



# 2019–2020 Business Plan

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**Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau**

421 Fayetteville St., Ste. 1505

Raleigh, N.C. 27601-2995

[www.visitRaleigh.com](http://www.visitRaleigh.com) ★ [#visitRaleigh](https://twitter.com/visitRaleigh)



# **About the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau**

## **MISSION**

The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, as the official destination marketing organization of Raleigh and Wake County, accelerates sustainable economic growth and development by increasing visitor and convention business.

## **INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED DESTINATION ORGANIZATION**

The destination organization is accredited by the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) of Destinations International, 2025 M St., N.W., Ste. 500, Washington, D.C., 20036, U.S.A., Ph. 202.296.7888.

## **ORGANIZATION VISION**

To be the prime visitor advocate and regional leader of destination marketing and product development.

## **GRCVB PHILOSOPHY AND CUSTOMER COMMITMENT**

We perform effectively by adhering to values and guiding principles, and delivering on customer promises:

- Customer-centric
- Entrepreneurial
- Collaborative
- Innovative
- Ethical

## **PARTNER PROMISE**

We pledge, as an accountable and supportive partner, to offering enhanced exposure to visitor market opportunities and to appropriate community leadership through increased promotion of destination experiences and extended professional advocacy commitment.

## **ADVISORY BOARDS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES AT GRCVB**

- GRCVB Board of Directors
- Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance Advisory Board
- Cultural Presenters Forum
- Destination 2028 Blue Ribbon Task Force
- Live Music Advisory Committee
- Passionate Minds Collective
- Wake County Beer Summit

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## Travel and Tourism Trends for 2019–2020

According to the March 2019 U.S. Travel Outlook prepared by the U.S. Travel Association (USTA): “The U.S. economy finished the [calendar] year on a temperate note, with fourth-quarter real GDP growing at a 2.6-percent, seasonally-adjusted annualized rate. Growth was led by strong but slowing contributions from consumer spending and business investment. If the preliminary estimate were to hold, then real GDP would have increased by 2.9 percent in 2018, one of the fastest years of economic growth since the recovery.”

“Travel to and within the U.S. grew 3.2 percent year-over-year in Jan. 2019, according to the [USTA’s] latest Travel Trends Index (TTI)—marking the industry’s 109th straight month of overall expansion. But the predictive portions of the TTI continue to forecast a slowdown, as weakening global economic growth, trade tensions and fading consumer and business confidence take hold in coming months. That could be problematic as the U.S. works to halt an erosion in its share of the competitive international travel market.”

Concerning international, 2018 U.S. “travel exports accumulated an annual total of \$256 billion, a 1.8-percent increase from 2017. However, American travelers spent \$13 billion more abroad in 2018 than in 2017, posting a new, all-time high of \$187 billion (a 7.6-percent increase). The resultant trade surplus was 11 percent lower than in it was 2017, but the total U.S. trade deficit in 2018 would be 11 percent larger were it not for the \$69 billion trade surplus generated by foreign travelers to the U.S.” (as cited by USTA). International arrivals to the U.S. totaled approximately 80 million in 2018, about half of whom came from overseas.

According to USTA, “consistent themes American travelers are interested in in 2019 include a desire to tune out and reconnect, get outdoors and make memories, whether alone or with the whole family. While the lodging and airline industry predict continued growth, it will be subdued for the next year or so.” Also, “travelers have an increased preference for hyper-local, unique and transformative travel experiences, according to Skift’s U.S. Experiential Traveler Trends 2019 report” (as cited by USTA); this finding aligns seamlessly with GRCVB’s efforts to implement the Individual Leisure priority recommendations of Wake County’s new Destination Strategic Plan.

“One-third of travelers indicated they would be traveling more in 2019 than the prior year, down from 37 percent one year earlier according to Destination Analysts’ latest survey of American travelers. This moderate degree of pessimism seen in trip expectations also extends to future travel spending” (as cited by USTA).

USTA’s latest forecast projects study growth for domestic leisure travel through the forecast horizon of 2022, due “in part to strong consumer confidence and low unemployment. Domestic business travel is expected to retain its strong momentum from 2017 and with faster growth in 2018 and 2019 (though still not surpassing leisure travel growth), due to an increase in business optimism and higher fixed investment.” International inbound travel should continue recovery, but the U.S. will continue to lose market share within global travel overall.

Based on USTA forecasts, both domestic leisure travel and domestic business travel will grow by 1.8 percent in 2019—virtually the same growth rate in total as had been forecasted nationwide for 2018. Total travel expenditures to the U.S. will increase by 4.1 percent in 2019 (compared to 5.0 percent forecasted for 2018).

Other USTA forecasts for travel nationwide are:

- Total travel spending in the U.S.: up 3.7 percent in 2020
- Total U.S. domestic person-trips: up 1.5 percent in 2020
- U.S. domestic leisure person-trips: up 1.6 percent in 2020
- U.S. domestic business person-trips: up 1.4 percent in 2020.

STR projects that both supply and demand in the hotel industry nationwide will increase by 1.9 percent in 2019, while occupancy will be flat; ADR and RevPAR each are expected to climb by 2.3 percent. For 2020, STR predicts that supply will increase 1.9 percent and demand will grow 1.7 percent, while occupancy is projected to slip 0.2 percent; nationwide ADR is expected to rise 2.2% and RevPAR 1.9%. (Occupancy in the U.S. has not declined year over year since 2009.)

With regard to overnight visitation trends and the Research Triangle Region’s lodging industry, CBRE Hotels Americas Research summarizes as follows in its March–May 2019 Hotel Horizons®: “In 2018, Raleigh-Durham [market] hotels finished the year with a RevPAR gain of 5.8 percent. This was the result of an increase in

occupancy of 2.9 percent and a 2.8-percent gain in average daily room rates (ADR). The 5.8-percent boost in Raleigh-Durham RevPAR was better than the national average of 2.9 percent.

“[The market’s] lower-priced properties finished 2018 ahead of its upper-priced properties in terms of RevPAR growth. The properties in this category attained a 3.2-percent gain in ADR and saw a 2.9-percent increase in occupancy. Upper-priced hotels experienced an ADR growth rate of 1.9 percent, along with a 2.9-percent gain in occupancy.

“Looking towards 2019, Raleigh-Durham [market] RevPAR is expected to grow 5.3 percent. Occupancy is forecast to rise 1.2 percent, while average room rates are projected to increase 4.0 percent. Revenue is expected to continue to climb in 2020.” (For 2021, CRBE Hotels currently forecasts a decline in occupancy rate of a couple percent but slight growth in ADR and RevPAR for this region.)

Specifically for calendar year 2020, CRBE Hotels envisions for the Raleigh-Durham market:

- Occupancy: 68.9 percent, down 1.0 percent
- ADR: \$113.16, up 3.6 percent
- RevPAR: \$78.01, up 2.6 percent.

According to the March 2019 edition of Hotel Horizons, CBRE Hotels is forecasting U.S. hotel RevPAR to increase by 2.5 percent in 2019, due in large part to a favorable economic outlook through 2020 (2.0-percent growth forecast for 2020 RevPAR). However, an economic slowdown in 2021 will cause a short-lived softening of lodging industry fundamentals.

“Nearly 900 million passengers boarded U.S. air carriers in 2018, according to recent Transportation Department data” cited by USTA, and “2018 was a banner year for air travel, with total systemwide passenger enplanements increasing at 4.8 percent, faster than the annual increases seen in 2017 or 2016.”

At RDU International Airport, passenger traffic reached new heights in 2018, with 12.8 million passengers arriving or departing, a 9.7-percent increase over the prior year. President and CEO Michael Landguth, AAE, noted, “The unparalleled demand highlights the importance of securing critical funding and starting work on capstone projects [of Vision 2040], like our new runway.” Spirit Airlines and Via Airlines are new carriers implementing service to RDU at the time of this writing; a new, nonstop flight from Montréal this summer will complement GRCVB’s international tourism efforts.

Generation Z (Gen Z) will be the largest generation by 2020 and already has significant buying power, according to a report by Expedia Group cited by USTA: “This generation travels more frequently and longer than generations preceding them and are open to destination inspiration with 84 percent of Gen Z travelers influenced by social media through promotions or media posted by friends or experts. Gen Z are beginning to travel for work, and two-thirds of Gen Z business travelers have taken a bleisure trip, adding an average 3.4 days on a five-day business trip.” As anticipated in the 2018–2019 Business Plan, this trend has ramifications in targeting for almost all domestic tourism/visitor market verticals including meetings & conventions.

GRCVB also looks forward to the July 2019 release by Destinations International of a new DestinationNEXT Futures Study, which will outline the next trends and strategies identified for shaping the future of the CVB industry. GRCVB staff will absorb its findings and again recalibrate efforts accordingly.

April 2019

# Visitor Profile for Raleigh, N.C., and Wake County

## BASIC FACTS AND FIGURES

- There were 16.45 million domestic visitors in 2017—up 5.3 percent from 2016. Including international and domestic visitors, visitors directly spent \$2.53 billion on Wake County trips in 2017—up 4.0 percent from 2016.
- Average overnight party size was 1.69 in 2014–2016—compared to 1.63 in 2012–2014. Average day-trip party size was 1.63 in 2014–2016—compared to 1.67 in 2012–2014.
- Overnight travel totaled approximately 8.2 million visitors in 2017.
- Overnight daily spending by visitors was \$122 per person in 2014–2016—compared to \$131 nationwide. Day-trip daily spending by visitors was \$83 per person in 2014–2016—compared to \$98 nationwide.

## VISITOR BREAKDOWN

- Domestic leisure visitors – 12.5 million in 2017
- Domestic business travelers – 3.94 million in 2017
- Average overnight traveler to Raleigh/Wake County by lifestage (2014–2016):
  - Moderate to Affluent Mature – 21 percent;
  - Maturing/Free – 16 percent;
  - Moderate to Affluent Family – 20 percent;
  - Young Family – 9 percent;
  - Young & Free – 21 percent.
- Average age of Raleigh/Wake County's overnight visitors is 46 years old (2014–2016). Distribution is:
  - 18–34 years: 30 percent
    - Young & Free – Without children/any household income: 21 percent;
    - Young Family – With children/any household income: 9 percent.
  - 35–54 years: 36 percent
    - Maturing & Free – Without children/any household income: 16 percent;
    - Moderate Family – With children/household income under \$75K: 6 percent;
    - Affluent Family – With children/household income above \$75K: 14 percent.
  - 55+ years: 34 percent
    - Moderate Mature – Without children/household income under \$60K: 1 percent;
    - Affluent Mature – Without children/household income above \$60K: 20 percent.
- Raleigh/Wake County's average party per overnight trip spending by age (2014–2016):
  - 18–34 years: \$506
  - 35–54 years: \$692
  - 55+ years: \$565
- The means of transportation for Raleigh/Wake County's overnight visitors (2014–2016) is: 84 percent drive – 15 percent fly – 2 percent other.
- The most popular overnight travel months to Raleigh/Wake County (2014–2016) were July (12 percent), followed by Nov. (11 percent) and Aug. (10 percent), making the summer season the most popular season for Raleigh's overnight visitation. Day-trip visitors predominantly came in the spring and summer seasons.
- Average household income of Raleigh/Wake County's overnight visitors (2014–2016) is: 16 percent, \$50,000–\$74,900; 14 percent, \$75,000–\$99,999; 39 percent, \$100,000 or higher.
- Accommodation type for Raleigh/Wake County visitors (2014–2016): 63 percent of stays occur in paid accommodations (hotels/motels/other), while 37 percent occur in non-paid (including private homes).

## GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

- Some 39 percent of Raleigh/Wake County’s overnight visitors (2014–2016) came from North Carolina. The top 10 states are: 39.1 percent, North Carolina; 14.8 percent, Virginia; 6.2 percent, New York; 4.6 percent, Florida; 4.5 percent, South Carolina; 3.4 percent, Maryland; 3.0 percent, Pennsylvania; 2.1 percent, Tennessee; 2.0 percent, Texas; and 2.0 percent, Georgia.
- Some 91 percent of Raleigh/Wake County’s day-trip visitors (2014–2016) came from North Carolina. The top states are: 90.7 percent, North Carolina; 1.9 percent, Virginia; 0.9 percent, Texas; 0.8 percent, Maryland; 0.7 percent, Georgia; 0.7 percent, New York; and 0.5 percent, Ohio.

## VISITOR ACTIVITIES AND MOTIVATORS

- Activity participation of Raleigh/Wake County overnight stays (2014–2016):
 

20 percent, culinary/dining	6 percent, other personal celebrations
19 percent, shopping	6 percent, concerts/theatre/dance
10 percent, business/work	5 percent, beach/waterfront
8 percent, museums/exhibitions	5 percent, parks
8 percent, nightlife	5 percent, historic sites
7 percent, holiday celebration	5 percent, festivals/fairs
7 percent, movies	4 percent, touring/sightseeing

## AVERAGE OCCUPANCY, AVERAGE DAILY RATE AND VISITOR-RELATED TAX REVENUE HISTORY

The following is a summary of the collections from Wake County’s hotel occupancy and prepared food & beverage taxes as well as the average occupancy and average daily rates for 2018 and for the previous 10 years in Raleigh/Wake County paid accommodations:

	<u>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY</u>	<u>AVERAGE DAILY RATE</u>	<u>OCCUPANCY TAX REVENUE</u>	<u>F&amp;B TAX REVENUE</u>
2008	62.0%	\$87.51	\$14,510,239	\$17,537,562
2009	56.5%	\$80.92	\$12,863,589	\$17,326,526
2010	58.9%	\$79.67	\$13,853,293	\$17,642,600
2011	61.8%	\$82.66	\$15,586,539	\$18,703,047
2012	61.6%	\$85.34	\$16,707,165	\$20,261,838
2013	63.6%	\$86.53	\$17,948,940	\$21,126,371
2014	67.9%	\$91.31	\$20,261,653	\$23,015,254
2015	69.7%	\$95.87	\$22,401,795	\$25,262,981
2016	70.1%	\$100.85	\$24,273,522	\$26,910,616
2017	69.1%	\$102.90	\$25,144,387	\$28,326,065
2018	70.3%	\$106.55	\$27,899,926	\$30,004,566

## Talking Points for the 2019–2020 Fiscal Year

Talking points recommended for GRCVB staff, board members, economic development allies, stakeholders and area hospitality partners during the 2019–2020 fiscal year are three themelines that are core to the Raleigh, N.C., destination brand platform, as well as three themes that will reinforce the GRCVB Community Engagement Strategy with its target audiences this year (see GRCVB Community Engagement Strategy for more information).

### RALEIGH, N.C., DESTINATION BRAND THEMELINES

Each of these major themelines encapsulates the strongest and most central attributes of the destination's brand, based on 2014–2015 research and articulation of brand strategy. (See the Raleigh, N.C., Destination Brand Strategy Manual at [www.raleighncbrand.com](http://www.raleighncbrand.com) for full information on messaging.)

**Smart:** Continually fueled by one of the world's most significant research and educational epicenters, Raleigh benefits from a stream of savvy students- and professionals-turned-residents who are collectively driving the city and area's cultural renaissance forth, creating experiences for enrichment and learning.

**A Modern Establishment:** Driven by the desire to innovate, a pursuit of prosperity and the need to live well, Raleigh's community is embracing a modern vision for their historic capital city area. This has given life to business big and small, new music, arts and cultural experiences that join Raleigh's existing cultural assets, expansive green spaces and institutions to create an appealing destination.

**Undiscovered:** Raleigh's unassuming stature as a destination has allowed it to develop organically and sustainably, evolving naturally for the greater good of those who live here and those who will visit. It is that genuine element that defines many of the destination's handcrafted experiences and provides the visitor with an assurance that discovery in Raleigh will always be authentic and unique—qualities rarely found in today's more established destinations.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES FOR 2019–2020

**The Value of Tourism:** Local audiences should grasp the multibillion-dollar impacts of area tourism-related economic development.

**Destination 2028:** Our Destination Strategic Plan report completed in 2018 sets out the 10-year tourism plan for Wake County ([www.visitRaleigh.com/2028](http://www.visitRaleigh.com/2028)).

**Destination Brand:** Rearticulated in 2014–2015, the destination brand strategy must continue to be embedded into all touchpoints of area tourism such that visiting consumers sense, feel and share in it.



## Destination Strategic Plan and Implementation for Destination 2028

In 2017, GRCVB commissioned a Destination Strategic Plan (DSP), to develop a platform through which destination partners can work together seamlessly to strengthen the area's destination product and increase overnight visitation over 10 years (to the year 2028). The CVB engaged Jones Lang LaSalle's Hospitality and Tourism Group to facilitate and lead this yearlong, countywide planning effort, which culminated with the Aug./Sept. 2018 release of the DSP final report and presentation of specific municipality plans to each of Wake County's 12 municipalities.

The DSP final report identifies actions that destination partners, stakeholders and allies can take, in conjunction with GRCVB, to impact overnight visitation along three visitation channels: meetings and conventions, sporting events and leisure visitation. It is meant to serve now as a blueprint for the area's destination development, with Wake County government, the 12 municipalities, GRCVB and many destination partners having collective and individual roles in its implementation, transforming Raleigh/Wake County into the ideal destination it can be in 2028. The final plan and the Destination 2028 implementation are organized according to eight priorities.

Throughout this 2019–2020 Business Plan, when departmental objectives, audiences and strategies directly relate to year-one implementation of any of the DSP priorities, they are marked with one or more of these symbols:

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ❶ Meetings & Conventions | ❷ Individual Leisure      |
| ❷ Sports                 | ❸ Destination Development |
| ❸ Events                 | ❹ Regional Demand Drivers |
| ❹ Key Attractors         | ❺ Quality of Place        |

Since Aug./Sept. 2018 while in fiscal year 2018–2019, GRCVB leadership and staff and a Destination 2028 Blue Ribbon Task Force already have commenced implementation steps across all eight plan priorities. Some examples (not comprehensive) of strategic recommendations already tracked and underway prior to 2019–2020 are:

- Formal discussions and working meetings between the GRCVB Sales Department and Raleigh Convention Center staff on the optimization/prioritization of meetings and conventions under the DSP's Scenario One. This included the review and analysis of current bookings data and new guidelines.❶
- Formal discussions between the Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance and a variety of sports event stakeholders or rights-holders relating to esports, PNC Arena and potential Major League Soccer stadium development and other facility development or renovations.❷
- Drafting of a proposal for a Signature Event Fund for further discussions in Early 2019 among Interlocal Fund stakeholders.❸,❹
- Discussion and detailing of next steps by the Cultural Presenters Forum (committee facilitated by the GRCVB Marketing and Communications Department) relating to calendar coordination, event measurement and reporting and future blockbuster exhibitions hosted by key attractors.❸,❹
- Hiring of a part-time contractor for destination development, who will oversee most implementation efforts at GRCVB for Events, Key Attractors, Destination Development and Quality of Place priorities.❸,❹,❺,❻
- GRCVB Board of Directors' approval of a resolution to support the Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan.❹
- Discussions between Marketing and Communications and Information Technology Departments' staff and People-First Tourism, Inc., toward formalizing a strategic alliance for 2019–2020 and beyond.❷
- Formal discussions between the GRCVB Public Relations and International Tourism Department with key stakeholder groups—RDU International Airport, Research Triangle Regional Partnership and Visit North Carolina.❷
- Brand consultations between GRCVB staff and Town of Cary and Town of Rolesville/their agencies.❸

Initial implementation steps will evolve into GRCVB department-led projects in upcoming fiscal years and will be designated for completion within the departmental sections of this and future annual business plans.

## Marketing and Communications Department

The Marketing and Communications Department is responsible for the Bureau's integrated marketing communications efforts, through which various destination marketing tools work together to maximize their total impact on (mostly external) target consumers or stakeholders. Based on consumer market research and other GRCVB marketing data, these efforts comprise the advertising, brand communications, cooperative partner programming, publications and tourism strategies that lead to consideration of Raleigh, N.C., as a destination for the sports, convention and leisure tourism vertical markets. The primary goal of the department is to increase overall visitation to the destination and area hotel and restaurant revenues.

### MARKETING OBJECTIVES

- Continue to grow Raleigh/Wake County's destination brand equity overall, as recommended in the Raleigh, N.C., Marketing Blueprint (2015), and build upon the Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance (GRSA) brand within the sports vertical market, according to GRSA's positioning statement.
- Increase hotel occupancy and revenue through compelling domestic or international marketing programs—advertising, online, packaging, promotions—targeted primarily at leisure tourists.
- Establish Raleigh, N.C., as the convention and sports destination of choice through compelling advertising, collateral and online marketing communications targeted to industry professionals (or local connections to outside industry professionals).
- Encourage visitors to do and spend more by creating accurate, compelling content showcasing what Raleigh, N.C., promises and delivers to its visitors and gain exposure for the official tourism content/promotions in visitor welcome centers, on mobile-friendly online and social media marketing platforms and in local areas with high visitor traffic.
- Increase visitor attendance for signature events/festivals, with signature experiences and at special performances and venues, as well as convert day-trippers to overnight visitors (when possible), through online messaging and content marketing strategy.
- Increase website traffic levels (sessions) through a research-based, user-optimized visitRaleigh.com/raleighsports.org presence and via search engine optimization, search engine marketing, content marketing and other tactics.
- Establish visitRaleigh.com as the single, official source for the area's tourism, restaurant, hotel, attraction and event, meeting, sports, travel media and partner/local resident information.

### MARKETING STRATEGIES, ALL VERTICALS

- Steward the destination brand strategy for 2019–2020 and future years. Use the Raleigh, N.C., Destination Brand Strategy Manual and Marketing Blueprint to guide and reinforce well-aligned marketing, messaging/content and communication across all Bureau departments. Provide ongoing brand strategy education and more training resources for Bureau staff and other brand messengers, such as the 12 municipalities in the Raleigh area. Continue to shape the Bureau's future as the “go-to” source or curator of a wide variety of tourism/destination content and for a wide variety of local and destination customer audiences. ③
- Collaborate with local economic development allies to build consistent messaging and synergy between their traditional economic development strategies and GRCVB's visitor-related economic development strategies, e.g., destination brand, joint public affairs tactics in the Raleigh area.

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**Key to Destination 2028 symbols:** ❶ Meetings & Conventions, ❷ Sports, ❸ Events, ❹ Key Attractors, ❺ Individual Leisure, ❻ Destination Development, ❼ Regional Demand Drivers, ❽ Quality of Place

- Continue to enact a GRCVB/GRSA social media marketing strategy to take full advantage of social conversations, engagement and networking, brand ambassadorship and shareable content, and continue to position Raleigh competitively among its peer destinations in these areas.
- Continue to empower the area’s visitor sector partners representing all industries/verticals to “help themselves” to GRCVB’s marketing programs and co-op opportunities (self-service) through Bureau projects, such as PIXL (Partner Information eXchange Login) or advertising on the official website, while also increasing contracted resources to help maintain partners’ event content at the highest levels. ③, ③
- Collaborate with the IT Department to retrain Marketing and Communications staff supporting all verticals as key users of new versions of Customer Relationship Management software and messaging distribution software to be upgraded in 2019–2020.
- Continue to nurture new business relationships directly with select local producers or suppliers (entrepreneurs), providing GRCVB with brand-compliant promotional products for all verticals, while maintaining a business relationship with an outside promotional consultant who can facilitate all other product needs.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES, CONVENTION SALES**

- Continue collaborating with IT to template all the steps of the personal selling process, enabling convention sales and services staff to fully deploy new prospecting, lead-nurturing, deal-closing, attendance-promoting or relationship-building emails or other tactics in accordance with the Bureau’s annually-updated Digital Content Marketing Strategy.
- Arm sales staff with new designs, prepackaged themes, collateral, promotional products and social media marketing strategy, in accordance with the destination brand, to supplement tradeshow booth installations, stunts or activations at all shows throughout the year.
- Continue to put Raleigh on the list for consideration with convention and meeting planners through compelling advertising, the Meetings Watch e-newsletter, official Meeting Planners Guides, enhanced bid books, professionally printed pieces as needed, video content, the visitRaleigh.com website section for Meetings & Conventions and visitRaleigh meetings insider blog.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES, SERVICES**

- Work cooperatively with Services team to automate/digitize and otherwise enable the online implementation of Destinations International’s handbook of CVB Attendance Promotion Practices and other new and revised programs/tools for Raleigh area convention and visitor services.
- Continue to enhance conversion to visitors at in-state points of sale (state welcome centers) and increase circulation among Raleigh visitors at local information desks by proactively distributing collateral at major sites. With Services staff, redefine the official Visitor Information Center as a pivotal, physical space for portraying the destination brand experience to visitors/customers and for fulfilling the sale of new signature experiences with individual leisure tourists or arriving groups. ⑤
- Continue to collaborate with the Services team to develop and implement regularly scheduled partner education sessions, not only to encourage partner buy-in for co-op marketing tactics (which is taking place in quarterly Tourism Talk Live meetings or regular advisory board/committee meetings) but also to encourage destination brand adoption, PIXL use and deeper understanding of GRCVB/GRSA in general—to include the traditional hospitality partners as well as new partner relations with shared-economy businesses or proprietors (e.g., area Airbnb hosts).

## MARKETING STRATEGIES, DOMESTIC TOURISM

- Promote the following to the Bureau's target audiences\*, inspiring overnight stays and day-trips for leisure purposes, the conversion of day-trips to overnight stays and brand ambassadorship:
  - Raleigh, N.C.'s destination brand;
  - entrepreneurial locals as well as the museums, arts, live music, craft culinary and beverage scene, handcrafted goods and historic experiences they are responsible for and have fostered here; and,
  - other compelling tourism product offerings (e.g., hotels, things to do, signature experiences, leisure tourism events, restaurants).Focus on promoting Raleigh experiences that leave visitors feeling enriched and energized. ⑤

\*Backyard Boosters, Lifestyle Chameleons and Pulse Keepers (as defined in Marketing Blueprint)

- Constantly and strategically influence and inspire potential visitors at key touch-points through Internet platforms (e.g., articles and social media, email activations, search engines) and publications in order to increase awareness of and preference for the Raleigh, N.C., destination brand and to inspire potential visitors to travel and/or stay overnight. Publish an inspirational, content- and photography-heavy Official Visitors Guide for 2020–2021 designed to send readers to visitRaleigh.com for detailed trip-planning/conversion.
- Use the 2019–2020 Editorial Calendar, the Digital Content Marketing Strategy and the Social Media Marketing Strategy as guides to continually steer all tourism marketing tactics (Internet marketing activities, print advertising, point-of-sale initiatives) toward annual goals/objectives. Engage with area hospitality partners to create and curate inspirational content that supports themes and promotions. Keep partners updated with co-op partner program opportunities as they arise under each theme, timeframe and editorial emphasis.
- Establish and/or strengthen relationships with Raleigh, N.C.'s smart and passionate residents (in some cases through local third-party introductions) who are shaping the growth of the historic city's emerging creative businesses, innovative festivals and food establishments, passionate music and sports scenes and modern cultural experiences—to generate content that will entice visitors to experience the destination, become brand ambassadors and make return visits. ③
- Strengthen area partner relationships to influence and guide creation of one-of-a-kind, signature experiences that will inspire memorable visits when marketed well; this includes building healthy, new relationships with area microentrepreneurs, non-profits or entrepreneurs/small businesses that can associate with GRCVB/the visitor sector or with People-First Tourism, Inc. (P1t), to begin serving visitors (tourists or groups) in uniquely brand-compliant ways. ⑤
- Strengthen relationships within standing committees (e.g., Cultural Presenters Forum, Live Music Advisory Committee, Wake County Beer Summit) and with area allies/municipalities (e.g., City of Raleigh Housing & Neighborhoods Department, Downtown Raleigh Alliance, Hillsborough Street Community Service Corporation, Midtown Raleigh Alliance) to collaborate in the best ways possible for content or tourism product to enhance the Raleigh, N.C., destination brand and attract or better serve visitors.
- Create and/or maintain strategic partnerships statewide and nationwide with CVNC, the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association, LGBTCVB, OpenTable, P1t, Priceline, Visit North Carolina and others and augment GRCVB's destination marketing efforts.

## MARKETING STRATEGIES, GREATER RALEIGH SPORTS ALLIANCE

- Collaborate with IT to template all steps of the sports marketing process, enabling GRSA staff to fully deploy new prospecting, lead-nurturing, deal-closing, attendance-promoting or relationship-building emails or other tactics in accordance with the Bureau's annually-updated Digital Content Marketing Strategy. Re-conceptualize the printed/online bid proposals used by GRSA staff with sports event planners.

- Continue to build upon the GRSA brand within the sports vertical through compelling advertising, collateral/Sports Watch e-news, promotional products, social media marketing tactics, new video content and content development on raleighsports.org.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM**

- Conduct a local-oriented visiting-friends-and-relatives (VFR) and brand ambassador campaign. Recruit “insiders” or individuals from all walks of life who can help create content, become destination brand ambassadors and provide local, authentic and unbiased advice on their Raleigh. Encourage families who have settled in the area from outside to drive visitation from VFR, who in turn will showcase the destination’s compelling story more on social media.
- Ensure the Bureau’s overall content and social media strategies promote the positive media coverage garnered for the area, encouraging consumer sharing.
- Ensure the Marketing and Communications Department and Public Relations Department editorial calendars are aligned to foster consistent messaging to the domestic tourism vertical and media.
- Develop, with Public Relations Department staff, collateral and electronic communication/presentation materials about Raleigh, N.C., and about special-interest travel promotions or specifically recommended travel experiences, to aid in that department’s pursuit of international tourism sales during 2019–2020.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES, MARKETING RESEARCH**

- Explore, alongside the IT Department, the scoping and purchasing of new traveler conversion, profiling and segmentation data through a research platform such as Arrivalist, while also increasing contracted resources to help area hospitality partners/stakeholders make full use of the newly available data with their own marketing plans and strategies. ⑤
- Update and/or explore better ways to update visitor profile, visitor volume and spending estimates through calendar year 2020 with research from DK Shifflet, the U.S. Travel Association or other research vendors.
- Update and disseminate research on the overall annual economic impacts (direct, indirect and induced) of visitors to Wake County, as a Bureau performance indicator and as a communications tool for government relations and community engagement (Tourism Economics).
- Continue to join with local arts/culture/leisure tourism event partners to maintain event impact data on their annual events/festivals and provide additional research, destination brand training, marketing consultations and other stakeholder education to organizers identified for further development of signature events. ⑤

## Public Relations and International Tourism Department

The Public Relations Department is responsible for managing all external communication activities, which include all media relations, influencer marketing, public affairs, community awareness and advocacy as well as crisis, issues and reputation management functions. Additionally, the department is responsible for overseeing international travel trade efforts for the Bureau.

Media relations efforts include local earned media to generate community awareness and out-of-town earned media in the meetings, leisure, group tour and sports markets to help generate visitation. Public affairs efforts include advocating for the value of the visitor economy to Wake County and the role the Bureau plays in creating and fostering the visitor experience. International travel trade efforts include working with receptive tour operators and travel agents as well as media in key feeder markets (Canada, U.K. and France) abroad to increase brand awareness and drive foreign individual travel (F.I.T.) to Wake County.

The department's mission is to craft for the Bureau a positive public image with the general populace and the news media, while educating locals on the value of the visitor economy, and to craft for Raleigh/Wake County a positive public image internationally with potential visitors and the media, while working with travel agents and receptive tour operators to market and sell product into the county.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES

- Local Objectives:
  - Elevate GRCVB brand awareness to residents, media and partners in the Wake County hospitality community.
  - Engage in building and fostering strong relationships with local television, print, radio and online media, updating them on GRCVB initiatives and the tourism industry in Wake County, building credibility in the local and business community.
  - Work with Public Information Officers from all Wake County municipalities to develop communication objectives for promoting events, festivals and news of interest to leisure and meeting visitors.
  - Work in collaboration with appropriate communications and public relations representatives in local organizations including: Wake County Economic Development, City of Raleigh, North Carolina State University Centennial Campus and Research Triangle Regional Partnership to collaborate on story ideas and to ensure that we have consistent messaging on how we are branding and marketing the area and continue to develop quality-of-place theme lines.
  - Develop a local connectors' network of travel writers to pitch "hometown" travel articles to state, regional and national publications.
- Out-of-market Objective:
  - Execute a proactive media outreach program to generate earned media with an emphasis on relationship-building and targeting to ensure the destination brand message is conveyed in editorial, broadcast and online placements outside of Wake County.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, CONVENTION SALES

- Collaborate with appropriate Convention Sales team members to identify and plan a series of targeted sales/media events using brand-specific themes on an annual basis in one of the following markets: Chicago, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Atlanta.
- Work to develop a comprehensive communications/public relations plan, including pre-written editorial placement and television appearances, for a community awareness campaign to highlight local connectors, local businesses that are bringing major conventions to the area and the impact that "staying local" means to Wake County.

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- Work with Raleigh Convention Center and all Wake County meeting industry partners to promote successes of the Raleigh Convention Center and new initiatives and developments of local hotels, venues and meeting facilities through media relations tactics. Work with Marketing and Communications to support the meetings blog editorial calendar with media relations efforts aligning with convention themelines.
- Provide easy access to standard tools through pre-written editorial pieces, destination descriptions and quotes that reflect the Raleigh, N.C., brand.
- Collaborate with the Convention Sales Department to identify relevant topics and trends in the meeting industry in which the Raleigh area has a relevant claim (e.g., smart) for major media push.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, CONVENTION SERVICES**

- Identify the major meetings and conventions within the key vertical markets to develop a comprehensive local and national public relations plan to maximize exposure.
- Update the “Do It Yourself” tools for meeting and convention planners to guide them in the process of garnering local media exposure through press releases, press conferences and media alerts.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

- Work strategically with the Marketing and Communications Department to promote tourism messaging to local, statewide and regional audiences and potential visitors—efforts to include up-to-date, dedicated press releases and backgrounders on ambassadors and putting the area’s passionate people in the spotlight.
- Develop integrated marketing campaigns and editorial that utilize the Marketing and Communications Department’s 2019–2020 Editorial Calendar of brand themelines, tourism assets and campaigns.
- Develop a digital b-roll library of stock video footage available on-demand to media outlets working with Marketing and Communications Department.
- Update content of the Media section on visitRaleigh.com to reflect the Raleigh, N.C., brand and tell the story of the entrepreneurial Raleigh residents who enhance the area’s visitor appeal.
- Develop an influencer marketing strategy working with the senior marketing manager and content marketing manager to oversee relationships with digital influencers including paid content partnerships.
- Develop a social media marketing strategy with senior marketing manager, group marketing manager and content marketing manager to promote positive media coverage garnered for the area—encouraging sharing.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, GREATER RALEIGH SPORTS ALLIANCE**

- Build local sports media list and relationships by providing timely story ideas, facts and figures such as participant numbers, room-nights and economic impact figures on a timely basis.
- Build sports business and industry trade media lists to use in promoting Wake County as a sports destination and GRSA as an industry leader in sports destination marketing.
- Craft press releases on key sports events taking place in the area, as well as continue to position the Raleigh area as a key market for amateur sports.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, ADMINISTRATION**

- Position GRCVB as the singular voice for tourism in Wake County and position executive staff as travel industry experts for journalists to use as top-of-mind sources for stories on local and national tourism.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive community awareness campaign to advocate for the value that tourism and hospitality bring to Wake County and educate the public on the impact of the visitor economy, working in conjunction with the Marketing and Communications Department.
- Develop a comprehensive public relations campaign around GRCVB's ongoing efforts to implement Destination 2028.
- Create talking points for internal use relating to travel and tourism issues. These reference documents will aid in Administration, Public Relations and other staff members being on the same page regarding issues facing Wake County tourism.
- Maintain a series of canned quotes regarding meetings and conventions, tourism initiatives and local policies that affect the tourism industry in Wake County.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, MEDIA RELATIONS**

- Promote positive impact of tourism through public awareness initiatives and a series of pitches and/or press releases detailing travel figures specific to Wake County.
- Create customized pitches aimed at journalists, bloggers, cable network producers and online editors. Identify and respond to pitch opportunities generated through partner organizations and tourism public relations firms representing local hotels, restaurants and attractions.
- Cultivate new and existing media relationships through one-on-one connections including media tours, targeted pitches, networking events and site visit facilitation.
- Encourage journalists on assignment to expand and infuse stories with destination brand messages and callouts where appropriate to the area's passionate-minded people as well as seasonal and niche story ideas. Promote inclusion of call-to-action, conversion-oriented elements including online resources, campaign-specific URLs, travel packages and events.
- Broaden use of social media as an integrated tool for media outreach, relationship development and targeted pitching.
- Integrate targeted keywords into traditional and online PR efforts to align with SEO efforts.
- Integrate advanced earned media analytics through media measurement software and the DMO Metric Report developed with Cision to guide earned media strategies, advanced analytics and KPIs moving forward.
- Work with Visit North Carolina's Public Relations Department to participate in media missions in key markets like New York City, Atlanta and Washington, D.C., as well as in-state.
- Pursue qualified travel media to visit the destination on individual visits or during any planned group press trips.
- Create customized pitches for editors, freelance writers, bloggers etc. and continue to respond to inquiries that come directly to the Public Relations Department.
- Keep the online press room updated with press releases, backgrounders, media alerts and industry facts and figures to communicate news and information for easy access to media.



- Work in conjunction with partner public relations agencies to host several music, travel and lifestyle journalists on individual press tours surrounding Wide Open Bluegrass and other emerging music festivals such as Hopscotch and Dreamville.
- Attend TravMedia’s International Media Marketplace in New York City to hold desk-side visits with key media writing for travel, leisure and lifestyle outlets.
- Attend Public Relations Society of America’s Travel and Tourism Section Conference.
- Collaborate with the Marketing and Communications Department to align public relations strategies with major marketing campaigns surrounding live music, craft breweries, arts and culture.
- Develop a public relations campaign around blockbuster exhibitions at area attraction partners and the opening of destination restaurants. ③

<b>PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTION CALENDAR</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>
DI Annual Convention – St. Louis	x											
GRCVB Joint Sales/Media Event – New York City			x									
IBMA Press Tour				x								
Individual Media Visits	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
PRSA Travel & Tourism Section Annual Conference – Philadelphia												x
TravMedia’s IMM – New York City							x					
U.S. Travel Association’s ESTO – Austin, Texas		x										
Visit North Carolina Media Events (state, regional and N.Y.C.)		x			x					x		

**INTERNATIONAL TOURISM OBJECTIVES**

- Local Objectives:
  - Elevate awareness of the value of the international visitor market within Raleigh/Wake County. ⑦
  - Work with local hoteliers to sign contracts with and get product into travel agents’ and receptive tour operators’ portfolios in key markets (Canada, U.K. and France). ⑦
  - Work with local partners, businesses to create single- and multi-day itineraries for travel agents and receptive tour operators to sell. ⑦
  - Work with regional economic development groups such as RDU International Airport, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, Visit N.C., Travel South U.S.A., Research Triangle Regional Partnership, Wake County Economic Development, N.C. State University and others to develop a China-Ready strategy and aid the broader regional economic development effort to bring a flight from China to RDU. ⑦
- Out-of-market Objectives:
  - Develop and execute a proactive media outreach program to generate earned media with an emphasis on relationship-building and targeting to ensure the destination brand message is conveyed in editorial, broadcast and online placements in key international feeder markets. ⑦
  - Develop and execute a proactive sales training program with travel agents and receptive tour operators to generate more bookings of F.I.T. in Wake County. ⑦

**INTERNATIONAL TOURISM STRATEGIES**

- Work with Wake County hotels, attractions and restaurants to educate them on the importance of the international business, how to work with that market and help generate business for our partners. ⑦
- Generate tour operator and receptive operator leads for hotels, attractions and other partners. ⑦

- Produce and conduct trainings on Wake County market and product offering to international tour operators/receptives. ⑦
- Develop and maintain effective networking relationships within the international leisure travel industry including travel agents, receptive tour operators and media. ⑦
- Compile and maintain a database of international travel agents and receptive tour operators within the CRM and create ongoing communications outreach strategy for contacts. ⑦
- Attend tradeshows, sales and media missions targeted towards the international market with an emphasis on supporting our international flights from Canada, the U.K. and France. ⑦
- Work closely with Visit North Carolina to coordinate site visits/familiarization trips to the area. ⑦
- Create recommended itineraries for international visitors and work with the Marketing and Communications Department to produce necessary collateral and electronic communication material. ⑦
- Develop and execute marketing and sales promotions in key markets working with Marketing and Communications Department on any creative, collateral or electronic communication materials needed. ⑦
- Develop and distribute quarterly press releases to leisure, lifestyle, culinary and trade media in key international markets using TravMedia’s international media database and distribution software. ⑦
- Research emerging international markets and create destination-specific strategies based on travel drivers of each. ⑦
- Work with airlines that serve RDU with international service in marketing the area. ⑦
- Work jointly with regional economic development groups such as RDU International Airport, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, Visit N.C., Travel South U.S.A., Research Triangle Regional Partnership, Wake County Economic Development, N.C. State University and others to determine drivers for visitation from China and gauge interest in the market. ⑦
- Build the framework of a China-Ready strategy for the region by assessing barriers to travel in-market for Chinese visitors and ability of our local hospitality community to address the specific needs of Chinese visitors. ⑦
- Conduct Raleigh, N.C.-specific consumer, media and trade event in Paris, in conjunction with Visit North Carolina to drive brand awareness and increase bookings of F.I.T. via Delta Airlines direct flight. ⑦
- Build out international landing pages, working with Information Technology as well as Marketing and Communications Departments, for direct-flight markets, translated in French and Spanish to deliver curated content specific to the country/audience including promoting the direct flight into RDU offered to that region. ⑦
- Conduct research, working with the Marketing and Communications Department as well as Visit North Carolina, to validate total number of international visitors in Wake County annually as well as country of origin. ⑥, ⑦

<b>INTERNATIONAL TOURISM ACTION CALENDAR</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>
Individual Media Visits	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
IPW Tradeshow – Denver, Colo.											x	
Travel South International Showcase – Nashville, Tenn.					x							
TravMedia’s IMM North America – New York City				x								
Visit North Carolina Media Events (Canada, U.K. and France)	x							x				x

## Convention Sales Department

The primary goal of the Convention Sales Department is to promote Raleigh/Wake County as a convention and meetings destination and establish a strong regional, national and international presence in the meetings industry, thus initiating direct economic impact by increasing room-night production for our area hotel partners.

### CONVENTION SALES OBJECTIVES

- Generate leads and produce room-night business for Wake County hotels, Raleigh Convention Center, PNC Arena and other county venues. ❶
- Incorporate revised Convention Sales strategies that align with the Destination Strategic Plan (DSP) for the Raleigh Convention Center campus and Wake County's five meeting districts. ❶
- Incorporate key initiatives from The Experience Institute's Decision to Attend Study.
- Identify and engage with key meeting planners and decision-makers who have the potential to bring conventions and meetings to Wake County and increase awareness of Raleigh as a meeting destination in key feeder markets (Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest and Northeast).
- Influence corporate business headquartered in the region or with a strong regional presence to host meetings and events at the Raleigh Convention Center and meeting hotels.
- Work closely with the region's economic development and start-up communities to gain insights and connections with high-growth industry clusters and their representatives (e.g., ag-bio, defense, life sciences, medical devices, non-woven textiles and data analytics).
- Educate business leaders and meeting professionals on the role of GRCVB.
- Enhance relationships with the local multicultural and diversity community to increase awareness of the meeting capacity in the county and the benefits and economic impact of hosting events in their hometown.
- Increase engagement with Association Management Companies and multivolume, third-party accounts in all regions to increase the sales prospecting funnel.
- Leverage the destination brand of passionate minds to showcase the diversity of events and the destination assets in Wake County and to differentiate Raleigh/Wake County as a meeting destination.
- Ensure that GRCVB Convention Sales team members are seen as leaders in their profession and are key partners locally and from a global perspective.

### CONVENTION SALES STRATEGIES

- Continue to evolve in our role as a business strategist and consultant for clients, taking the sales-to-services approach, by evaluating current processes and embracing best practices on how we can add value-driven results to meetings and convention organizers.
- Research and develop a list of qualified prospects that will meet the recommended guidelines of the Wake County DSP. ❶
- Launch a direct ad plan to fulfill the five-year glidepath for priority one Raleigh Convention Center downtown citywide groups. ❶

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- Design and implement trackable fields for data intelligence within our CRM that align with key initiatives from The Experience Institute’s Decision to Attend Study.
- Redefine the prospecting process by tracking key data points for meeting profiles, which would allow the team to target specific business based on rotation, industry and other demand drivers. ❶
- Collaborate with IT in developing a real-time dashboard for the convention campus, which will be used as a tool to provide instant access to gap analysis, compression and pace, to guide strategic business decisions utilizing the data contained in the CRM. ❶
- Build updated list of local business and community leaders who are members, board members, officers of groups that may consider Raleigh for their meeting destination or are faculty of higher-education institutions in the region. Specific focus to include but not limited to N.C. State University, Shaw University, Saint Augustine’s University, N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences and the Nature Research Center. Schedule individual “connectors” meetings with those identified to gain support and intellectual capital on potential conferences.
- Identify and engage at least four, new corporate businesses headquartered in the region or that have a strong regional presence to host meetings and events at the Raleigh Convention Center and meeting hotels in the area, rather than taking an event out of market.
- Host a local Multicultural/Diversity Task Force comprised of local multicultural corporations and stakeholders that would meet once a quarter. This group would engage by assisting in identifying meetings/conferences that would fit our current infrastructure, producing letters of support and assist the GRCVB in selling to these groups.
- Further engage with Association Management Companies (AMCs) and multivolume, third-party accounts in all regions to increase the sales prospecting funnel. Schedule presentations with AMCs in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast and Southeast. Expand reach to multivolume accounts by attending AMC tradeshow and annual meetings to include but not limited to: Cvent CONNECT, HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference, ConferenceDirect and HPN Global Partner Conference.
- In partnership with IT and Marketing, develop a webinar for multivolume accounts that focuses on destination highlights, new developments, hotels and airport information.
- Leverage the destination brand and continue to curate passionate locals and signature experiences into client engagements at tradeshow, client events, site inspections and sales missions, to showcase the diversity of events and the destination assets in Wake County and to differentiate Raleigh/Wake County as a meeting destination. Invite our local hospitality partners to participate:
  - Leverage expertise of our D.C. regional office to make sales presentations and host quarterly events in the D.C. market focused on multivolume accounts and individual appointments with hot prospects.
  - Design out-of-market client events in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast and Southeast in partnership with our local brand ambassadors around themes that reflect the destination brand such as culinary, breweries, music or arts and culture.
  - Host themed familiarization tours and networking opportunities for potential clients from our markets in the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest and Northeast regions around signature events, concerts, festivals and sporting events, in conjunction with our hospitality community, to showcase Raleigh’s entertainment, culinary and cultural scene.
  - Participate in select, industry-related tradeshow and events to build relationships that result in direct sales.
  - Further cultivate relationships in the national association market by sponsoring a Certified Association Executive applicant testing event, which includes a Visit Raleigh presentation.
- Host Visit Raleigh Meeting Professionals Summit for planners located in Wake County and surrounding areas; the event will include education and networking with a reverse tradeshow.

- Host biannual roundtable discussions with the sales leaders who represent Raleigh/Wake County meeting districts to reevaluate Bureau strategies and align business objectives with future trends and target markets. ❶
- Implement five, targeted, convention-area-specific email activations, promotions and collateral throughout the year for the Midtown, Raleigh West, Downtown, Cary and Airport meeting districts. ❶
- Partner with IT and Marketing and Communications to investigate and redesign user-friendly bid book and site visit presentations, in digital and optional print format.
- Create a CVB 101 digital collateral one-pager to provide hotels and other partners an at-a-glance view on working with the Convention Sales and Services teams.
- Host PIXL onsite lead response training for Wake County hotels, to foster a better understanding of how we aim to present the area's best package to planners.
- Contribute relevant content of interest to meeting professionals and other members of the larger GRCVB community for use in the "Meeting Planner Spotlight" or other elements of the Meetings Watch, GRCVB blog posts and social media accounts. Such spotlights give concrete examples of how individuals have assisted in bringing business to our community through leads, letters of support etc.
- Pitch news release ideas quarterly to the PR Department for meeting and conventions.
- With support from the Public Relations team, develop quarterly news releases and briefs targeting meetings industry publications like *Successful Meetings*, *M&C*, *Meetings Today*, *Meeting Mentor*, *Convene* and *The Meeting Professional* (MPI).
- Identify and recruit local university students from business, marketing & finance and parks & recreation departments as interns. The interns will receive valuable experience and assist the Sales team with market research, database knowledge, partner and client engagement.
- Continue to serve on and seek out leadership, board of directors and committee positions with national and regional industry organizations (e.g., MPI, PCMA, AENC, SGMP and NCBMP).

## Services Department

The Services Department impacts the visitor experience by connecting visitors, attendees and planners to the destination's resources.

### SERVICES OBJECTIVES

- Convention/Group Services: Use the convention planning and servicing process to provide “one-stop shop” event planning services.
- Visitor Services/Visitor Information Center: Provide visitor information, counseling and destination awareness to encourage positive experiences that result in longer stays and increased visitor spending.
- Partner Relations: Create and facilitate connections between our planners and visitors to area hospitality partners.

### SERVICES STRATEGIES, CONVENTION/GROUP SERVICES

- Work across all CVB departments to expand the services we offer and the speed at which we can provide them with a goal that services provided will help to position GRCVB as a leader in the convention and meetings marketplace.
- Use Destinations International's “CVB Attendance Promotion Practices” as a guideline for revitalizing our services. Build on the unique proposition of CVB Services teams in these roles. This includes but won't be limited to:
  - Work this effort in conjunction with GRCVB's Marketing and Sales teams.
  - Continue to revise our communications to say more clearly what our services role is and what services we provide. Work with Marketing and Communications to create new messaging for services introductions to clearly articulate what we provide and how we do it.
  - Development of templates for introductions and communications at key points in the planning timeline.
  - Update attendance promotion practices across the spectrum of group sizes.
  - Develop new ideas of how Services support Sales for site visits and also for planning site visits.
  - Revise the pre-con step of servicing so that it aligns the destination experience for our planners. ❶
  - Integrate the services revisions with sales strategies focused on hotel-anchored meeting districts.
- Continue to clarify the role of social media for group services within GRCVB's overall social media marketing strategy and implement it as a part of key services offered.
- Work with GRCVB's marketing and sales teams to enhance the services provided to weddings, reunions and group tours to maximize on the higher profile of these markets on our new website, while also servicing them effectively and efficiently. Focus on tools that are “grab and go.”
- Recognizing that festivals and events are a strong part of the Raleigh, N.C., brand, work to differentiate services provided to those groups compared to services provided to convention/meeting groups.
- Build on the value of corporate social responsibility in meetings and conventions. Maximize our relationship with Activate Good for servicing the needs of our groups to provide “voluntourism” or corporate social responsibility “plug and play” options.
- Set a high standard for event servicing by increasing the awareness and the value of stellar event servicing. Use our participation in the Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA) to provide shared learning opportunities and participate in ESPA's 10th National Annual Celebrate Services Event for more awareness of and appreciation for the convention services manager (CSM)/event manager (EM) roles.

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- Work with PR to maximize visibility of key arriving groups.
- Provide housing bureau services using our MeetingMax housing tool, optimizing its benefits for the appropriate groups. This will be particularly useful due to the increased prioritization to optimize the selling of the Raleigh Convention Center, resulting in use of more hotels for groups that book there. ❶
- Leverage participation in local host organizing committees as a key value to local host partners/local connectors who bring conventions and meetings home to Raleigh.
- Supporting our need to better connect qualified partners to meetings and convention organizers, develop and implement a partners' program/town hall-style event focusing on key supplier services for meetings and conventions (AV, transportation, décor and similar types of businesses).

## **SERVICES STRATEGIES, VISITOR SERVICES/VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER (VIC)**

- Work with Marketing and Communications to ensure that the destination brand stays fresh in our VIC once updated and/or moved. It is our goal that the VIC be a pivotal space for selling the brand experience. This involves décor, alignment on materials/brochures offered and concentration on the right messages (in person, on the phone and via online communications) offered by staff working there.
- Secure GRCVB's VIC as a key welcome location and concierge for destination information and experiences by providing a unique and separate space that reflects the high-tech and innovative presence the Raleigh area possesses, using the following:
  - Offer locally made merchandise and/or visitRaleigh-brand items for sale.
  - Create an iPad station to allow us to collect visitor intercepts of personal info/demographics, with an additional goal of this tool to be used as a possible point of sale for new People-First Tourism and other signature experiences. ❹, ❺
  - Develop an interactive/touchscreen kiosk or monitor with virtual "pins" for where visitors are visiting from and other visitor data highlighting the diversity of visitors, importance of tourism etc.
  - Offer iconic/Instagram-worthy photo-opp space for visitors.
  - Offer immersive programming, partnering with local attractions/venues throughout the year. ❹, ❺
  - Encourage local tour companies to utilize the VIC as a starting point for tours. ❹, ❺
- Strive to grow VIC visitation and effectiveness in these ways:
  - Develop partnerships for unique programming and visibility.
  - Utilize the VIC as a tour starting point for local, downtown tour companies.
  - Provide value to our partners by developing a tracking method for visitor referrals and needs that are fulfilled by our VIC. Grow our impact for visitor fulfillment by working with Marketing and Communications to align on new leads resources like AAA, Travel Guides Free and others.
  - Minimize visitor frustrations in finding the VIC by working with our Administration and Marketing and Communications team to highlight the continued need for updated wayfinding and external signage to better direct visitors to the VIC, including placement of VIC signage in the parking garages.
  - Maintain optimum levels of brochure inventory to ensure distribution that represents Raleigh, N.C., well. Quarterly we will review the number, type and quality of visitor-related businesses that are represented in the VIC to ensure that we are meeting visitors' needs.
  - Grow relationships with representatives of all municipalities in Wake County to increase brochure representation in the VIC and enhance value for them. Work on development to this by having VIC manager to accompany the visitor information assistant on deliveries to chambers of commerce and key venues for the municipalities.
  - Maintain and grow awareness through other visitor centers to include state welcome centers, Capital Area Visitor Services etc., by actively engaging the personnel in these centers for ongoing partnerships.
  - Ensure that the VIC manager trains continually to stay abreast of visitor center trends by attending Destinations International's Visitor Services Summit.
  - Continue ongoing efforts to develop relationships with Raleigh Convention Center and Raleigh Marriott City Center security teams, as well as Raleigh Police Department, to ensure safety of visitors in or near our VIC location.

- Raise the level of awareness for the VIC by conducting periodic visitor intercepts to assess perceptions of the VIC's appearance, performance and suitability for our visitors overall.
- Continue to develop inquiry fulfillment opportunities.
- Work with the Marketing and Communications Department on any special promotions (like grand openings of new exhibits, new attractions etc.).

## **SERVICES STRATEGIES, PARTNER RELATIONS**

- Use customer service as a key strategy for excellent hospitality delivery by improving our training programs that impact experience delivery and optimize the impact of the programs by working to grow attendance for the programs:
  - Promote the Guest Service Gold® program for customer service certification. The program, developed by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), is a partnership with the N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association (NCRLA) which allows our partners to participate at a cost savings. Switch curricula to the newer Guest Service Gold® Tourism program.
  - Partner with Wake Technical Community College for the Customer Care for the Hospitality Industry program, as a resource for partners interested in offering a customized, onsite customer service training program.
  - Help to build better visitor experiences by continuing to offer “See For Yourself” tours on a quarterly basis. Tour themes will reflect the year’s marketing editorial calendar; these tours are valued, popular training tools serving to acquaint our partners with area visitor attractions.
  - Promote the use of the online destination awareness training/introduction tool on our website for new hospitality employees. The hoped-for result is having a community of business partners who understand and support the destination brand experience and deliver the brand promise more enthusiastically to our visitors.
  - Leverage taxi drivers to make great first impressions on visitors. Relative to changing trends in use of taxis versus other shared ride services, offset concerns about dwindling taxi driver numbers by creating a taxi driver awareness event. This will be in lieu of continuing our taxi driver training program with Raleigh Police Department and taxi services at RDU International Airport. Focus on brand awareness and customer service training as well as recognition for these partners. Encourage placement of GRCVB’s Official Visitors Guides in the taxis.
  - Assist the CVB with workforce development. Help with partners’ staffing needs by working with teams across GRCVB to promote and support the annual Wake County Hospitality Job Fair. ❶
- Support the event management development initiatives of GRCVB by continuing to serve on City of Raleigh’s Events Task Force. ❷
- Inspire community engagement for arriving groups. Maintain leadership for engaging community partners to be involved in higher profile events like our largest event, International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) World of Bluegrass week. Key areas of engagement include hospitality and welcome services, volunteer recruitment and training, partner engagement via community partner activations like special deals and programming, as well as expanding accessibility awareness for special needs audiences. The blueprint for servicing IBMA World of Bluegrass can be used in smaller and larger ways for many arriving groups.
- Grow our key partner relationships in these ways:
  - Support the Sales team with the Visit Raleigh Meeting Professionals Summit by planning and facilitating the partner portion of the program to highlight Wake County vendors who can meet the needs of planners hosting meetings, conventions and events in Raleigh, N.C. ❶
  - Continuing to offer our proactive Visitors Guide delivery service, maximizing on the role that hotels and key attractions have in providing accurate visitor information to arriving visitors. This valued program has a GRCVB representative regularly onsite with these key partners to provide hard-copy materials. This has proven to yield an important side benefit of developing face-to-face relationships with frontline staff and management, allowing us to communicate key initiatives and training opportunities.
  - Committing a day each month for partner visits and tours. By growing our knowledge of the destination assets and developing stronger relationships with the partners, we can in turn provide better experiences for our clients, attendees and visitors. ❶



- o Maximize the impacts of shared economy service providers (like Uber, Lyft and Airbnb) and work with Marketing and Communications to develop methods to raise awareness of the Raleigh, N.C., brand, the value of great customer service and Official Visitors Guides.
- Support the development of key vendor services and servicing needs:
  - o Continue to raise awareness for the need for accessibility services and accommodations for special needs visitors, both for leisure travelers and group attendees. Reach out to key partners locally for implementing this and keeping in mind accessibility relating to physical needs as well as unique demographics. ❶
  - o Work cooperatively with Marketing and Communications to leverage the use of GRCVB’s Event Services & Suppliers listings, to promote existing local vendors and as a marketing tool to encourage new companies. ❶
  - o Seek partnerships and work with other CVB departments to grow the offsite venue offerings for our destination. ❶
  - o Heighten awareness of security for the hospitality industry including overall event security.
  - o Practice and model green and sustainable planning practices.

<b>SERVICES ACTION CALENDAR</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>
Annual Tourism Ambassador Event									x			
Celebrate Services Day with ESPA	x											
Destinations International Annual Convention – St. Louis	x											
DI Convention Sales & Services Summit – TBD						x						
DI Visitor Services Summit – Kansas City, Mo.			x									
ESPA Annual Meeting – TBD							x					
Guest Service Gold® Programs		x			x			x			x	
Lunch and Learns/ESPA Webinars	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x
Taxi Recognition Program (date TBD)							x					
See For Yourself Tours	x			x			x				x	
Simpleview Summit – Phoenix										x		
MeetingMax Housing Unconvention – Vancouver, B.C.									x			
Partner Meetings (frequency TBD)												

## Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance

The Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance—a department of the Greater Raleigh CVB—markets and promotes Raleigh, all of Wake County and the area’s sports venues in order to create economic development for the region in the form of sports events, tournaments, championships and meetings. The GRSA works closely with local partner organizations to successfully host and service existing events for the purpose of enhancing the product and developing repeat business. Both the sales/marketing and hosting components are designed to effectively position and brand Greater Raleigh as one of the nation’s leading sports event destinations. The GRSA has a 23-member Advisory Board, made up of sports, government, tourism and hospitality leaders who play key roles in the sports event industry in Greater Raleigh.

### GRSA OBJECTIVES

- Create economic impact by filling hotels and restaurants with sports-related business.
- Position, or brand, Greater Raleigh as one of the nation’s premier locations for sporting events and a “championship destination.”
- Provide excellent leadership and/or support in the area of event hosting and servicing.
- Generate positive media exposure and visibility for Greater Raleigh and its venues.
- Increase local awareness of the sports event industry as a key generator of economic development in Wake County.
- Continue to develop and strengthen relationships with local host partners and sports organizations.
- Continue to strengthen the GRSA’s reputation as the foremost authority on the sports event industry in Wake County.
- Advocate for new and improved sports facilities and venues in Wake County that will spur economic impact from visitor spending. ❷

### TARGET AUDIENCES

- Collegiate sports (NCAA championships, ACC & other conference championships)
- Amateur sports (youth and adult)
- High school sports (NCHSAA)
- Core sports: soccer, softball, baseball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, lacrosse, cheerleading, swimming, cross country
- Emerging sports: Esports, disc golf, ultimate frisbee, extreme sports (BMX, etc.), table tennis ❷
- Focus organizations: NCAA, ACC, NCHSAA, NHL, USOC National Governing Bodies, plus numerous youth and amateur organizations and associations
- Geographic scope: national, regional, statewide (& occasionally international)

### PRIORITIES, PRIMARY THEMES, NEW INITIATIVES FOR 2019–2020

Destination 2028: Fiscal year 2019–2020 will mark the first full year of the GRCVB’s Destination Strategic Plan (DSP) implementation. The GRSA will take the lead role in ensuring that the sports components of that plan are making progress and moving forward in a timely fashion. Early priority initiatives include: (1) a major multisport indoor sports/small arena complex and support for other major sports projects; (2) a new countywide model establishing a standard baseline and criteria for the development, marketing and scheduling of sports facilities that receive public funding; (3) the continued push into the burgeoning esports marketplace; and (4) stronger, more consistent partnerships with each of our 13 local parks and recreation departments. ❷

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**Key to Destination 2028 symbols:** ❶ Meetings & Conventions, ❷ Sports, ❸ Events, ❹ Key Attractors, ❺ Individual Leisure, ❻ Destination Development, ❼ Regional Demand Drivers, ❽ Quality of Place

**Next Round of NCAA Championships:** In the spring of 2017, the NCAA announced site selections for its 90 annual sports championships covering all divisional levels. Greater Raleigh was fortunate to land 13 championships in that four-year window covering 2018–2022. Now it's time to do it all over again. The NCAA will begin the process for its next bid cycle around summer/fall 2019, covering academic year 2022–2023 through academic year 2025–2026. Since NCAA championships are priority events for this market and for many of our local colleges, universities and venues, this next bid cycle will get our undivided attention as we work with our partners to secure as many future championships as possible.

**Major Events Committee:** The GRSA Advisory Board established a Major Events Review Committee in FY 2018–2019 to look ahead 3–10 years in order to identify and recommend (at least three) major, high-profile, spectator-based events that the GRSA and partners should target as part of a 10-year vision. The Committee was charged with answering the question, “What’s the next big thing” for this sports market? The committee is scheduled to conclude its work in summer 2019, and the GRSA will then begin the process of executing the long-term plan.

**USBA Hoops Heaven:** Raleigh will be the center of the youth basketball universe in July, when the GRSA and the Raleigh Convention Center host the USBA Boys and Girls National Championships for the first time. We are expecting more than 450 youth teams, of all ages, to descend upon Wake County for five days of wall-to-wall basketball inside the RCC. This will mark the first year of a three-year contract with USBA, and the GRSA will roll out the red carpet to ensure the USBA and its athletes, families and officials have a first-class, unforgettable experience in North Carolina’s capital city.

**New Venues & Facilities:** The GRSA will place a greater emphasis on serving as a resource and advocate for new venue development and facility improvement projects that would enhance Greater Raleigh as a sports event destination while generating visitor spending and economic impact. Chief among these potential venues is a new, major indoor sports multipurpose/small arena complex, in addition to major projects such as PNC Arena and a proposed MLS stadium. **2, 4, 6**

**Esports an Epriority:** The GRSA has spent much of FY 2018–2019 trying to gain a better understanding and a grasp of a market that has impacted the sports event industry like no other in recent memory. That would be esports, which is arguably the fastest-growing and most rapidly evolving event category in the sports marketplace. The GRSA has made esports a priority and is working with multiple partners in an attempt to enter this rapidly-growing and constantly changing space. In FY 2019–2020, will continue to venture into the world of esports, and we intend to do so by taking smart, measured steps that will ensure quality events and well-managed growth. Venues, cities and sports commissions across the country are trying to get a handle on this industry and determine how, or if, to enter the space. It is important to discern whether or not esports can or will drive room-nights and visitor spending. The GRSA will continue to educate itself in this new market. **2**

**NCAA Title Town:** Greater Raleigh will be the site of at least three NCAA championship events in FY 2019–2020, two of which are returning after a few years away. They are the 2019 Men’s (Soccer) College Cup, the 2020 Women’s Division I Golf Regional and the 2020 Baseball Division II World Series, which has been held in Cary each year since 2009 (with the exception of 2017). Greater Raleigh prides itself in hosting and supporting a variety of NCAA championships, and this year will give us another opportunity to roll out the red carpet on three occasions. The GRSA is also planning to attend the NCAA annual convention for the first time in Jan. 2020.

**Major Events:** Every year is a big sports year in Greater Raleigh, and FY 2019–2020 will be no exception. As a result, the GRSA staff will once again place a heavy emphasis on working with and supporting our local partners to successfully host major events. In addition to the events listed previously, here is a sampling of events planned for the year ahead: USA Archery JOAD National Target Championships, USSSA Baseball Atlantic Coast World Series, Great American Cross Country Festival, visitRaleigh.com Showcase Series (soccer), ACC Men’s & Women’s Soccer Championships, Raleigh LaxFest, City of Oaks Challenge (volleyball), Deep South Classic (girls’ basketball), MAPL Volleyball, ACC Tennis Championships, National Black Heritage Championship Swim Meet, USA Swimming Southern Zone Championships (new), 12 NCHSAA state championships and multiple USA Baseball events, including the National High School Invitational.

**Video, Social Emphasis:** The GRSA, in coordination with the Marketing and Communications and IT Departments, will next turn its attention in FY 2019-2020 to improving and growing its social media presence (beyond Twitter and Instagram). Top priorities will be testing new platforms, developing new content and placing a new emphasis on video. This includes such platforms as Facebook, Facebook Live, Instagram, blogs and the possible development of a GRSA YouTube channel. Any new initiatives will have an emphasis on being as mobile and nimble as possible.

Meanwhile, the GRSA and Marketing will continue to improve and enhance the new sports website, particularly in the areas of photo galleries, video (with GoPro video) and fresh content.

**A Charitable Partnership:** The GRSA is currently evaluating, for the first time, the possibility of a charitable partnership. This will enable the GRSA to engage in an initiative designed to help others and make our community a better place... rather than just the often-times black-and-white, bottom-line world of sports tourism and economic development. The GRSA is looking for an affiliation that allows for year-round promotion and support of the charity to build general awareness. In addition, the GRSA plans to partner with one or two major events during the year in a manner designed to benefit the selected charity. Projected timeline for this new partnership to debut is first-quarter FY 2019–2020.

**Volunteers:** The GRSA plans to explore the feasibility of creating, maintaining and utilizing a volunteer database. This is a “need area” in our sports market, and the GRSA will attempt to address that need in FY 2019–2020.

### **What’s New for Fiscal Year 2019–2020**

1. Destination 2028 – first full year of implementing initial projects and components of 10-year plan ②
2. Esports – smart, measured and well-planned steps into exploding new market ②
3. Next NCAA multisport bid cycle
4. GRSA Major Event Review Committee – finalize plan
5. USBA Boys & Girls National Championships
6. NCAA Convention
7. NCAA Championship Events Returning – Men’s College Cup & Women’s Golf Regional
8. USA Swimming Southern Zone Championships
9. Increase role as resource / advocate for new sports venues and facility improvements ②, ④, ⑥
10. Regular meetings/communications with each of Wake County’s 13 parks & rec departments ②
11. GRSA/charity partnership
12. Evaluate, consider volunteer database
13. Increased emphasis on expansion of social media platforms
14. Emphasis on video / new content, GRSA YouTube channel, Facebook Live
15. More one-on-one meetings with locally-based sports clubs and organizations

### **GRSA STRATEGIES, SALES**

- Attend national tradeshow to meet one-on-one with event owners and rights-holders and to promote Raleigh and Wake County as a premier sports event destination. (See sports marketing travel schedule for a complete list of tradeshow and events.)
- Focus on the following sales priorities: (1) collegiate, high school and amateur sports; (2) core sports of soccer, softball, baseball, basketball, volleyball, lacrosse, swimming, tennis, cross country and cheerleading; (3) emerging sports of esports, disc golf, ultimate, BMX, Ultimate, table tennis; and (4) state, regional, national and, in some cases, international markets. ②
- Prospect strategically for new business, primarily through existing contacts and client relationships and by attending tradeshow, but also via “events available” databases, digital listings, sports directories, industry online publications and industry contacts.
- Research and evaluate potential events (in coordination with our host partners) to determine which ones are the “right fit” for Greater Raleigh.
- Develop and generate qualified sports leads on a consistent basis for Wake County hotels.
- Produce high-quality bid proposals and presentations for select sporting events as needed. Work closely with hotels, venues and local host organizations and partners.
- Create GRSA-branded marketing materials for bid proposals. (Marketing and Communications)

- Travel as needed to make sales calls and presentations, in order to recruit and secure new sports business.
- Organize and host site inspections and client events for rights-holders and event planners to showcase the area's sports venues, accommodations and attractions.
- Contact local sports organizations, clubs and associations to learn which events they compete in at the statewide, regional or national levels, and determine which of those events might be a reasonable and desirable fit for Wake County. At the same time, determine which of those organizations would be interested in helping to recruit, manage and host the event once it has been booked.
- Continue to update and develop a more accurate and comprehensive database of sports event owners and rights-holders at the state, regional and national levels, and categorize each entry by sport for e-marketing purposes. Expand the database by researching and entering new and potential client organizations.
- Produce and distribute periodic e-marketing newsletter (Shout-Out) that targets event owners and rights-holders by sport with sport-specific themes and information. (Marketing and Communications)
- Manage the Sports Event Investment Program (SEIP) and work closely with GRCVB Board of Directors to generate new sports business opportunities and economic impact for Greater Raleigh.
- Manage GRSA event-hosting line item in order to secure priority events through negotiations and supporting bid efforts with bid fees, rights fees, sanctioning fees, facility rental assistance, sponsorship commitments and "value added" enhancements (examples include marketing, hospitality, receptions, banquets, welcome gifts etc.).
- Support the efforts of local organizations to bring sporting events to the area. This includes but is not limited to N.C. State University, PNC Arena, City of Raleigh, Town of Cary, NCFC Youth, USA Baseball and many more.
- Continue to support North Carolina FC in its efforts to bring an MLS franchise to Wake County.

## **GRSA STRATEGIES, MARKETING**

- Continue to build brand awareness and establish the value of the Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance within the national and regional sports event industry, as well as within the local market. The GRSA brand will continue to grow through professionalism, hospitality, reliability and a commitment to excellence—plus various marketing, advertising and proactive media initiatives.
- Produce quarterly sports e-newsletter (Sports Watch) that is distributed to event owners and rights-holders as well as local partners, host organizations and media. (Marketing and Communications)
- Continue to improve and enhance the new GRSA website, with an emphasis on tailoring the site to rights-holders and event planners, while keeping the content fresh, timely and pertinent. (Marketing and Communications, IT)
- Renew contract with a freelance writer to produce new, fresh content (features stories and possibly podcasts) on a monthly basis for the GRSA website and social media platforms.
- Improve photo gallery search technology and incorporate into the sports website, searchable by sport, venue or date. (IT)
- Establish the GRSA sports website as a primary sales and marketing tool and as the No. 1 information resource for the sports event industry in Wake County. (Marketing and Communications, IT)
- Update and manage a database of Wake County major venues and facilities.

- Schedule advertising placement in any or all of the primary sports event trade publications (*Sports Business Journal, SportsTravel, SportsEvents, Sports Destination Management*). (Marketing and Communications)
- Continue to expand and develop sports marketing creative for print and online placements. Creative should promote the GRSA brand while also positioning Greater Raleigh as one of the nation's premier sports event destinations. (Marketing and Communications)
- Increase emphasis on social media, with the following plan in place for FY 2019–2020: Continue to excel with Twitter, grow Instagram and blogs and establish a GRSA YouTube Channel. Determine if new platforms (Facebook Live, for example) are useful. (Marketing and Communications)
- Promote the GRSA sports website to event owners and rights-holders through e-mails, advertisements and collateral materials. (Marketing and Communications)
- Update and manage master calendar of Wake County sporting events that are affiliated with GRSA.
- Expand, maintain and improve the GRSA's sports photo library for promotional and media purposes. (Marketing and Communications, IT)
- Develop proactive local media relations plan designed to increase awareness of the sports event industry as a vital generator of economic development in Wake County. (Public Relations)
- Develop proactive national media relations plan designed to position Greater Raleigh as a premier destination for sporting events. (Public Relations)
- Maintain active membership in the National Association of Sports Commissions and the North Carolina Sports Association.

## **GRSA STRATEGIES, HOSTING & SERVICING**

- Place our traditional strong emphasis on hosting and servicing a series of signature sporting events in fiscal year 2019–2020. Work with event planners and local partners to plan and successfully host these events. (A sampling of the major events scheduled for the year ahead can be found above under “Priorities, Primary Themes, New Initiatives for FY 2019–2020.”)
- Take a leadership role in housing issues while staying current with changes within the industry—continuing to lead, coordinate, provide and improve hotel and housing services and options for events rights-holders and planners.
- Take a leadership role in the GRSA's efforts to evaluate and possibly implement a volunteer database.
- Emphasize continued excellence in traditional visitor services for sporting events—as requested, as needed and at a service level commensurate with the impact of the event on the local hospitality industry. This includes area maps, information desks, hotel decorations, airport digital welcomes, venue signage, team gift baskets, VIP gifts and much more.
- Serve on Local Organizing Committees, as needed.
- Provide volunteer ambassadors on site at select sporting events.
- Support existing priority events by collaborating with rights-holders and local partners to strengthen the event or enhance the “event experience” through such avenues as visitor services, marketing and sponsorship support, hospitality programs, ancillary programming and VIP gifts... for the purpose of leveraging strong community support to help retain desirable events (repeat business).

- Continue hotel room-night tracking and pick-up following all key sporting events, with an emphasis on being as thorough and accurate as possible. Identify two separate numbers: (1) room-nights tracked; and (2) GRSA's educated best-estimate of actual room-nights generated in the market.
- Continue gathering post-event report information following selected key sporting events.
- Continue post-event evaluations by surveying event owners and rights-holders. (Expand this program to include coaches, participants and visiting family in order to determine more fully the perception and evaluation of Raleigh as a sports destination.)
- Create and host sports event microsites (landing pages) for major events, when applicable. (Marketing and Communications)
- Attend ESPA national convention to stay up-to-date on industry trends.

<b>GRSA ACTION CALENDAR</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>
MLB Little League Game – Philadelphia		x										
Connect Sports Market Place – Louisville, Ky.		x										
U.S. Aquatics Sports – St. Louis			x									
S.P.O.R.T.S. Conference – Panama City Beach, Fla.			x									
GRSA Advisory Board Meeting – Raleigh			x									
NC Sports Association Quarterly Mtg. – TBD			x									
USA Softball – Sparks, Nev.					x							
TEAMS – Anaheim, Calif.					x							
USOC Sportslink – Anaheim, Calif.					x							
NASC 4S Conference – Providence, R.I.				x								
NASC CEO Summit – Louisville, Ky.					x							
U.S. Specialty Sports Association – Ft. Myers, Fla.					x							
USA Track & Field Convention – Reno, Nev.						x						
GRSA Advisory Board Meeting – Raleigh					x							
US Sports Congress – Columbia, S.C.						x						
NC Sports Association Quarterly Meeting – TBD						x						
American Baseball Coaches Assoc. – Nashville, Tenn.							x					
Event Service Professionals Assoc. – Denver, Colo.							x					
U.S. Lacrosse National Convention – Philadelphia							x					
National Soccer Coaches / USYSA – Baltimore							x					
NCAA Convention – Anaheim, Calif.							x					
GRSA Advisory Board Meeting – Raleigh								x				
Visit North Carolina 365 – Asheville									x			
NCAA Tournament Future Host Advance – TBD									x			
NC Sports Association Quarterly Meeting – TBD									x			
NASC Women's Summit – New Orleans									x			
NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four – Atlanta										x		
Nat'l Assoc. of Sports Commissions – Kansas City, Mo.										x		
Simpleview Summit – Phoenix											x	
GRSA Advisory Board Meeting – Raleigh											x	
Esports Travel – Atlantic City, N.J.												x
NC Sports Association Quarterly Meeting – TBD												x
Women in Sports Events – New York City												x

## Information Technology Department

The Information Technology Department is responsible for all of the Bureau's cloud-based software solutions, technology infrastructure, web development, business intelligence and social media, content and Internet marketing technologies. The primary goal of the department is to support the organizational business plan and individual departments' business objectives through the effective use of information technology and cloud-based services—providing the resources to support the destination marketing that attracts more visitors.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVES

- Train, support and enable staff on all organization-related technology deployments in an effective manner, to promote productivity and empower staff with continuous learning opportunities via existing webinars and knowledge-base access.
- Identify, manage and solve/address all organizational technology-related opportunities.
- Automate the organization's use of internal information to ensure that data are organized and shared in a manner that adds value, enhances productivity, protects against loss and promotes customer retention.
- Work closely day-to-day with the Marketing and Communications Department to implement Internet and content marketing strategies that ultimately attract more visitors and visitor spending.
- Maintain, support and upgrade infrastructure for GRCVB administrative offices and official Visitor Information Center.
- Continue to maintain alternative methods of communication during crises or emergency situations in the destination or during unscheduled server downtimes.
- Increase website traffic levels (sessions) via search engine optimization and search engine marketing.
- Establish visitRaleigh.com as the single, official source for the area's tourism, restaurant, hotel, attraction and event, meeting, sports, travel media and partner/local resident information through the effective application of new web technology.
- Maintain and support social media aggregation tools for user-generated content and a digital asset management system.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES

- Deploy new versions of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and messaging distribution software in 2019–2020 to all Bureau departments; collaborate especially with the Marketing and Communications Department to retrain on supporting all destination vertical markets through these software solutions.
- Work with Marketing and Communications and Services Departments to technologically empower area partners to manage promotion of one-of-a-kind, signature experiences that will inspire memorable visits; this includes building healthy, new relationships with area microentrepreneurs, non-profits or entrepreneurs/small businesses and creating new online/offline experience fulfillment strategies and data reporting processes. ⑤
- Continue to support marketing of the GRSA brand within the sports vertical through compelling web advertising, social media marketing tactics and content development on raleighsports.org.

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**Key to Destination 2028 symbols:** ① Meetings & Conventions, ② Sports, ③ Events, ④ Key Attractors, ⑤ Individual Leisure, ⑥ Destination Development, ⑦ Regional Demand Drivers, ⑧ Quality of Place



- Collaborate with Marketing and Communications to template all steps of the sales and sports marketing processes, enabling Sales and GRSA staff to fully deploy new prospecting, lead-nurturing, deal-closing, attendance-promoting or relationship-building emails or other tactics in accordance with the Bureau's annually-updated Digital Content Marketing Strategy. Re-conceptualize the printed/online bid proposals used by Sales and GRSA staff with event planners.
- Work closely with Sports, Sales and Services to ensure that the integration, upgrades and communication between third-party online destination sales and marketing channels like website RFP submission and Cvent are seamless via the CRM and maintain a cohesive presence that represents our destination well.
- Explore, alongside the Marketing and Communications Department, the purchasing of new traveler conversion, profiling and segmentation data through a research platform such as Arrivalist (and ultimately implement such a platform technologically), while also increasing contracted resources to help area hospitality partners/stakeholders make full use of the newly available data. ⑤
- Continue to support and evolve our centralized business intelligence platform, providing each Bureau department access to track key metrics and allowing for multiple charts and graphs of CRM metrics, key performance indicators and strategic partner metrics. Align with Bureau departments to add dashboards for each municipality, the convention center and pace performance reporting to help with forecasting, feasibility, developer and municipal inquiries. Work closely with platform provider to align with Destination Strategic Plan (DSP) metric needs, providing another layer of what-if scenarios as staff examine data to understand trends and derive insights. Collaborate with Sales/Sports in developing a real-time dashboard for the Raleigh convention campus that will be used as a tool to provide instant access to gap analysis, compression and pace, to guide strategic business decisions utilizing the data contained in the CRM. ①
- Continue to maintain cybersecurity needs by accessing current enterprise system security to identify areas that are lacking controls and empowering staff with web-based continuous learning to be more aware of potential cyber threats.
- Work closely with the PR Department to ensure that the integration and communication between Cision, Google Analytics, CRM and destination dashboards are seamless and maintain data integrity, better representing our destination's PR reach.
- Deploy and work with all departments on a Bureau-wide marketing communications automation platform to integrate with current platforms, allowing for the ability to track very specific behaviors and reach consumers and clients with approved, personalized messaging and electronic collateral from all integrated marketing communication channels; help departments redefine their prospecting processes by tracking key data points for meeting profiles, which would allow the teams to target specific new business based on rotation, industry and other demand drivers. ⑤
- Manage aspects related to visitRaleigh.com, raleighsports.org and themostnc.com including updates and improvements to the Content Management System (CMS) and booking engine as well as Yelp, OpenTable, Google Maps, external data feeds and CVNC.org events API integrations. Continue support and build out content and functionality via integrated CMS for visitRaleigh.com, raleighsports.org and themostnc.com.
- Continue to manage opportunities to serve partners' advertising on the official website and other sections like GRSA and Meetings & Conventions sections.
- Manage and evolve the CRM system for destination marketing that provides the tools to promote organization and productivity and to power sales, services and other processes Bureau-wide. Also support all third-party integrations from a new marketing communications automation platform, Authorize.net, CVNC.org, Destinations International and Arena.
- Deploy and beta-test a new CRM DSP Event Impact Calculator (EIC) tool, streamlining the data collection process from Bureau staff and partners. This will allow a partner to submit raw/input data for EIC evaluation and for staff to manage the economic impact analysis and output process. ①

- Continue to support the CRM's integrated partner login with staff, with local hotels/meeting facilities and with local hospitality partners whose information is housed in the CRM. Evaluate customizations to the Partner Information eXchange Login (PIXL) system based on feedback.
- Support an integrated CRM-enabled mobile app solution with PIXL access for key arriving groups (like International Bluegrass Music Association), in conjunction with the Administration and Services Departments, populating then deploying the apps on mobile storefronts prior to annual group arrival.
- Manage and support MeetingMax housing platform with local hotels and meeting planners. Evaluate customizations to housing system based on feedback; also deploy system and integration updates to pull hotel data from the CRM.
- Maintain and support user-generated content feeds via Instagram, Twitter, Facebook for tradeshow, social walls, website and widgets for the official Visitor Information Center and convention groups.
- Deploy, support and train staff on social media applications, social posting strategies and management tools. Monitor Google Analytics and manage Search Engine Marketing (SEM)/Pay-Per-Click (PPC)/YouTube to evaluate, troubleshoot and improve visibility in search engine results.
- Manage the digital asset management system allowing for visual content to be accessed not only internally by employees but also externally by media, partners, agencies, clients and even the public. Deploy and train on new upgrades, reporting and functionality changes to this system.
- Provide third-party support and hosting to regional initiatives: Wake County Hospitality Job Fair and Arts in the Triangle, in which the Bureau has taken leadership roles. Maintain and support themostnc.com in support of the area's visitor-friendly live music scene.
- Continue to support devices that will enable staff to interact more effectively with sports event organizers, meeting planners and partners.
- Continue to use the CRM/CMS/website as a tool to facilitate critical data during a crisis to communicate with partners and travelers.
- Continue to support security surveillance and existing technology tools for improved delivery of services at the Raleigh, N.C., Visitor Information Center.

## Administration Department

The primary goal of the Administration Department is to provide managerial guidance to all GRCVB departments related to staffing, management, operational efficiencies, organizational strategic planning, education and community-based initiatives that position the GRCVB to be the leader in hospitality and tourism-based economic development for Wake County, N.C.

### ADMINISTRATION OBJECTIVES

- Continue to enhance the proactive reporting, measurements and formats of monthly and yearly tourism data through the acquisition of third-party research and economic metrics to better communicate tourism economic impacts to media, industry and policymakers.
- Evolve the data dashboards reporting and benchmarking system for group sales, group booking pace and interactive analytics for visitRaleigh.com/owned media; launch the Raleigh Convention Center booking pace report. These measurements will be used for both internal and external analysis.
- Continue to manage the Wake County and City of Raleigh Business Development Fund for increasing citywide convention and tradeshow business within the Raleigh Convention Center.
- Invest in research and conversion platforms that will help measure leisure visitation programs. Launch Arrivalist program that will give us the ability to track leisure visitation resulting from our marketing programs.
- Support the City of Raleigh's efforts to enhance and expand the Raleigh Convention Center along with attracting an adjacent full-service convention hotel. ❶
- Continue to have input on the Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan to ensure that elements are considered for development that will be iconic and help draw overnight leisure visitation. ❸, ❹, ❺
- Request the establishment of a Signature Event Fund that would be used to help attract signature events and blockbuster exhibitions that will create overnight visitation with measured trackable ROI as outlined in the Destination Strategic Plan (DSP). ❸
- Serve as a resource to all Wake County municipalities to help access economic impacts of events and festivals using a new festival matrix/festival impact calculator and creating an economic research analyst position within GRCVB. ❸
- Work with Wake County municipalities, economic developers and local planning organizations to begin thinking about tourism development needs and how to incorporate those needs in future developments and planning conversations. ❻
- Continue to provide data, input and support regarding future air service and other local transportation channels. ❼
- Work with area academic and work force development partners to help train the existing hospitality workforce and continue to host an annual job fair to assist partners in finding employees. ❸
- Increase engagement and briefings with local municipalities, making the case for why tourism matters and is a necessity of a Quality of Place strategy. Support the ongoing implementation of individual tourism plans to ensure continuity and trackable success. ❸

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**Key to Destination 2028 symbols:** ❶ Meetings & Conventions, ❷ Sports, ❸ Events, ❹ Key Attractors, ❺ Individual Leisure, ❻ Destination Development, ❼ Regional Demand Drivers, ❸ Quality of Place

## ADMINISTRATION STRATEGIES

- Host quarterly partner meetings with hotels, attractions, restaurants and other interested partners specific to GRCVB designated projects, programs and initiatives noted in the fiscal year 2019–2020 Business Plan.
- Maintain engagement with our technology partner to aggregate the data from our CRM system and provide a reporting and benchmarking dashboard for group sales transactions, with countywide hotels and the Raleigh Convention Center via a group booking page and interactive analytics from [visitRaleigh.com/owned](http://visitRaleigh.com/owned) media. This data will be shared with our hotel and facility partners for forecasting, budgeting, feasibility studies and ROI measurement.
- Continue work with community and regional organizations to promote programs, information, planner resources and events that gain our partners recognition for their tourism economic development efforts and programs. This information will be aggregated and listed in a dynamic microsite on [visitRaleigh.com](http://visitRaleigh.com) or through linking to regional sites. Topics and partners will include the Raleigh area arts via the Cultural Presenters Forum, [themostnc.com](http://themostnc.com) via the Live Music Advisory Committee and the Raleigh Beer Trail via the Wake County Beer Summit.
- Serve in a proactive advise-and-consent role with local economic development allies such as City of Raleigh Economic Development (ED), Wake County Economic Development (WCED), Raleigh and Wake County parks and recreation departments and the RDU Airport Authority specific to the following projects:
  - RDU Airport Authority and Regional Transportation Alliance Air Service Advancement Program
  - City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Dix Master Plan
  - Town/municipal sports and leisure tourism master plans
  - Comprehensive economic development activations, to include aligned messaging and branding with City of Raleigh and Wake County at events like SXSW and regular media outreach
  - Destination 2028 Blue Ribbon Task Force launched in FY 2019, which will continue the advocacy and implementation of the 10-year DSP.
- Work in conjunction with accounting, HR, office administration and IT teams to find the best software solutions for technology environments that deliver the highest ROI and efficiencies.
- Continue working with our elected city and county officials, along with associated parties, to ensure that the Interlocal Fund review, measurement process and forthcoming Hospitality Tax Small Projects Competitive Process are founded on visitation infrastructure that will deliver the best ROI and address facilities that we don't currently have in our countywide inventory. The DSP final report gives direction to various community stakeholders on the future need for visitation facilities over the next 10 years.
- Involve GRCVB staff with Regional Transportation Alliance, Visit North Carolina, the N.C. Travel & Tourism Coalition, N.C. Travel Industry Association, Destinations International, N.C. Restaurant & Lodging Association and the American Society of Association Executives, to ensure that we have a voice on local, state and national issues impacting Wake County tourism.
- With the completion of the DSP and GRCVB in full implementation mode, a realignment of the GRCVB organizational chart will be implemented to include two full-time and two contractor positions to achieve year-one implementation goals. Realizing this is a 10-year master plan, we have prioritized, divided the overall plan into a series of fiscal-year segments and will continue to address in each future GRCVB Business Plan from FY 2020–FY 2028.
- Undertake tactics in training, town-hall meetings, task force and committee development, online resources and social media. A review of our partners' educational, advocacy and desired resources will be established through a partner survey, then a triannual series of Tourism Summits (half-day conferences held three times a year) will be developed to deliver value, education and networking opportunities.
- Work in conjunction with the N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association, Capital Area Workforce Development and Raleigh Convention Center on a 3rd Annual Wake County Hospitality Job Fair.

## **GRCVB Community Engagement Strategy**

Beyond annual Bureau-wide goals, objectives and strategies to increase visitor and convention business for Raleigh/Wake County directly through bookings and arrivals, GRCVB also joins the interests of travel suppliers, city/town/county governments, trade and civic associations and other local stakeholders in achieving overall tourism-related economic development.

Differing from Bureau staff's day-to-day relations with the area's 3,900+ hospitality partners (attractions, hotels, restaurants and other service providers), the GRCVB Community Engagement Strategy formalized in 2018–2019 (to be updated annually) comprises specific objectives for engaging target audiences other than traditional industry insiders/partners. These other audiences represent high- and mid-level community leaders, including key local influencers, who can advocate strategic talking points relating to Wake County's pursuit of tourism development. (See Talking Points for the 2019–2020 Fiscal Year.)

By engaging the community this way, the Community Engagement Strategy, as outlined each year by the Administration, Marketing and Communications and Public Relations Departments, can build awareness, relationships, support and resources for the Bureau and for Raleigh/Wake County's continued success as a tourism destination.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- Educate locals (living or working in Wake County) on the mission, value, benefits and relevance of tourism and of the successful tourism-related economic development work of GRCVB.
- Increase the perceived value of the Bureau in the business community and in the municipalities, giving us "seats at more tables" and expanding the network of advocates and collaborators.
- Indirectly persuade our area hospitality partners to be more engaged with us as leaders, as well as create synergy among partners with similar or overlapping missions, bringing them into the overall fold of tourism-related economic development (developing product).

### **TARGET AUDIENCES**

- Target audiences for 2019–2020:
  - Destination 2028 Blue Ribbon Task Force, Passionate Minds Collective and other standing GRCVB boards/committees
  - Former members of The Conference Table advisory board and their related organizations
  - Local elected officials, area chamber/municipal leaders and mid-level chamber/municipal managers
- Other important community audiences include:
  - Area residents
  - Local LGBTQ and other diverse communities of residents/workers
  - Colleges/universities
  - News media
  - Workforce (especially from non-hospitality industries)

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

- Produce and program the Bureau's Annual Meeting with local stakeholders, including presentation of hospitality community awards. Produce the monthly Tourism Economic Development Report and charts, designed especially to articulate the benefits of tourism strategy and tourism economic development. Produce and disseminate the weekly Tourism Talk blog, designed especially for community engagement.
- Maintain a resource kit at [visitRaleigh.com/tourismmatters](http://visitRaleigh.com/tourismmatters) that contains talking points, Tourism Talk blog posts, educational/training materials and white papers.

- Hold initial community conversations with all of GRCVB's standing advisory boards, boards and committees; present to area hospitality partners (through meetings such as Tourism Talk Live) what the new Community Engagement Strategy means and entails.
- Conduct work sessions annually with all Wake County-based town councils, chambers of commerce and business leaders. Share annual tourism report cards, powered by predefined data fields from the GRCVB CRM, and participate in strategic events with all 11 towns/chambers to reinforce engagement, collaboration and the value of tourism-related economic development.
- Organize and execute annual work sessions with Raleigh City Council and Wake County Board of Commissioners and their management staffs to discuss and strategize on tourism development initiatives.
- Pitch and secure local media coverage of GRCVB, including news releases and announcements that highlight the importance of tourism or sports tourism to the local economy. Collaborate with other economic development allies, such as Downtown Raleigh Alliance and Wake County Economic Development, on pitches and hosting of journalists.
- Develop a multilevel training program (set of in-person presentations for a speakers bureau), beginning with the basics of tourism in Wake County and its relationship to overall economic development goals and progressing to more in-depth information about visitor-generated tax revenues and Interlocal Fund priorities.
- Explore commissioning a limited research project with 2019–2020 target audiences to determine their current perceptions of the important role/impacts of tourism in Raleigh/Wake County as well their perceptions of GRCVB and willingness to engage as advocates for GRCVB's mission.
- Based on research results, further tailor informational presentations and collateral to address any misconceptions or gaps in perception as the formal strategy moves forward into future fiscal years.

## Summary of GRCVB Measurable Performance Objectives

MEASURE	2018 GOAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 GOAL	VARIANCE OVER ACTUAL
1. Wake County Occupancy	69.4%	70.3%	71%	1%
2. Wake County ADR	\$105.50	\$106.55	\$109.74	3%
3. Wake County Occupancy Tax	\$26,150,162	\$27,899,926	\$29,015,923	4%
4. Wake County PFB Tax	\$29,742,368	\$30,004,566	\$31,504,794	5%

MEASURE	18-19 GOAL	18-19 FORECAST	19-20 GOAL	VARIANCE OVER GOAL
5. Group Definite Bookings	283	337	294	3.9%
6. Group Definite Room-Nights	235,452	266,518	244,870	4%
7. Definite Economic Impact	\$152 million	\$165 million	\$157.5 million	3.6%
8. Group Leads	675	709	702	4%
9. Group Tentative Room-Nights	512,917	638,000	533,433	4%
10. Tentative Economic Impact	\$370.3 million	\$375 million	\$385.5 million	4.1%
11. Website Sessions	2,488,800	2,899,260	3,189,186	28%
12. Net Reach/Impressions from Earned Media	350.7 million	600 million	618 million	76%
13. Significant Placements	—	57	62	—
14. Speakers Bureau Presentations	36	45	42	17%
15. Groups Serviced	571	571	582	1.9%
16. Service Survey Response Rate	39%	39%	42%	7.7%
17. Average Survey Score (out of 5)	4.75	4.75	4.75	—
18. Visitors at VIC	11,220	11,500	11,444	2%
19. Visitor Requests Fulfilled*	8,484	8,000*	8,654	2%
20. Visitors Guide Delivery Service Guides/Maps Delivered	49,875	46,760	49,875	—
21. Visitors Guide Delivery Service Partners Serviced	495	456	495	—

\* A significant, paid source of visitor requests was paused July–Oct. 2018 while transitioning to a new strategy for leisure advertising.

## **Industry Leadership Positions Held by GRCVB Staff**

### **DEREK ALLMAN, CHIA**

- Co-Chair, Marketing Committee, Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina

### **JULIE BRAKENBURY, CGSP®**

- Treasurer, Board of Directors, Event Service Professionals Association
- Grants Panel, City of Raleigh Arts Commission
- Member, City of Raleigh Special Events Task Force
- Advisory Board, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, North Carolina State University

### **TORI COLLINS**

- Membership Committee, National Association of Sports Commissions
- Tradeshow Committee, North Carolina Sports Association
- Board of Directors, WISE Greater Raleigh
- Sponsorship Committee, WISE Greater Raleigh

### **SCOTT DUPREE**

- Nominating Committee, North Carolina Sports Association
- Board of Directors, North Carolina Baseball Museum

### **DENNIS EDWARDS**

- Treasurer, North Carolina Travel & Tourism Coalition
- Member, Raleigh-Durham Skål Chapter
- Vice Chair, RDU Air Service Committee, Regional Transportation Alliance
- Board of Directors, RTA
- Board of Directors, Wake County Economic Development
- Board of Directors, City Club of Raleigh
- Board of Directors, Downtown Raleigh Alliance
- Advisory Board, School of Hospitality Leadership, East Carolina University
- Liaison, The Centennial Authority

### **JONATHAN FREEZE, CDME, CHIA**

- Faculty, Certified Destination Management Executive Program, Destinations International
- Marketing Advisory Committee, Wake County Economic Development

### **LOREN GOLD**

- Board of Directors, Destinations International
- Sales & Marketing Committee, DI
- Chair, Triangle Regional Film Commission
- Co-Chair, 2019 IBMA World of Bluegrass Local Organizing Committee
- Advisory Board, Hospitality START, Wake Technical Community College
- Advisory Board, Simpleview, Inc. (Technology Provider to GRCVB)
- Liaison, Raleigh Convention Center Commission
- Advisory Board, Hospitality Academy, Broughton High School

### **MALINDA HARRELL, CMP, CASE**

- Advocacy Committee, Meeting Professionals International–Carolinas Chapter
- Scholarship and Awards Committee, Association Executives of North Carolina

### **STEPHEN JACKSON, CMP**

- Education Committee, New England Chapter, Meeting Professionals International
- Membership Committee, Philadelphia Chapter, Professional Convention Management Association
- Education Committee, New York Chapter, PCMA



**TAMMY JEFFRIES, CGSP®**

- Annual Social Committee, Event Service Professionals Association
- Education Committee, Meeting Professionals International–Carolinas Chapter

**NICOLE KESHLER**

- Treasurer, N.C. Society of Government Meeting Professionals
- Board of Directors, Meeting Professionals International–Carolinas Chapter

**ASHLEE KIRK**

- Tradeshow Committee, North Carolina Sports Association
- Marketing Committee, NCSA

**SCOTT PEACOCK**

- Past Chair, Executive Committee, Public Relations Society of America’s Travel and Tourism Section
- North American International Media Marketplace Advisory Board, TravMedia
- Foreign Direct Investment Committee, Wake County Economic Development
- Marketing Advisory Committee, WCED

**JASON PHILBECK, CSEE**

- Immediate Past Chair, Executive Committee, North Carolina Sports Association
- Local Organizing Committee, NCAA Men’s College Cup

**JAMIE RICE, CMP**

- Membership Committee, Association Management Companies Institute
- Professional Development Committee, Capital Chapter, Professional Convention Management Association
- Director, Ladies Hospitality Golf League, Time Fore Nine
- Fundraising Committee, The Meetings Industry Fund

**THERESA TYLER, CGSP®**

- Local Organizing Committee, NCAA Men’s College Cup

**VIMAL VYAS**

- MINT Super User Group, Destinations International
- CMS User Group, Simpleview, Inc.

**LORETTA YINGLING, CMP**

- Membership Committee, Chicago Area Chapter, Professional Convention Management Association
- Awards Committee, Greater Midwest Chapter, PCMA