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N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Supports JoCo Grows Agriculture Initiative

(Johnston County, NC - March 25, 2022) – The Johnston County Tourism Authority has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$111,900 from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (NCTTFC). This funding will support the JoCo Grows Agriculture Steering Committee’s efforts to market and gain awareness of the importance of agriculture in Johnston County.

Grant funding will be utilized for a project entitled, *Consumers and Farmers: Bridging the Gap*. The Johnston County Tourism Authority will work in partnership with the NC Cooperative Extension Johnston County Center and the JoCo Grows Agriculture Steering Committee over the next 36-months to execute the grant. This includes several innovative marketing projects, holding public on-farm events, and engaging in educational outreach to support agricultural profitability and productivity for Johnston County farmers. Other grant programs will include video production, social media promotion, cost-share marketing grants for farmers, and expanding listings on the NC Farms App.

“We are so thankful to the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission for their support of the JoCo Grows Agriculture initiative,” said Bryant Spivey, County Extension Director - Johnston. “This effort grew out of recommendations from our Johnston County Extension Advisory Council as a way to connect the growing population of our county to local farms and agribusiness.”

As strawberry season approaches, immediate plans are being made for the first joint event, a Strawberry Harvest Season marketing campaign which will highlight eight strawberry growers in the county. Advertising will market on-farm activities for families, where to purchase locally grown strawberries, and on circulating educational materials. Events like this will remain a part of the grant initiatives through 2023 to introduce area farms to local and regional consumers.

“The Visitors Bureau has a long history of promoting agritourism in the county and working with the Johnston County Cooperative Extension Office, and we are excited to launch the many projects in the NCTTFC grant”, stated Donna Bailey-Taylor, President/CEO, Johnston County Visitors Bureau.

The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (NCTTFC) was created to assist current/former tobacco farmers, former quota holders, persons engaged in tobacco-related businesses, individuals displaced from tobacco-related employment, and tobacco product component businesses in NC that have been affected by the adverse effects of the MSA. The NCTTFC can disburse funds through compensatory programs and qualified agricultural programs. For more information about NCTTFC visit their [website](#). To see the complete list of NCTTFC grant recipients [go here](#).

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