>7,201.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>4,430.10</td>
<td>4,188.08</td>
<td>5,144.57</td>
<td>5,097.51</td>
<td>242.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; Trade</td>
<td>14,831.13</td>
<td>4,460.15</td>
<td>35,332.88</td>
<td>44,953.30</td>
<td>10,370.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip/Building</td>
<td>44,540.53</td>
<td>44,058.58</td>
<td>44,159.93</td>
<td>46,707.83</td>
<td>481.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JoCo/Coop Adv.</td>
<td>166,778.93</td>
<td>130,654.87</td>
<td>228,686.85</td>
<td>251,835.49</td>
<td>36,124.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>9,191.67</td>
<td>4,162.75</td>
<td>12,015.78</td>
<td>15,774.71</td>
<td>5,028.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Expense</td>
<td>7,155.83</td>
<td>8,638.16</td>
<td>10,552.69</td>
<td>6,754.26</td>
<td>-1,482.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benson Marketing</td>
<td>38,243.97</td>
<td>33,160.35</td>
<td>24,930.71</td>
<td>44,879.93</td>
<td>5,083.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenly Marketing</td>
<td>41,939.34</td>
<td>30,842.84</td>
<td>17,186.51</td>
<td>20,847.01</td>
<td>11,096.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selma Marketing</td>
<td>49,480.68</td>
<td>60,769.75</td>
<td>101,480.66</td>
<td>67,530.54</td>
<td>-11,289.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smithfield Marketing</td>
<td>149,894.76</td>
<td>136,552.96</td>
<td>114,219.09</td>
<td>246,356.76</td>
<td>13,341.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Dues</td>
<td>15,535.16</td>
<td>12,619.96</td>
<td>13,750.00</td>
<td>22,341.46</td>
<td>2915.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Grant</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>13,750.00</td>
<td>17,500.00</td>
<td>5000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>647.00</td>
<td>647.00</td>
<td>647.00</td>
<td>672.00</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% County Fee</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>52,615.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>2,376.00</td>
<td>2,200.00</td>
<td>5,700.00</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
<td>176.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Grants</td>
<td>9,036.52</td>
<td>20,873.18</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>7,000.00</td>
<td>-11,836.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Grants</td>
<td>25,130.46</td>
<td>74,097.79</td>
<td>115,242.75</td>
<td>186,563.91</td>
<td>-48,967.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating</strong></td>
<td><strong>620,295.03</strong></td>
<td><strong>602,183.86</strong></td>
<td><strong>848,656.07</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,090,257.65</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,111.17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total HR + Oper.</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,156,216.26</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,114,166.10</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,339,431.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,517,906.78</strong></td>
<td><strong>42,050.16</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net +/-</strong></td>
<td><strong>568,014.51</strong></td>
<td><strong>112,713.51</strong></td>
<td><strong>47,321.53</strong></td>
<td><strong>53,724.17</strong></td>
<td><strong>455,301.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part of destination development in the county involves the staff of the Visitors Bureau serving on area boards, volunteering, providing marketing support, and participating in special committees related to tourism. The following is a list of service by the staff to area organizations to advance tourism in the county.

Donna Bailey-Taylor serves on the Benson Art Advisory Board. Projects in this fiscal year included the commission and installation of the Mule Sculpture by NC artist, Jonathan Bowling, and the Coffee Cup Mural by Jennifer Franks. The committee also started a sculpture lease program to rotate art pieces in front of the Mary Duncan Library on Main Street.

Donna Bailey-Taylor is Chairperson for the Ava Gardner Museum, and heads the Ava 100th Centennial Planning Committee. Projects have included the new Ava Gardner Mural and Rose Garden that was completed in May of 2022.

Donna Bailey-Taylor serves on the board of the Clayton Piano Festival to assist in marketing and promotion of the local music events and for fundraising efforts.

Donna Bailey-Taylor serves on the board of the Friends of Bentonville Battlefield, the support group for the state historic site which provides funding for a variety of projects needed by the staff. In addition, she serves as the NC Regional Director on the Civil War Trails board.

Donna Bailey-Taylor served on the following committees during the year: Ham and Yam Festival Advisory Committee, Workforce Alliance Strategic Planning Committee, SEAS (Southeast Area Study) Transportation planning for Johnston County.

Donna Bailey-Taylor serves on the Johnston County Grows Agriculture Marketing Committee and in the past several months has written and been awarded several grants to further the mission to market the county’s agriculture partners and agritourism.

Donna Bailey-Taylor donated her time to design the museum layout for the new Johnston County Heritage Museum project on Market Street in Smithfield.

Ashby Brame serves on the Friends of Johnston County Parks board, which is a new grassroots community group that supports local park and trail development in the county.

Ashby Brame serves on the SSS Academy of Hospitality & Tourism board, a group that works with high school students interested in pursuing a degree in hospitality.
NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND GRANT
GRANT AND PROJECTS

In 2021-22, the Visitors Bureau was awarded a grant in the amount of $111,900 from the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission to further the marketing plan for the JoCo Grows Agriculture marketing campaigns. Initial projects have included the following:

**Billboards & Signage**
A series of billboards have been installed on I-95, US 70, and US Hwy 301 to market the JoCoGrows.org website.

**Strawberry Season Campaign**
Designed and printed 10,000 Strawberry Postcards as part of the campaign that included radio, digital and social media marketing for 8 strawberry farms in the county.

**Social Media**
Designed a series of social media campaigns, posts, and carousels to build up followers on Facebook and Instagram.

**Cost Share Grants**
Announced and mailed grant applications to local farms on the NC Farm App. Two grants of $500 each were awarded to Smith's Nursery and Strawberry Farm and Creekside Blueberry Farm for improved signage and marketing campaigns.

**NC Farms App**
Increased the number of farms and partners on the app to 100. Johnston County was named a "top 10 asset views" county every month since the data was tracked, March 2022 - September 2022. Johnston County was named a "top 10 usage by county" March, May, and June 2022. Total asset views from July 2021 - July 2022 was 6,040. Total push notification opens from July 2021 - July 2022 was 3,813. Video filmed for Poole Family Farm and Creekside Farm for marketing by the NC Farms App team.

**Video Production**
In addition to this large grant, the Visitors Bureau was awarded a $3,000 grant from AgCarolina for new video projects for JoCo Grows Agriculture.

**Is the bureau part of the chamber of commerce?**
No, the Visitors Bureau is a quasi-government agency with oversight by the Tourism Authority.
Destination marketing involves a variety of campaigns with methods that includes outdoor advertising, digital ads, print ads, email marketing, social media, and public relations. The team at JCVB uses all these avenues to market our hotels, attractions, shopping, dining, and events. The following are some of the top success stories from FY 2022.

**Top Media Placement**

*Our State Magazine*
  "Franks for the Memories"
  "The Science of Smoke"
  "The Seed Saver"
  "Sweet & Sensitive @ JPs"

*Walter Magazine, Indy Week and The Local Palate*
  "Crawford Cookshop"

*UNC-TV (Now PBS)*
  From the Ava Gardner Museum
  From Howell Woods

*Business NC - Bentonville*
  "Reenactment Reimagined"

*Lonely Planet*
  Mountain to the Sea Trail
  Ava Gardner Museum
  Town of Smithfield

**Website Improvements with Simpleview**

In FY 2022, the JCVB marketing team upgraded the listings for attractions, events, and coupons with a new Listings Pro module with Simpleview, giving the website a new modern look and search features. Also, the Blog module layout was updated, so the look and functionality of the website was refreshed.
Telling our stories about new business openings, local chefs, artists, and festivals and events is the focus of the weekly JCVB blog. The staff utilizes the blog on social media to drive visitors to the website.

**JCVB Blog**

Some of the top BLOGs of interest for our readers in FY 21-22 were:

We know you’ve been wanting updates on the Old North State Food Hall - Reach 98,000
Going on Five Years, Redneck BBQ - Reach 44,019
Due to Continued Support for TFLM - Reach 43,153

**The Visitors Bureau Manages 5 Pages on Facebook:**

Visit Johnston County - 20,382 followers
Visit Selma, NC - 1,098 followers
301 Endless Yard Sale - 24,699 followers
Beer, Wine and Shine Trail - 12,977 followers
JoCo Grows Agriculture - 1,895 followers

Instagram - 3,828 followers
Twitter - 2,873 followers
Pinterest - 1,300 followers
YouTube Channel - 284 subscribers

Through our relationships on community boards and tourism marketing committees, the pages that we provide content for and promote in the county are:

Ava Gardner
Ava Gardner Museum
Bentonville Battlefield
Town of Benson
Ham and Yam Festival
Clayton Piano Festival
Friends of Johnston County Parks
Benson Museum of Local History
Historic Downtown Smithfield, NC
The Visitors Bureau won two Destination Marketing Awards in 2021:

*Platinum Award for Tourism Strong Community Communication Plan during COVID*

*Gold Award for Digital Guides for Meetings and Sports Venues in Johnston County.*

**PUBLICITY HIGHLIGHTS**

**MEDIA VISITS**

**Influencer Fam Visits**

*Influencer Jason Barnett spent the day touring businesses in Downtown Clayton, including Blvd West Coffee Shop, pictured at the right.*

Jason reported to the Bureau, “Clayton was one of my favorite destinations of the year, and it was certainly a highlight of my North Carolina road trip”.

Since posting the article in April, it has been viewed **25,386** times.

- Therese Iknoian Fam trip to Benson, Smithfield and Four Oaks - June, 2022
- Travel to Blank visit to Hinnant Vineyards, Howell Woods, and the Benson area - September, 2021

**NC F&B Podcast episodes**: JPs Bakery, Bob Hinnant Talks Grapes, Scott Crawford opens new Concept Restaurant in Clayton

**Partner communications**: 40 partner emails, and 11 *Tourism Does That?!* newsletters
Photo Shoots

Jonathan Levin: Carolina Premium Outlets, Town of Smithfield, Simple Twist food shoot, The Rudy Theater (Christmas, Easter & Country shows), Deep River Brewing, Instill Distillery

VisitNC photo shoot at Howell Woods for the Outdoor NC campaign
**GOOGLE ANALYTICS**

**Top Feeder State:** North Carolina - 66.02%

**Top City in NC:** Clayton - up 54.9%

**Demographics:**
- 58.8% Female - 41.2% Male

**Age breakdown:**
- 18-24: 9.63%
- 25-34: 17.21%
- 35-44: 20.02%
- 45-54: 20.81%
- 55-64: 18.05%
- 65+: 14.28%

**Top 10 page hits**
1. 301 Endless Yard Sale - 132,207
2. Ava Gardner Museum - 26,989
3. Things to Do/BWST - 12,723
4. Things to Do/Recreation - 9,232
5. Shopping/Carolina Premium Outlets - 9,169
6. Listing/New Jumbo China - 8,511
7. Events/ - 6,387
8. Smithfield/ - 6,402
9. Downtown VG - 5,445
10. Clayton/ - 5,424

**Top Affinity of Users:**

- Culinary Enthusiasts - 74,141 (19.09%)
- Lifestyles/Pet Lovers - 61,886 (25.58%)
- Shoppers/Value - 53,401 (17.76%)
- Media/TV Lovers - 50,881 (37.77%)

**Sources**
- Organic - 293,011 (68.10%)
- Direct - 66,402 (10.46%)
- Social - 61,833 (30.25%)
- Referral - 20,750 (26.19%)
- Paid Search - 16,895 (85.64%)

**Top 10 states**
- North Carolina
- Georgia
- Virginia
- New York
- Florida
- South Carolina
- California
- Pennsylvania
- Tennessee
- Tennessee

**Top ten states**

**Top Google Ad Results (Clicks)**
1. Johnston County Campaign - 11,188 (91.29%)
2. Ava Gardner Campaign - 6,184 (387.91%)

**Users**
- 449,334 - 41.37%

**Sessions**
- 562,870 - 45.17%

**Page Views**
- 978,956 - 39.16%

**Page/Session**
- 1.74 - 4.14%
VIDEO PROJECTS

HIGHLIGHTS

Total Video Views Across Channels:
Ava Gardner Festival - 49,079
Ava Gardner Mural - 872
Strawberry Picking - 9,700
Blueberry Picking - 791

Ava Gardner Museum Festival

Ava Gardner Mural Project

JoCo Grows Blueberries Video

JoCo Grows Strawberries Video
TOWN MARKETING PROJECTS HIGHLIGHTS

Donna Bailey-Taylor works directly with the Towns that have a 2% Rooms Tax to execute the requested marketing campaigns and tourism-related projects. Below are some highlights of projects for the Towns of Smithfield, Selma, Benson, and Kenly in FY 22.

Printed **5,000 Selma Visitors Brochures** for distribution in all local businesses and the NC Welcome Centers.

Redesigned the Town of Selma billboard campaign with the theme of Stay, Shop, and Visit Selma, NC.

Re-printed the Smithfield Walking Tour Brochure which is available at the Johnston County Heritage Center and in local distribution locations in Smithfield and the NC Welcome Centers.

Designed and reprinted 10,000 **Ava Gardner Museum brochures** to announce the Ava Gardner Festival and to distribute throughout Johnston County, to inquiries, for direct mail, and for NC Welcome Centers.

Designed, printed, and mailed **5,500 Summer Event postcards** to residents and businesses in Smithfield. In addition to mailing the postcards, 2,000 additional postcards were distributed to local business to reach visitors and more residents.

The JCVB Staff designed all marketing materials for the **Smithfield Ham & Yam Festival** for Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation including banners, signs, and digital materials for marketing. In addition, marketing support was provided with Google Ads and social media promotion.

The staff worked with the **Kenly Parks & Recreation Department** to use the 2% Room Tax funds from Town reserves to make several improvements at the park. Approximately $27,000 was used for fencing, shelters, and a disc golf course.

**Travel to Blank** influencers visited the Town of Benson and posted an article, "7 Dog Friendly Things to Do in Benson", that received 528 page views, 900 views on Facebook stories, and 82 likes on Instagram.
The Visitors Bureau invested in a data intelligence service, Near.com, to better understand our visitors to the county, and adjust marketing efforts based on zip codes, top Points of Interest, and Demographics of visitors to the county. Near.com estimates that they capture 10% of phones in the market segments. What has been learned in the first six months has been used with target audiences for digital and social marketing campaigns.

The segments defined by Near.com are:

- **Residents** - Devices that live or work within Johnston County
- **Locals** - Visitors who live within 50 miles and stay a minimum of 2 hours
- **In State Daytrippers** - Visitors that live outside 50 miles and stay 2 hours
- **In State Overnight Visitors** - Live in NC, are outside JoCo, and stay minimum of 2 days
- **Out of State Daytrippers** - Visitors who live outside the state, stay 2 hours and not overnight
- **Out of State Overnight Visitors** - Live out of NC, stay overnight for 2 days, and live in the US
- **International Visitors** - Live outside the US and stay a minimum of 2 hours

The Visitors Bureau uses Smith Travel Research data to measure the county's occupancy, ADR (Average Daily Rate), and RevPar (Revenue per available room). As 2021 was definitely a recovery year for the travel industry, Johnston County saw several record months.

**12 month data from June 2022:**
- OCC 55.9%
- ADR $86.80
- REVPAR $48.54

The Visitors Bureau invested in a data intelligence service, Near.com, to better understand our visitors to the county, and adjust marketing efforts based on zip codes, top Points of Interest, and Demographics of visitors to the county. Near.com estimates that they capture 10% of phones in the market segments. What has been learned in the first six months has been used with target audiences for digital and social marketing campaigns.

The segments defined by Near.com are:

- **Residents** - Devices that live or work within Johnston County
- **Locals** - Visitors who live within 50 miles and stay a minimum of 2 hours
- **In State Daytrippers** - Visitors that live outside 50 miles and stay 2 hours
- **In State Overnight Visitors** - Live in NC, are outside JoCo, and stay minimum of 2 days
- **Out of State Daytrippers** - Visitors who live outside the state, stay 2 hours and not overnight
- **Out of State Overnight Visitors** - Live out of NC, stay overnight for 2 days, and live in the US
- **International Visitors** - Live outside the US and stay a minimum of 2 hours
The Visitors Bureau works directly with the NC Film Office providing film locations to production companies to entice film projects to the county. In July of 2021, the staff assisted with a film project seeking to use the Smith Farm in the Cleveland Community. In 2022, the film *Abandoned*, a horror movie starring Emma Roberts, Michael Shannon and John Gallagher Jr., was released.

The historic home on the Smith Farm was a focal character in the film.

In October 2021, the Visitors Bureau staff worked with CycleNC who brought in 827 riders, plus 40 support staff, and 100 additional participants for a total of 967 visitors to Smithfield. The group booked 100 hotel rooms in Smithfield for non-campers. The bureau provided a custom microsite with maps, coupons, community information and more to welcome the cyclists to Smithfield, as well as, coordinated entertainment and transportation for the event. Sporting events and tournaments are an important tourism market for the county. The economic impact of the Cycle NC event was $138,295.

The Johnston County Visitors Bureau has partnered on a new initiative with VisitNC called OutdoorNC; which in turn has partnered with the national organization, Leave No Trace. JoCo and the state of North Carolina offers fun and unspoiled places to recreate and enjoy the outdoors, and we want to keep them that way. The dedicated JCVB website landing page for OutdoorNC had 2,894 views in FY 22.

Although several sales missions were not funded in the FY 22 budget, the staff did make visits to the I-95 North Welcome Centers for Christmas, and for National Tourism Week as outreach missions to visitors stopping at the centers.

The NC Welcome Center near Roanoke Rapids on I-95 invited the Visitors Bureau to put in a display for Howell Woods Environment Learning Center to promote recreation in the county. The display included a fun puzzle game for children, to match items in the case with items found at Howell Woods.
Are my county property taxes used for funding the bureau?

No, only visitors staying in local hotels, cabins, bed & breakfast inns, and AirBnB rental properties pay the occupancy tax that funds the bureau.