



NORTH MYRTLE BEACH

# Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021

“Advancing prosperity of North Myrtle Beach”





Destination North Myrtle Beach Investors/Partners,

On behalf of the board or directors and Destination North Myrtle Beach staff, I want to thank you for your investment/partnership in Destination North Myrtle Beach. In the following pages you will find the results from our fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

I would prefer to be reporting that the COVID pandemic is behind us. Instead, we are still navigating through these uncertain times. Our destination has fared better than many being that we are convenient to access, have numerous outdoor activities, and have been revered as a safe welcoming destination. That demand for our destination has resulted in challenges in addition to the pandemic such as workforce availability and supply chain issues. Our community has come out stronger when faced with obstacles and I am confident now will be no exception.



As the board chair, I can account for the contribution of time and energy the entire board of directors has dedicated. The board has worked closely with the Destination North Myrtle Beach staff to ensure that businesses get the resources and support that they need so they can continue to thrive. These resources come in the form of programs such as webinars, workshops, advocacy, and destination marketing. Given the challenges of this past year, your board of directors along with the team at Destination North Myrtle Beach were determined to make sure expectations were met. This required getting a little more creative and maintaining flexibility to make sure we are positioned for long term growth and success.

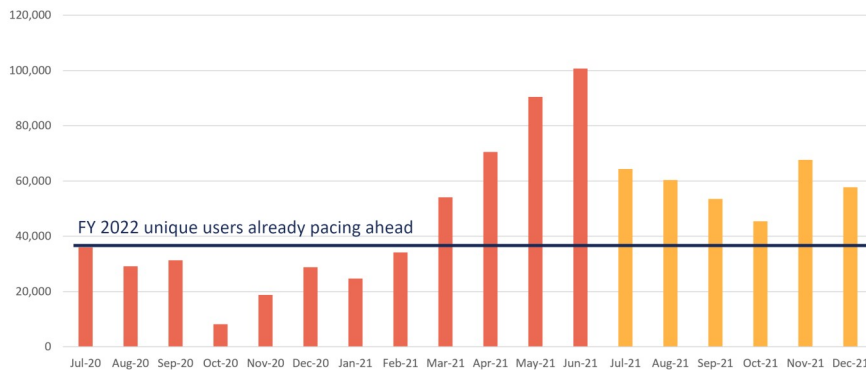
I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your board chair. As you review the material, I hope you as well as I, are pleased with the results. If you have any questions, your Destination North Myrtle Beach team is always available. I wish everyone much success in 2022 and I am confident that our best days are ahead of us.

Jim Powalie

Board Chair

# Destination Marketing Highlights

## Website Analytics



### FY 2021

Sessions  
658,887

Users  
518,093

Pageviews  
1,268,802

Pages / Session  
1.93

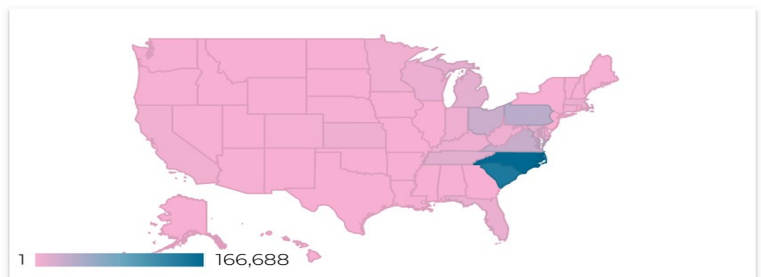
Avg. Session Duration  
00:01:31

Bounce Rate  
58.04%

**Website traffic** is a key resource used to engage with potential visitors. The graphic demonstrates that the advertising and social media generated positive results with an upward trend as the year emerged from COVID-19. The first six months of the FY 2022 fiscal year are well ahead in the month-over-month comparison.

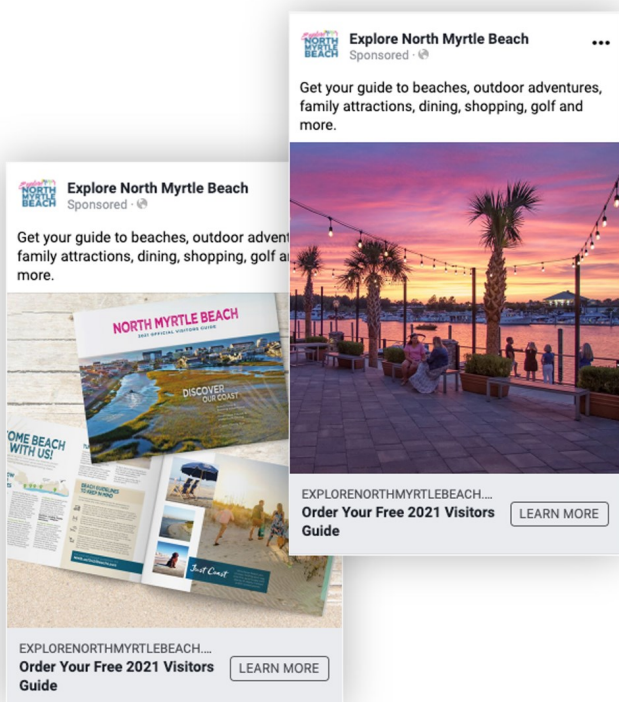
## Traffic by Location

Region	Sessions
North Carolina	166,688
South Carolina	97,379
Georgia	54,740
Ohio	41,380
Pennsylvania	35,990
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>658,887</b>

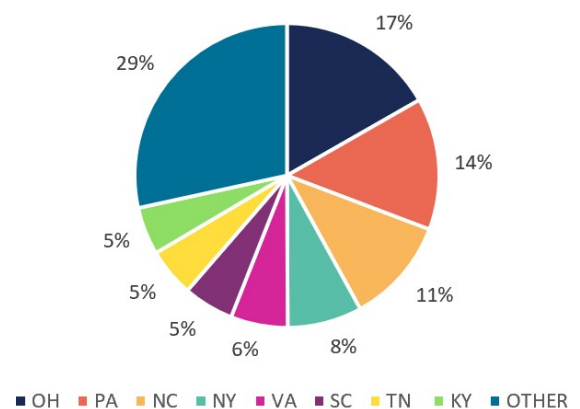


The primary and secondary markets were modified in the last 24 months to provide nimbleness as state health officials and governors declared South Carolina and, in some cases, the Myrtle Beach area hot spots with COVID. The chart shows the point of origin for our website users.

## Visitor Guide



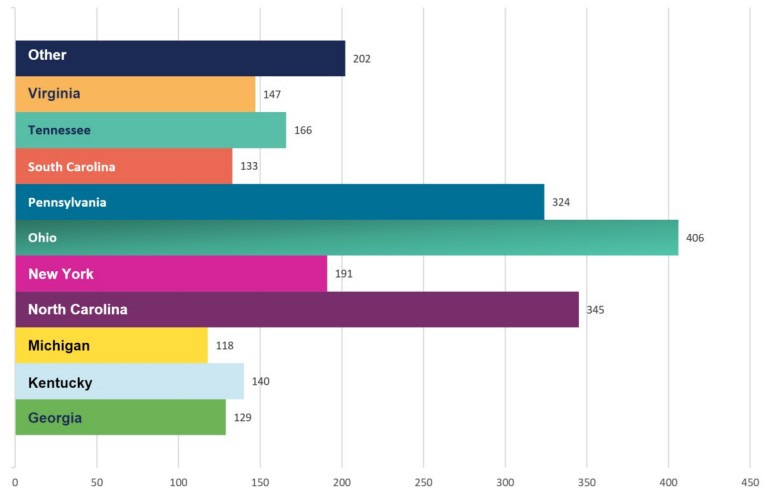
## Visitor Guide Distribution by State



The 2021 Official Visitors Guide flew off the shelf. The travel sentiment indicated that people wanted to visit the beach when COVID restrictions were lifted and the visitors guide was a critical fulfillment piece. The 2021 guide had a new format utilizing imagery in a magazine layout that provided a more upscale style. Distribution was driven by social media advertising geotargeted in key areas where travel attitudes were positive. A media drop was also implemented in key zip codes for high-end prospective visitors who received the guide with the Sunday newspaper.

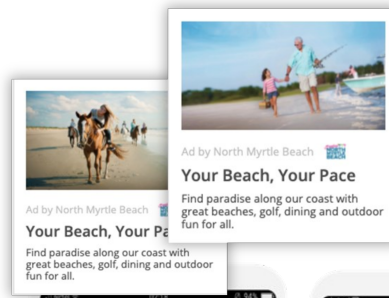


## Road Trip Travel Pack



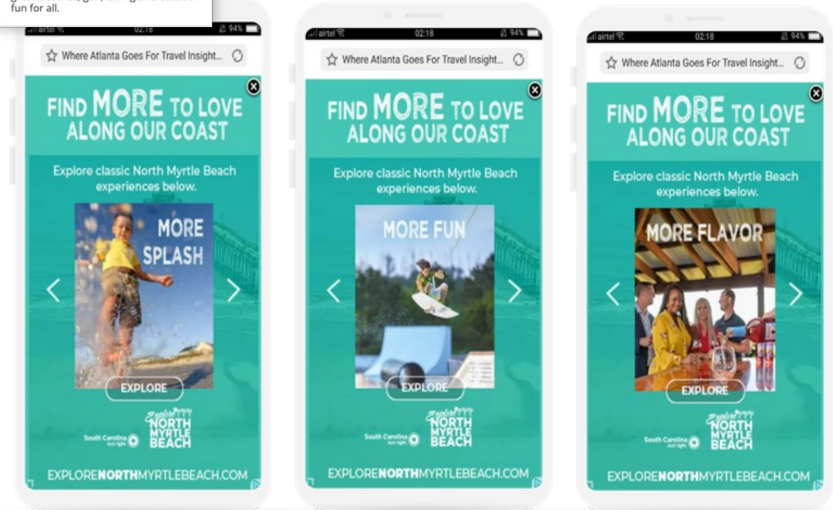
Road trips and remote learning were the rave during the pandemic. People wanted to control their own environment. Our team promoted a Road Trip Travel Pack that when advertised the quantity was depleted in less than 3 days! Blogs and social media promoted the idea of making North Myrtle Beach their destination for their road trip and we created a separate list of field trips for them to add to their remote learning needs.

## Display Advertising

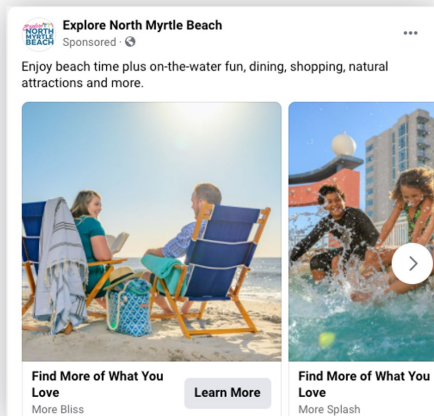


Impressions  
61,191,365

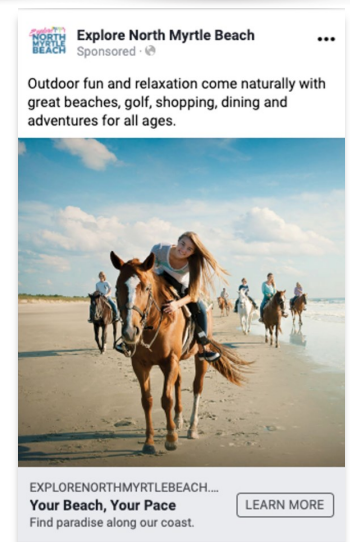
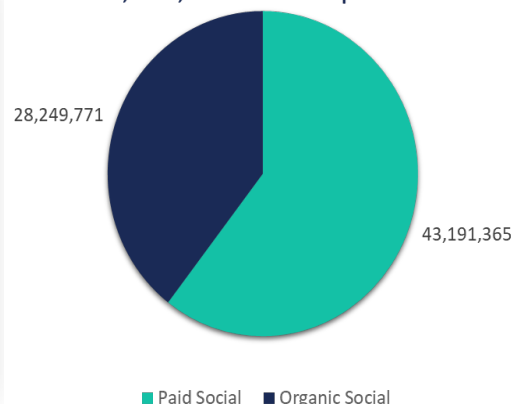
Display advertising is all about impressions and inspiring people to travel to North Myrtle Beach. Our team works to differentiate our collection of seaside communities from other coastal locations in South Carolina.



## Paid & Organic Social



Social Impressions  
71,441,136 total impressions



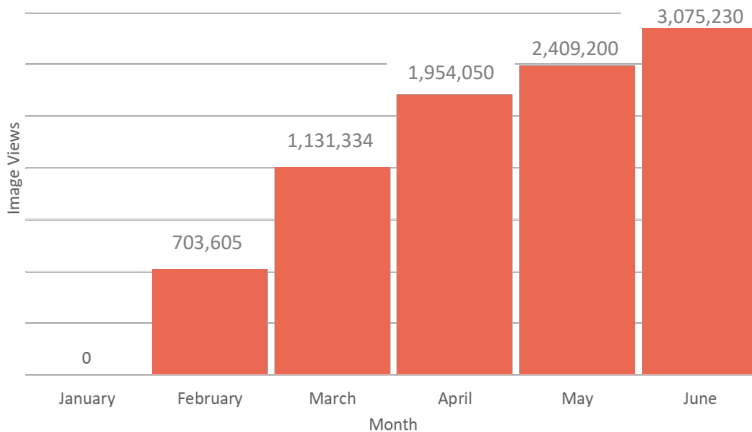
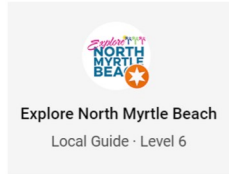


# Destination Development

## Destination Optimization



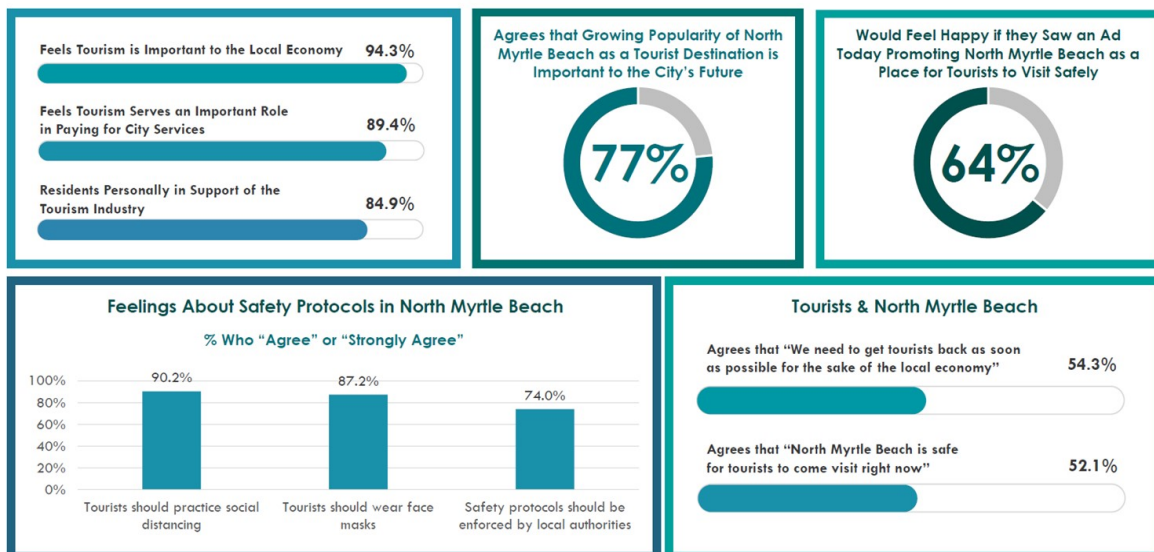
Google Maps



Google is the number one search engine in the world and Destination North Myrtle Beach worked to ensure that the investor/partner businesses had a solid presence with their Google listings and improved the Google map assets for the community. An audit of all of the Google business listings was conducted, the results were used to improve the performance for individual businesses by assisting with claiming listings, adding hours, removing outdated comments and images, etc. Destination NMB uploaded more than 600 photos and 360° street views to improve the map features. There were more than 3 million views at the close of the fiscal year, a huge improvement over the prior year.

## Resident Sentiment Study

### NORTH MYRTLE BEACH RESIDENT SENTIMENT *& Their Perceptions of Tourism*



NORTH MYRTLE BEACH RESIDENT SENTIMENT STUDY 2021

Destination Analysts

Resident travel sentiments are important for us to understand. During the pandemic, residents expressed concerns about events, re-opening businesses, the use of masks, and a variety of issues that were consistent with national trends. We retained Destination Analysts to conduct a sentiment study and found that overall, residents overwhelmingly agree that tourism is important to the local economy and that visitors pay for city services. The survey included questions about how residents felt about welcoming visitors into the community and at the time this study was completed, it was just past 50% stating that they were ready for visitors to return.

# Advocacy



U.S. Chamber of Commerce



DESTINATION  
CAPITOL HILL



SOUTH CAROLINA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Advocacy is a critical program for Destination North Myrtle Beach. During the fiscal year our team coordinated our legislative priorities developed through input from our investors/partners. We were also actively engaged with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Travel Association, and the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber Advocacy Council. We worked to secure COVID recovery funds for non-profits, expand the recovery program to directly address the impacts on travel related businesses, adjust the employment benefits within South Carolina to encourage workers to return to work, and addressed workforce issues.

## Name Change



A committee was assigned the task to explore a name change. The North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau Inc. was a long name that was often shortened to the Chamber. The initiative was defined to determine a name that demonstrated the type of community North Myrtle Beach is and the role of the organization.

The discovery phase resulted in the list of 10 features or benefits of the organization to include:

1. **Tourism promotion**
2. **Business advocacy**
3. **Destination management (including brand management)**
4. Sense of community for partners
5. One-stop shop for information – travelers, businesses
6. Important community role as convener and facilitator
7. Destination brand management
8. Networking
9. Strategic guidance & collaboration
10. Moving towards workforce development

Program areas and services provided to our investors/partners were explored and the top five program priorities were identified:

1. Awareness for customers
2. A voice in the community
3. Marketing guidance – research, etc.
4. Networking & access
5. Collective power & energy
6. Education



Then the committee researched aspects of what is in a name, words that must be included or avoided, and then name options emerged for internal testing and review. Once the new name was approved the logo design began. The use of the palmetto and crescent in the stem of the N is utilized to tie the name to South Carolina. The use of the term 'destination' describes the community and local economy, and the name, combined with the logo describes a single team working to advance the image, prosperity, and businesses within North Myrtle Beach.



# Destination North Myrtle Beach Programs

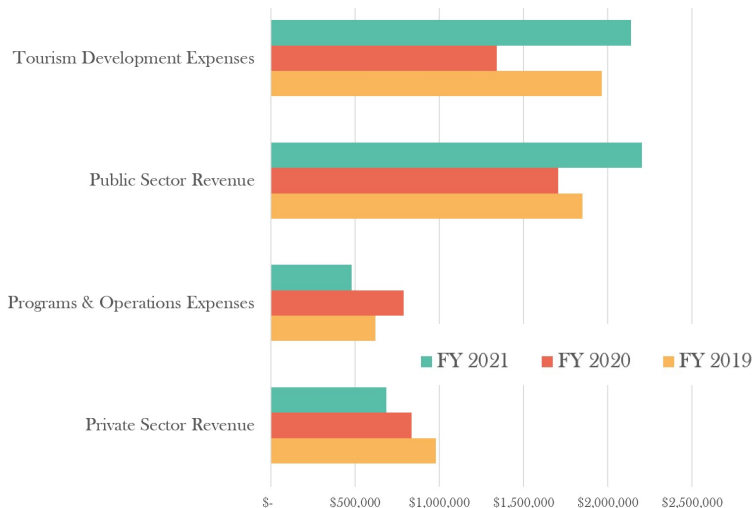
Networking, education programs, and business recognition are important functions for Destination North Myrtle Beach. During the year, some in-person activities were paused for a portion of the year, workshops became virtual, and by the spring, we returned to in-person gatherings and hosted the business awards and business after hours as usual.

During the year:

- 7 Business Sector Meetings were convened
- 14 Ribbon Cuttings were celebrated
- Monthly Partner Portal and New Partner Meetings
- A new series of programs were added: Enrichment Series
- A variety of workshops and seminars were offered
- The chairman's luncheon and annual meeting were convened virtually
- Business After Hours returned in May of 2021
- Awards Gala was well attended with 250+ attendees



## Financial Performance



We operated with the budget within a positive fund balance of more than \$200 thousand dollars. The board will designate the use of the restricted funds for the marketing and promotion of Destination North Myrtle Beach and the remainder to operating and building reserve funds. The organization did receive PPP loans in both the first and second rounds and both loans have been forgiven. Our private sector investments were down as a result of pausing programming and sponsorships due to COVID.

## 2021 Board of Directors

### Officers

**Jim Powalie – Chair**

Barefoot Landing & Broadway at the Beach

**Andy Thomas – Vice Chair**

Century 21 Thomas

**Cyndee Colborn, Treasurer**

Seaside Vacations

**Mendel Bell, Immediate Past Chair**

Touch MedSpa

**Cheryl Y. Kilday, President/Secretary**

Destination NMB

### Committee Chairs

**Mendel Bell**

Economic Development & Public Policy

Touch MedSpa

**Dargan Ervin**

Business Development

Tidelands Health

**Ben Clyburn**

NMB Chamber Foundation

Condo-World

**Brandon Cox**

Destination Marketing

Elliott Beach Rentals

### Board Members

**Ed W. Prince, III**

Cherry Grove Pier

**Stephanie Chestnut**

Bay Watch Resort by Vacasa

**Jim Eggen**

Myrtle Beach Seaside Resorts

**Jim Hanley**

Thoroughbreds Chophouse

**Monica Vehige**

McLeod Health

**Beverly Race**

Greg Norman Australian Grille

**Angela Seddinger**

Grand Strand Vacations

**Betsy Hinson**

Retreat Myrtle Beach

**Gretchen Floyd**

Sandhills Bank

**Corey Richardson**

Carolina Property Specialist

**Morgan Jackson**

Duplin Winery



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