

GREATER RALEIGH CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Report on

TOURISM REBUILD AND RECOVERY

August–December 2020



REPORT ON TOURISM REBUILD AND RECOVERY 2020

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SITUATION

THAT LED TO A
TOURISM REBUILD
AND RECOVERY PLAN

Resulting from the international COVID-19 pandemic,

coronavirus spread reached North Carolina and Raleigh in March 2020.

By month's end, demand for area restaurants had dropped significantly and demand for hotels had dropped precipitously; the tax revenues from both of these hospitality industries (i.e., the Interlocal Fund) comprise the Greater Raleigh CVB's (GRCVB's) funding source.

Nationwide the hotel industry's analytics plunged to their lowest points this century, indicating the current crisis extends beyond the scale of prior tourism industry crises after 9/11 and during the Great Recession. Hotels nationwide and in Raleigh/Wake County reduced their staffing, in some cases reduced room supply or began to close their doors to guests altogether, while area restaurants faced temporary closures under governmental or public health directives, also leading to staffing reductions (at least one still has not reopened). Countywide visitor tracking analytics available to GRCVB quickly showed an almost total loss of area visitation as stay-at-home orders went into effect.



SITUATION

THAT LED TO A
TOURISM REBUILD
AND RECOVERY PLAN

Throughout Wake County, **28,000+ hospitality jobs** previously supported entirely by visitation and related visitor spending were put into permanent jeopardy by even the initial impacts from COVID-19 spread, and 2020 unemployment figures in the area have been staggering—at great costs to the livelihoods of area workers and their families who depend on the local tourism economy and its daily arrivals. Of course the coronavirus disease itself has taken a great human toll on residents of Wake County, the nation and world.

In the first six months of the 2020 calendar year, area hotel occupancy tax collections had dropped 48.5% and area prepared food and beverage tax collections had dropped 25.7%. While area hotel supply and demand figures were starting to rebound from their historic lows by late summer, historical, national insights from past economic recessions or crises suggest that cuts made to Average Daily Rates (ADR) in the COVID panic will require years of time to “undo,” as the traveling public can only be coerced gradually to pay higher and higher room rates. This means that the impacts of COVID-19 will overshadow the local and national hotel industry for years to come, with overall revenue growth and thus hotel tax revenue growth also rebuilding gradually; one estimate for the return to pre-COVID levels of hotel revenue was late 2023. Restaurant industry forecasts are less clear.



SITUATION

THAT LED TO A
TOURISM REBUILD
AND RECOVERY PLAN

To an extent, additional tourism marketing for Raleigh/Wake County (as spearheaded by GRCVB) cannot undo the impacts already accrued from COVID-19. Until the very real public health-and medical-related factors related to the virus's spread are resolved—hopefully to include an effective vaccine taken by many, there is no amount of sheer marketing or promotional power that can effect a return to normal. However, as area hospitality businesses/organizations reopened or resumed near-normal operation and many tourism offerings rebuilt and resumed in fall 2020, **GRCVB's initial recovery plan could at least publicize the resumption of tourism activities and the steps being taken across the tourism sector to again ensure a safe experience for area visitors.**

In step with Wake County Government, GRCVB outlined a recovery plan with sales and marketing/communications strategies that GRCVB would initially execute on behalf of Raleigh and Wake County to mitigate the negative tourism impacts from the first half of 2020 and to facilitate the return of area visitors at increased levels—telling the story of health/safety guidelines and initiatives and new safe practices that must be mutually followed by guests and hosts.

This report summarizes the results of that tourism rebuild and recovery plan as actioned from Aug.–Dec. 2020.



PLAN FUNDING

On Aug. 11, 2020, GRCVB executed a funding agreement with Wake County Government to resume tourism promotion with its Coronavirus Relief Funds.

GRCVB deployed planned programs and services to ultimately share information with potential visitors and event planners regarding the local response to the pandemic and to publicize the resumption of visitor activities and steps taken to ensure a safe visitor experience in direct response to coronavirus throughout Wake County.



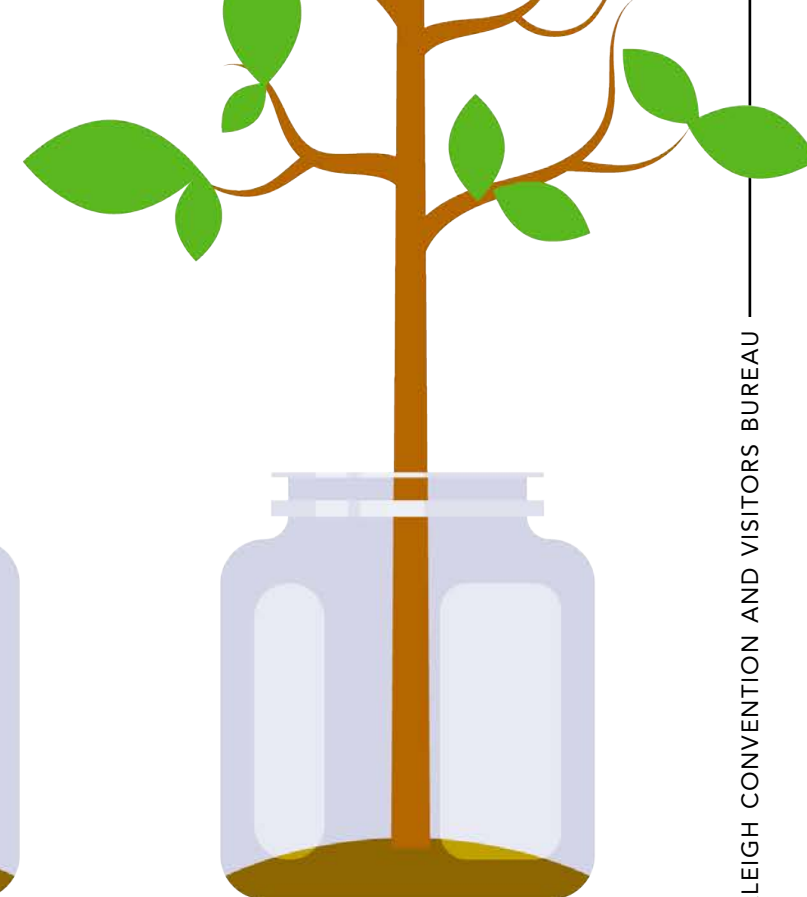
Building of enhancements to the **official Visitor Information Center** and visitor kiosks in the Raleigh Convention Center to ensure the health and safety of visitors and staff (\$75,000).



Production, shooting and execution of **virtual tours** of the major convention hotels in Wake County, Raleigh Convention Center, Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts, Red Hat Amphitheater, PNC Arena and major sports complexes throughout Wake County (\$150,000).



Attendance or participation in **tradeshows and conferences**, for meeting planners, sports and event organizers and travel writers (\$150,000).



Advertising in social media, electronic media, pay-per-click and print media platforms with target markets focused towards leisure, meetings/conventions and sporting events. Primary purpose and messaging is to build consumer confidence to travel to and meet in Wake County once again while highlighting the Count On Me NC health and safety training and protocols (\$875,000).

SCOPE

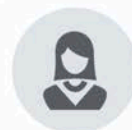
OF PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES WAS ORGANIZED AROUND FOUR CATEGORIES

COUNT ON ME NC

Prior to deployment of GRCVB's plan for Wake County, the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association joined forces with industry leaders including those at Visit North Carolina, academic partners and state officials on an innovative public health initiative for safely reopening restaurants and other businesses while addressing consumers' need for trustworthy standards.

Called **Count On Me NC**, the program provides specific guidance to restaurants, hotels and other businesses on best practices and an evidence-based training program to protect guests for the phased reopenings after Gov. Cooper's COVID-19 stay-at-home order.

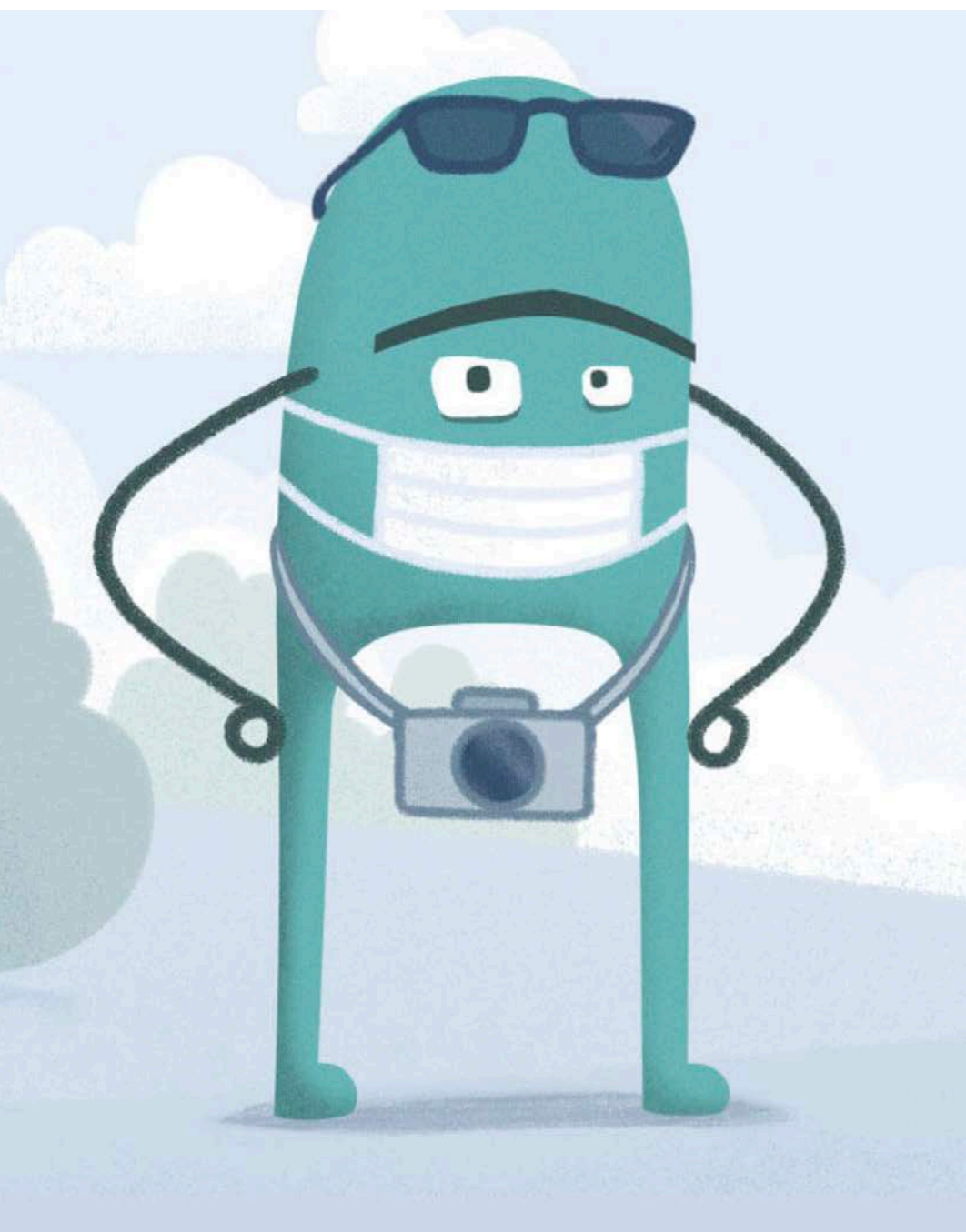
As restaurants, hotels and other businesses have reopened under COVID-19's cloud, their voluntary certification signals commitment to high standards.



Restaurant: Owners & Operators

Learn how to help ensure the well-being of everyone who enters your restaurant.

GET STARTED



countonmenc.org



Certified businesses as well as economic development alliances, local chambers of commerce and other affiliated entities were encouraged to get the word out about the initiative to further its recognition with consumers and build customer trust in safe practices, destination-wide. **GRCVB has joined in this.**

A statewide advertising and public relations component through the end of 2020 encouraged consumers to join the effort to keep everyone safe with a Guest Pledge. The co-op campaign also directed consumers to look for certificates and Count On Me NC logos for assurance that a business or tourism entity has completed the voluntary, no-cost training.

GRCVB participated cooperatively in the Count On Me NC initiative, integrating its statewide messaging into area tourism promotion. As of Dec. 2020, 61 hotels and 210 restaurants in Wake County had completed certification.



**WISH YOU
WERE HERE**

In Summer 2020, GRCVB staff developed a **creative solution (slogan and graphical device)** around which to organize all recovery plan efforts and for use across all four of the Bureau's customary vertical markets: leisure, residents and visiting-friends-and-relatives, meetings and conventions and sports marketing.

The GRCVB Marketing and Communications and Public Relations Departments also networked the proposed theme with area economic development organizations and alliances in hopes that it also could work effectively for: area alliances' uses, area chambers' uses, area municipalities' uses and City of Raleigh and Wake County economic development outreach uses.

The objectives of the “Wish You Were Here” recovery messaging theme are simple:

MESSAGING **TOOL KIT**

Contact
brand@visitRaleigh.com
for access to the tool kit
through June 2021.

1 To communicate to visitors, residents, clients, partners, business developers and any other stakeholders that the businesses, organizations and “people behind the places” of Wake County and Raleigh genuinely miss our interactions with them. We feel the loss of their presence here and the vitality it brings to our area. We’re anxious to be able to return to a more normal way of life.

2 To speak with a unifying voice. Not only does using a unifying theme make our communication more effective (speaking harmoniously and not cancelling each other out), but also it creates a meta-message that Wake County and Raleigh comprise a community of collaboration and cooperation.

Messaging under this theme first launched publicly on Aug. 19, 2020. GRCVB has made the recovery messaging strategy/theme and graphical templates freely available in a tool kit to any Wake County economic development-related organizations interested in synergizing with and benefitting from the destination awareness/demand being created through the CVB’s work.



TOURISM PROMOTION

AND MARKETING MIX FOR REBUILD AND RECOVERY

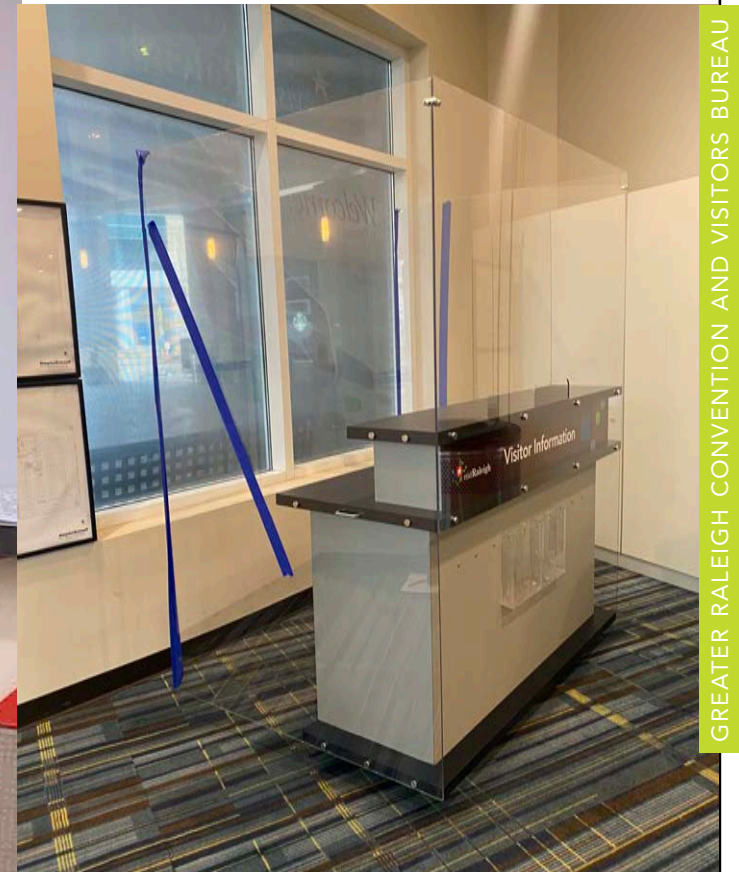
GRCVB's planned campaign was intended to **increase safe visitation** to the destination and area hotel and restaurant revenues as well as begin again to achieve other objectives of the 2020–2021 Business Plan as appropriate. Its marketing tactics were multichannel and multiphase:

- Internet marketing tactics;
- Advertising tactics;
- Research tactics;
- Point of sale and sales tools;
- Public relations tactics;
- Conversational marketing tactics.

All of these were threaded around the Raleigh, N.C., Destination Brand Strategy tenets (see raleighncbrand.com) as well as the Wish You Were Here creative theme.

Coronavirus Relief Funds from Wake County were invested in support of the Internet and conversational/social media marketing tactics; point of sale, personal selling and public relations tactics; and advertising tactics. Other resources rounded out the campaign strategy.



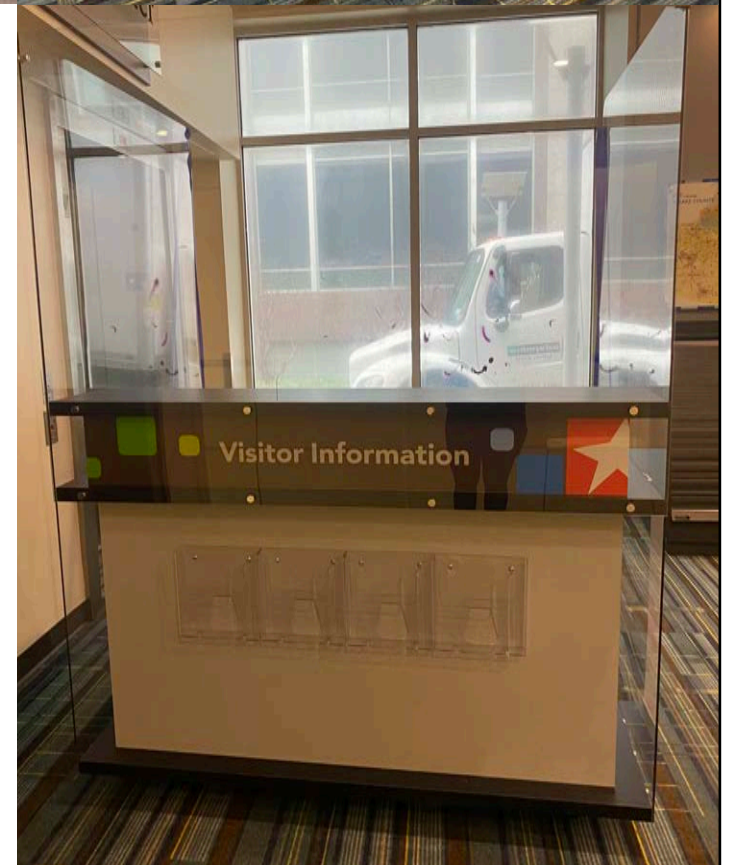


GREATER RALEIGH CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

GRCVB built enhancements to the Raleigh, N.C., Visitor Information Center and the information kiosks kept inside the Raleigh Convention Center, to ensure that they are compliant in new ways **promoting the health and safety of visitors and staff**. This included the installation of polycarbonate shields around the desks and the purchase of a hygienic fogger and air purifier.



VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER





GRCVB's Convention Sales and Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance (GRSA) staffs attended virtual-only tradeshow and conferences for meeting planners and sports event rights-holders, bringing post-COVID awareness and prospective new business back to the area.

The Convention Sales Department exhibited at/ hosted clients at 24 tradeshow and events where sales interactions were made possible by recovery funding. Strategic "return to business" partnerships aligned to some of these events extended customer exposure to campaign messaging by at least another 5,000 impressions.

Across all of the Convention Sales tradeshow/client events, department staff met with 1,116 clients representing prospective meeting or convention business for Raleigh/Wake County.



24
tradeshow and events

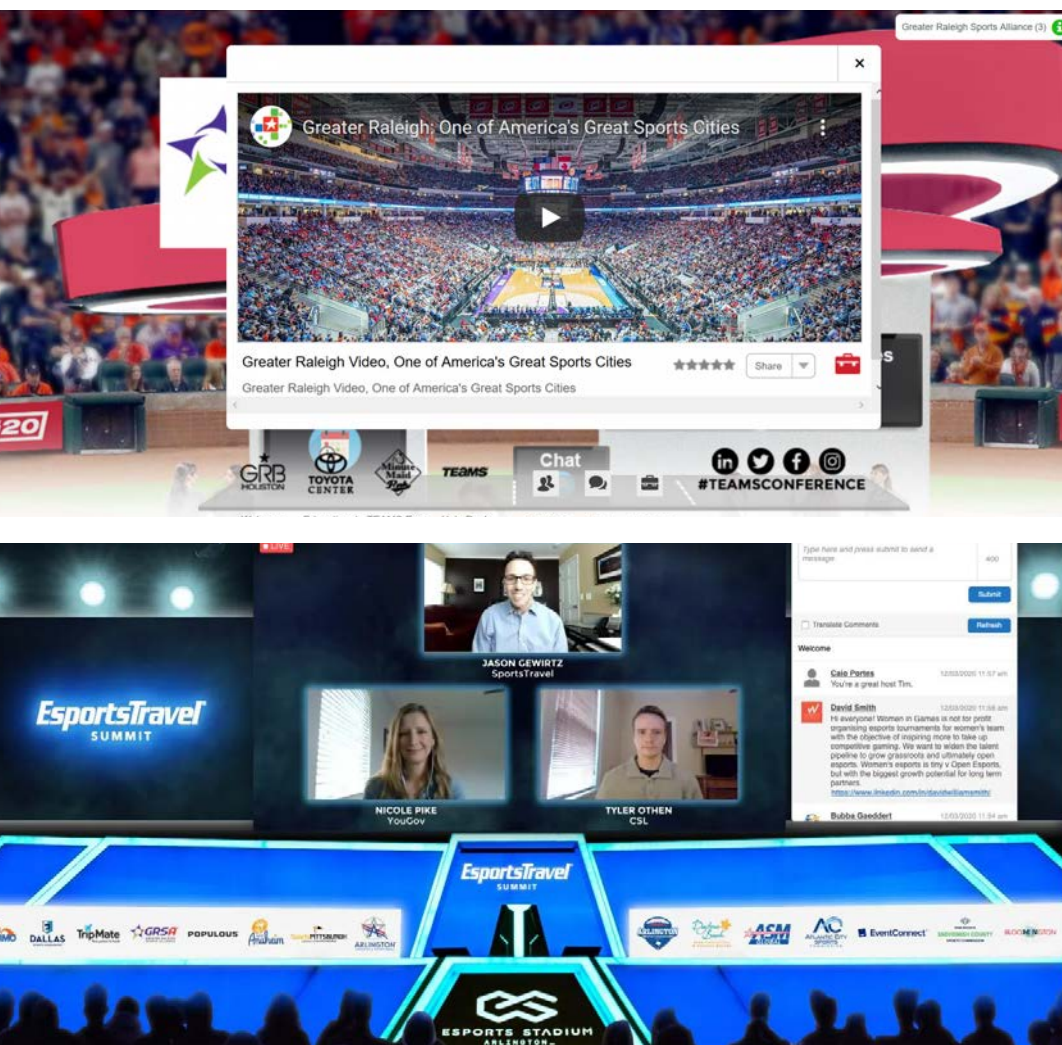
1,116
clients



SALES

TRADESHOWS AND EVENTS

5,000+
impressions



The Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance enacted two strategic partnerships that included staff participation at client events.

At TEAMS Conference & Expo, Oct. 19-22, GRSA staff met with 40 clients representing prospective sports bookings for Wake County, while 1,000 sports event industry customers there were exposed to area messaging.

At the EsportsTravel Summit, Dec. 2-3, staff made 22 appointments with clients representing this burgeoning sports event market for the Raleigh area, and 500 summit attendees saw a new sales video titled "Esports in Greater Raleigh, N.C."

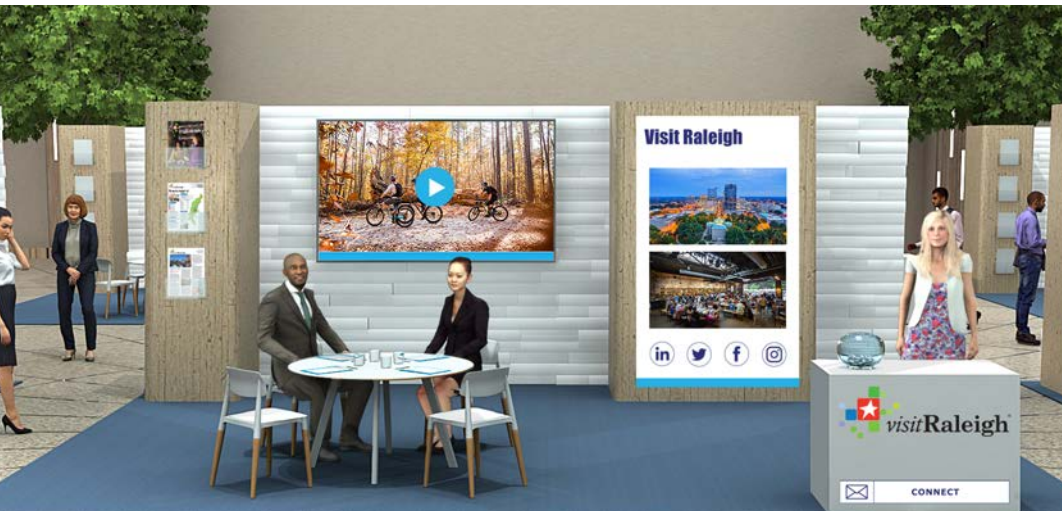
Also GRSA staff conducted a SportsNC Virtual Sales Mission, Dec. 7-11, reaching a dozen more sports event planners.

3
events

74
clients

1,500
impressions





GRCVB's Public Relations and International Tourism Department used personal selling/PR tactics at two paid appearances for the recovery campaign.

The Brand USA Global Marketplace/Travel Week Europe, Oct. 26-30, yielded 24 appointments and 82 customer-exposed impressions; 26 customers followed up with inquiries on Raleigh/Wake County.

The TravMedia International Media Marketplace France Virtual Tradeshow, Nov. 17-18, included 16 appointments and stimulated 19 follow-up media inquiries for the destination.



PUBLIC RELATIONS

AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM APPEARANCES AND EVENTS

2
tradeshows and events

40
appointments

82
more impressions

45
inquiries



VISUAL ASSETS

AERIAL DRONE VIDEO FOOTAGE



GRCVB's Administration and Destination Technology Departments headed up an effort to shoot, produce and digitize virtual tours and video flyovers of Wake County's major meeting hotels, meeting venues and sports facilities.

These videos and virtual tours then were added to visitRaleigh.com and promoted by sales/services staffs, filling event professionals' need for safe site inspections since those visits cannot regularly take place in-person during the pandemic.



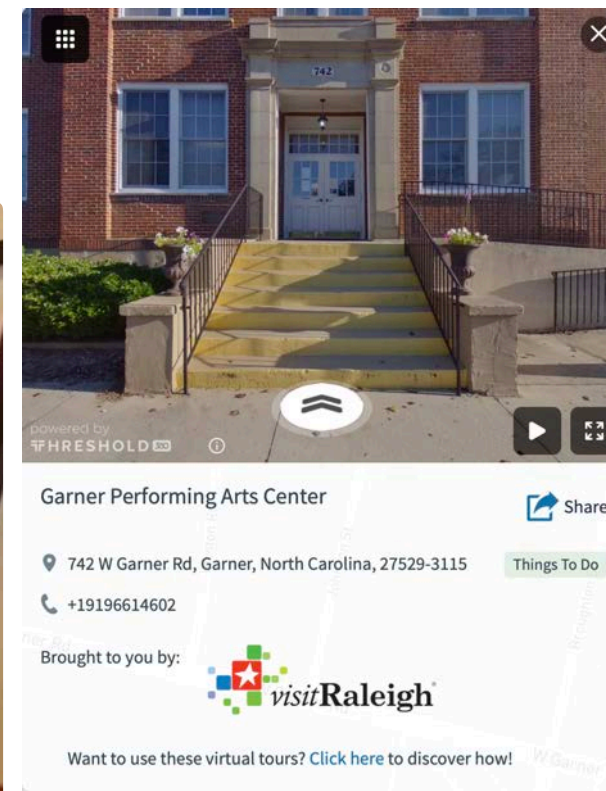
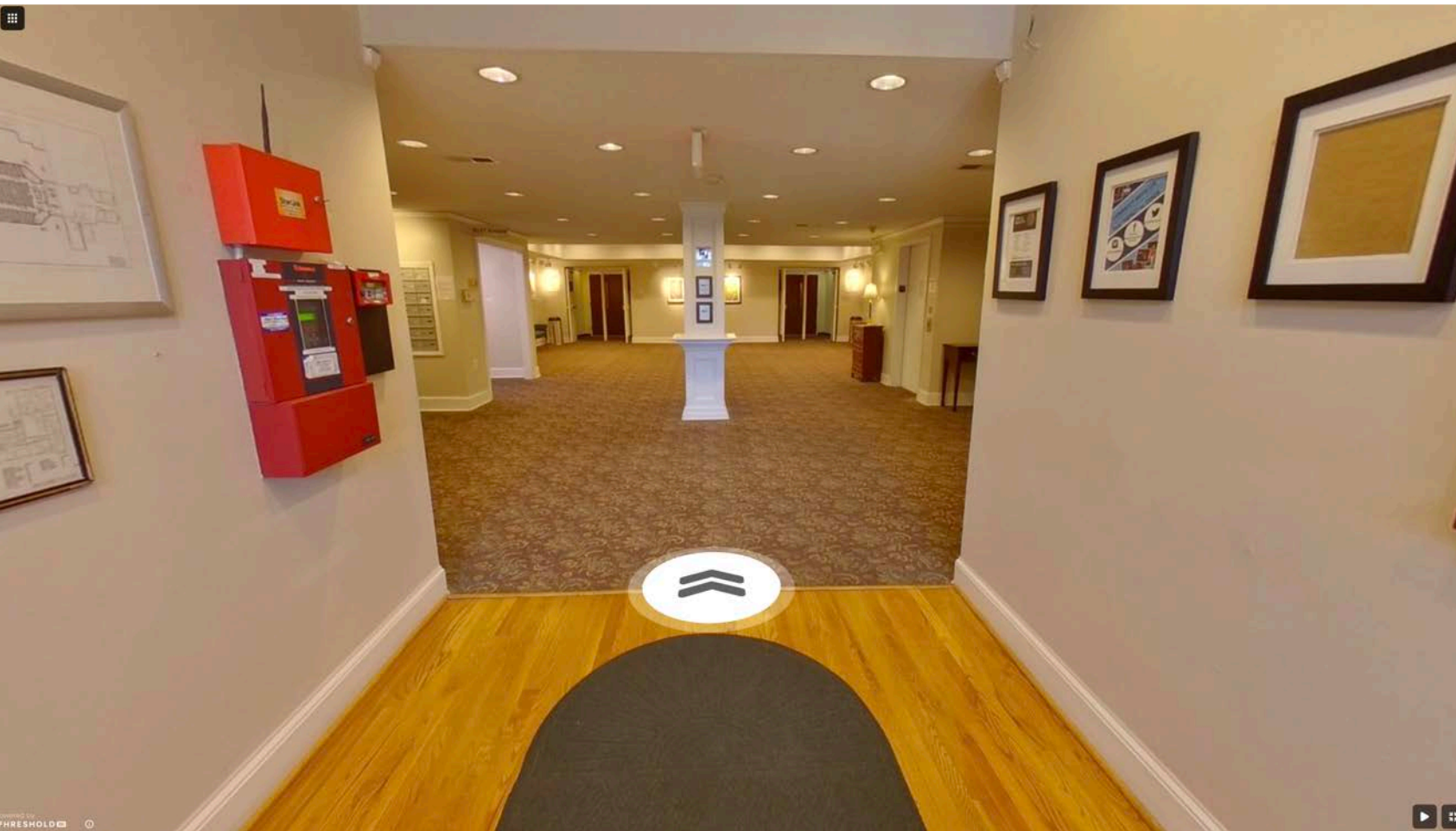
VISUAL ASSETS

AERIAL DRONE VIDEO FOOTAGE

GREATER RALEIGH CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Tourism rebuild and recovery

16



90

attraction/facility
virtual tours

9,811

views on platform

406,145

views on Google

74H 29M

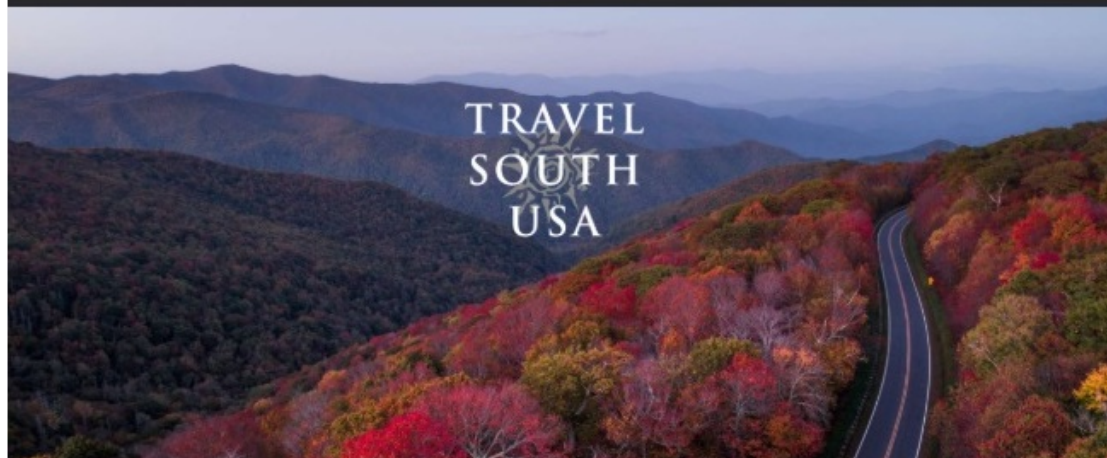
tour play-through
watched



VISUAL ASSETS

360° VIRTUAL TOURS

With destination marketing vendor Threshold 360, GRCVB captured 90 select locations over 15 weeks in a 360° virtual-tour format. As locations were captured, staff/vendor loaded the new tours onto visitRaleigh.com, onto the map.threshold360.com platform and into each attraction/facility's Google business listing page.



CHECK OUT AND START BOOKING FROM OUR AUTHENTIC SOUTH CAMPAIGN SPONSORED BY TRAVEL SOUTH USA

The close proximity of diverse experiences around the South makes it a prime destination for a road trip. Visitors can drive past idyllic pastures or along winding roads in the Great Smoky Mountains. Take in the lush scenery along the 1,932-kilometer Coast Highway, which spans from the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to ocean beaches. Guest can enjoy hospitality in small towns, and delve into music history. The possibilities are endless!

WISH YOU WERE HERE- WITH OUR DISCOUNTED HOTELS

The Raleigh area is home to some of the best-kept secrets when it comes to entertainment, food, shopping and more. For some truly-awesome experiences check out our articles and exclusive hotel deals.

[See Deals](#)



In partnership with Visit North Carolina and Travel South USA, GRCVB's Public Relations and International Tourism Department applied recovery funds to enhance its international press release distribution capabilities monthly and to run a **travel-trade marketing campaign with Hotelbeds**. The Hotelbeds campaign tactics would lead to Wake County hotel bookings from the U.S., Canada and U.K. for a travel window of Aug. 1, 2020, through July 31, 2021.

772,486

views and impressions

97,735

agents reached through email

196

trade webinar attendees

889

room-nights booked



PUBLIC RELATIONS

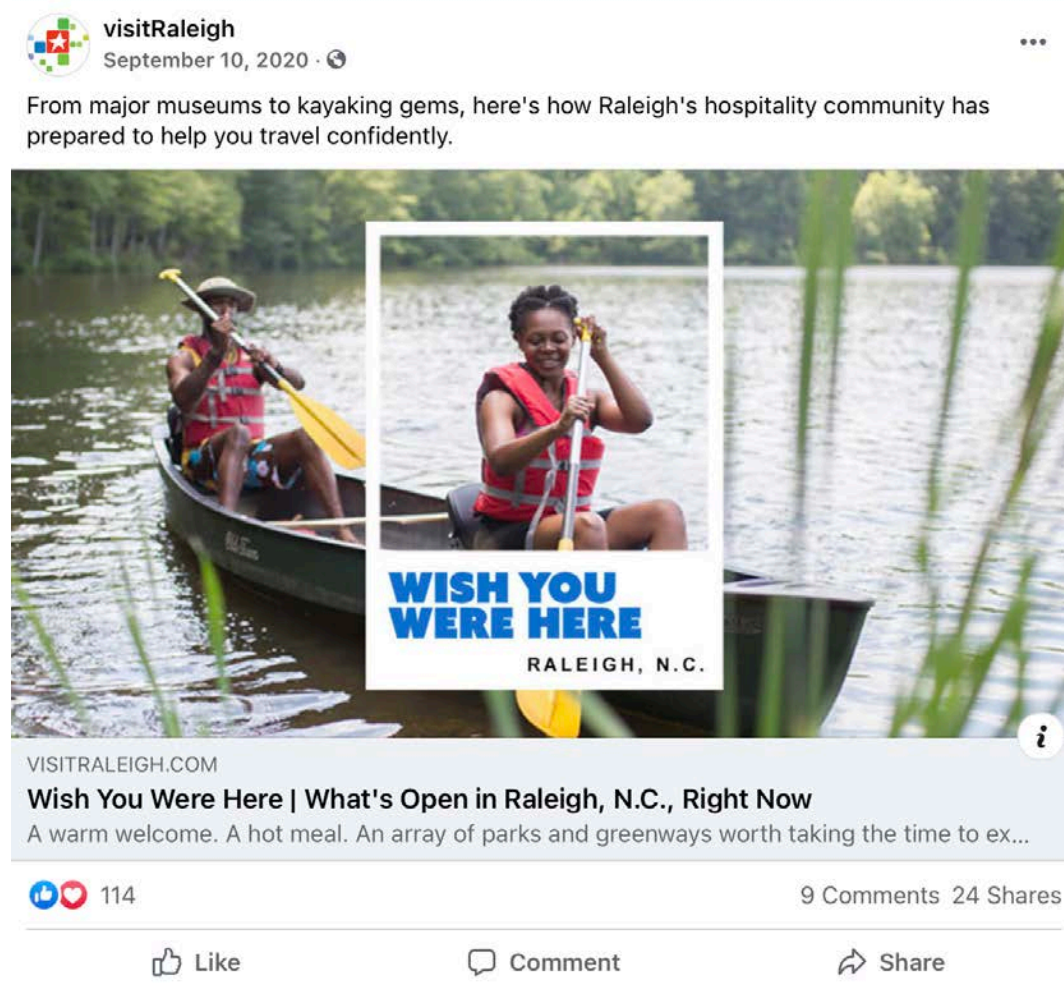
AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM
ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS

To support communicating Wish You Were Here, Count On Me NC and reopening messaging to consumer markets, **GRCVB's Marketing and Communications Department** developed a **one-stop-shop landing webpage** (visitRaleigh.com/wish), commissioned a destination recovery anthem video and published 19 visitRaleigh insider blog articles—all for additional uses linking with advertising tactics.

In addition to promoting the content via traditional destination advertising tactics (see subsequent section), the department executed a robust Facebook and Instagram advertising plan to spark consumer trip-planning for COVID-safe leisure visitation. Social media ad formats included both still-image and video website-click ads, generating traffic for visitRaleigh.com's Wish You Were Here campaign content.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING



8,105,208
Facebook and Instagram
ad impressions

1,422
comments

141,971
ad clicks to
visitRaleigh.com

4,986
shares

13,337
reactions

Shorter-length video ads with a “click to learn more” call to action were pivotal in the social media ad plan for both Facebook and Instagram. The video ad impressions, clicks and engagement results are included with stats on the previous page; social video views are summarized here.

The minute-long destination recovery anthem video also was uploaded to YouTube and received significant views organically there. (Other paid YouTube and TV/video ad viewership is noted on page 23.)

228,081

Views of at least 75% of video on Facebook/Instagram

547,363

Views of at least 3s on Facebook/Instagram

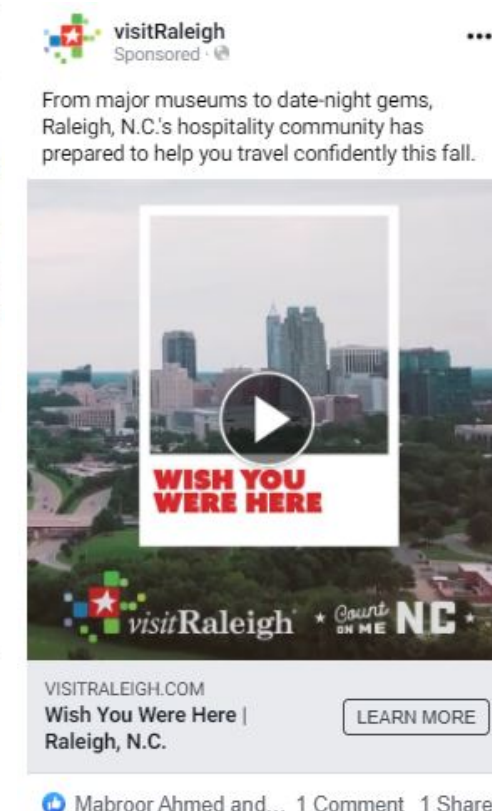
1,476

Organic anthem video views on YouTube



VIDEO CONTENT

AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING



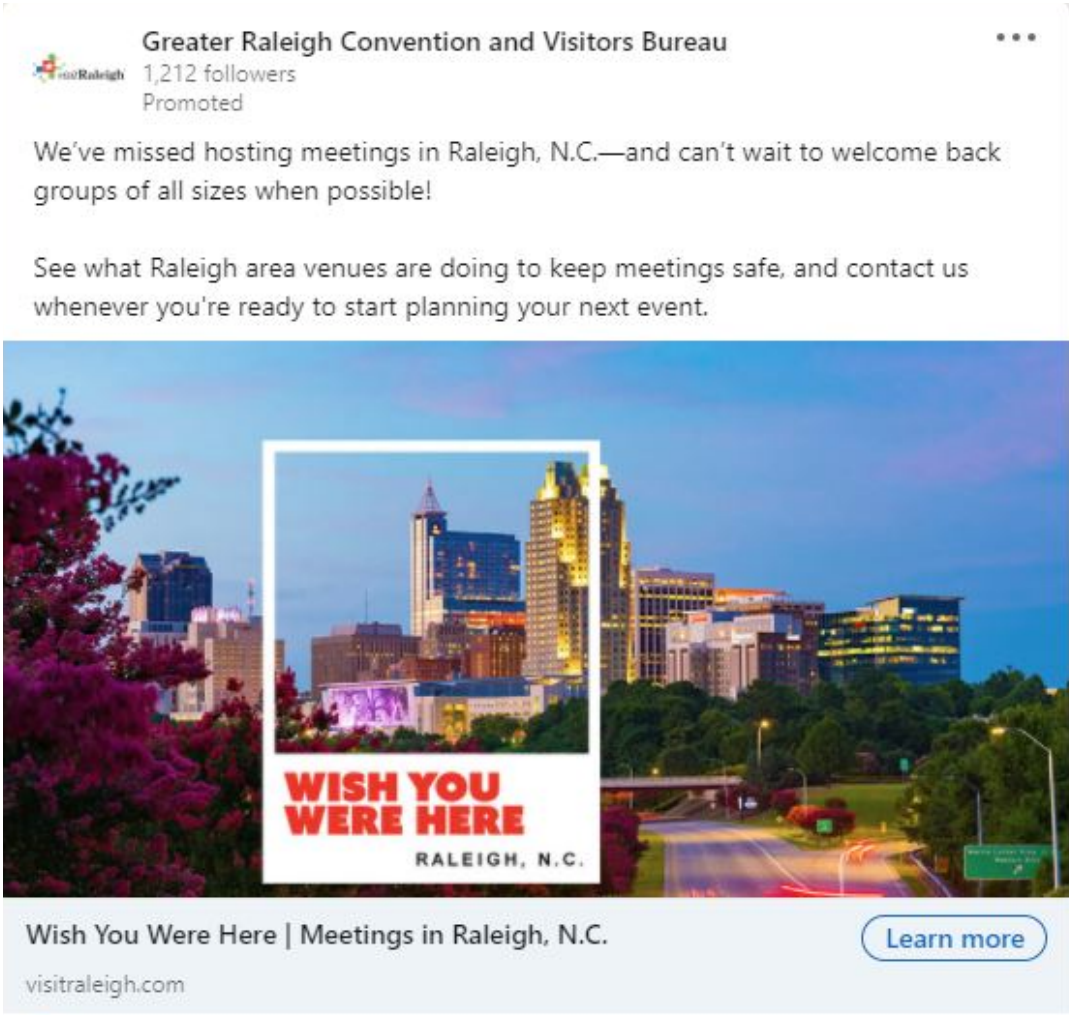
GRCVB's Marketing and Communications Department also developed a one-stop-shop landing webpage (visitRaleigh.com/wishmeetings) to support Wish You Were Here, Count On Me NC and reopening messaging to business-to-business markets. This page provided up-to-date N.C. event guidelines and more info about safe, small meeting practices and was linked with all advertising tactics—social media and traditional.

In addition to promoting the page’s content via traditional destination advertising tactics (see page 24), the department ran ongoing LinkedIn ads to ensure GRCVB’s and Wake County’s prior meeting customers were reached with more frequency. The ads were retargeted to meeting planners also subscribed to the Bureau’s Meetings Watch E-newsletter.

MEETINGS

CONTENT

AND LINKEDIN ADVERTISING



18,712

LinkedIn ad impressions

439

total ad engagements

103

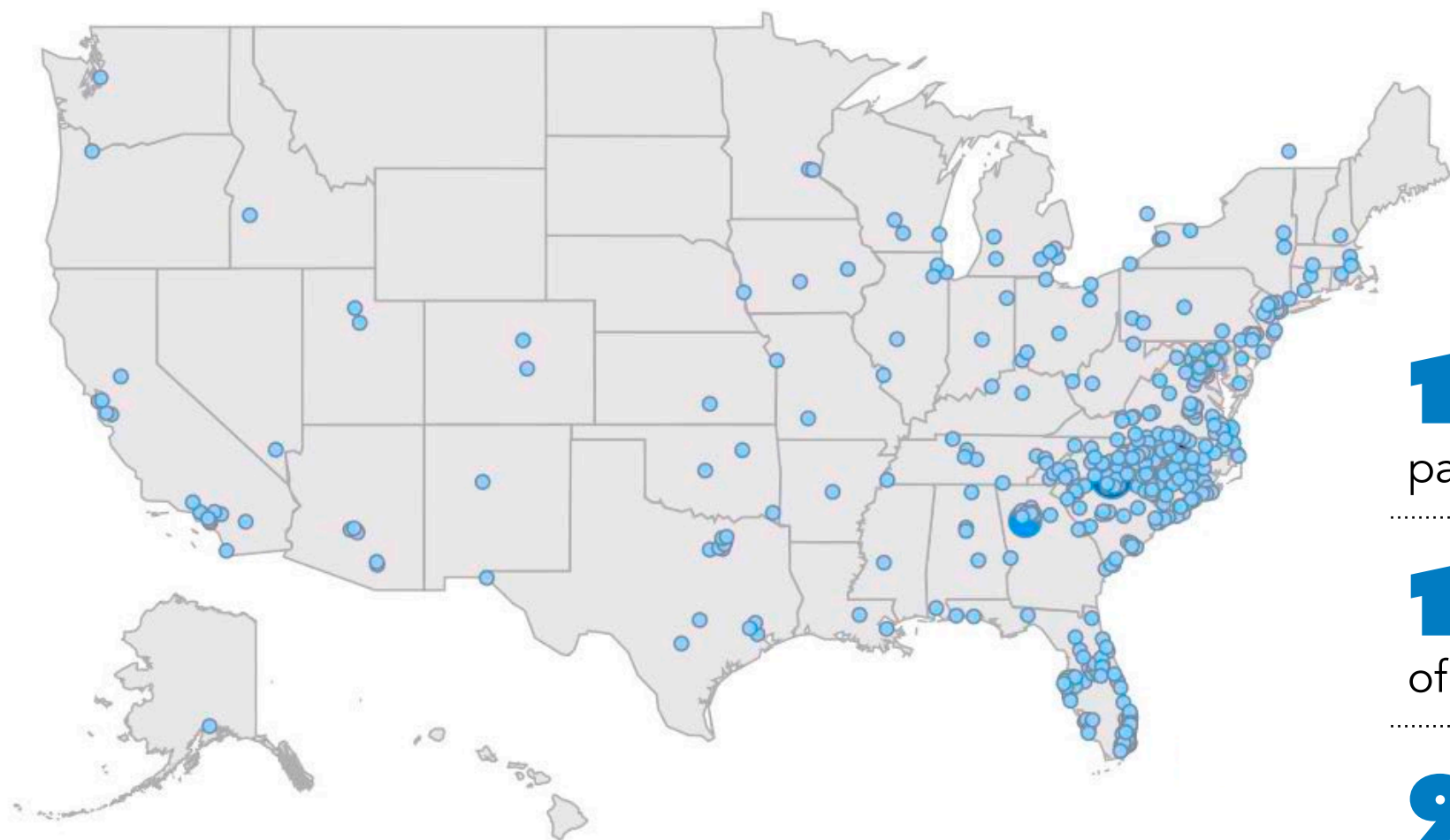
ad clicks to visitRaleigh.com

35

ad clicks to GRCVB's LinkedIn company page

61

reactions



SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

PAY-PER-CLICK

GRCVB's Destination Technology Department contracted with interactive agency Simpleview, Inc., to execute search engine marketing tactics in support of paid campaign strategy, Sept. 1–Dec. 30, 2020. **The department's efforts helped to capture Internet search traffic from potential visitors and interested business professionals** (e.g., meeting planners) for Wake County and for the campaign messaging/content.

143,478

paid search website sessions

15.76%

of visitRaleigh.com sessions

968,136

Google ad impressions

130,543

Google ad clicks

521,774

Microsoft ad impressions

8,726

Microsoft ad clicks



**WISH YOU
WERE HERE**

RALEIGH, N.C.

Man, do we miss hosting meetings—and we can't wait until we're all able to breathe the same air again. In the meantime, Raleigh and its venues are doing everything in our power to protect the health and safety of visitors. And we can't wait to welcome you back for the meetings yet-to-come.

★ *Count
ON ME* NC ★



visitRaleigh.com/wishmeetings



DESTINATION ADVERTISING

For more traditional advertising tactics, GRCVB partnered with its agency of record, Avenir Bold, based in Raleigh.

Across four vertical markets—meetings and conventions, sports marketing, residents and visiting-friends-and-relatives and leisure—the **resulting traditional ad placements represent one of the most extensive paid promotional campaigns that GRCVB ever has undertaken:** they gained significant attention from visitation markets and converted audiences into website users, another goal.

47,806,652

digital ad impressions, all markets/tactics

1,181,989

print ad impressions, all markets/tactics

3,743,061

total video completions

156,721

website visits tracked, all markets



ADVERTISING

MEETINGS

464,258

display ad impressions

1,841

display ad clicks

305,837

email ad impressions

21,171

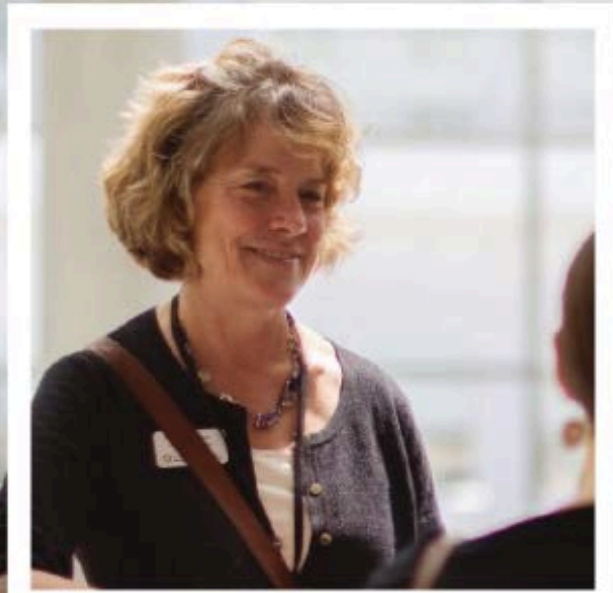
email ad clicks

657,250

print ad impressions

2,566

planner webinar contacts



WISH YOU WERE HERE

RALEIGH, N.C.

Man, do we miss hosting meetings—and we can't wait until we're all able to breathe the same air again. In the meantime, Raleigh and its venues are doing everything in our power to protect the health and safety of visitors. And we can't wait to welcome you back for the meetings yet-to-come.

★ Count ON ME NC ★



visitRaleigh.com/wishmeetings

"WE REALLY MISS HOSTING MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS IN RALEIGH, N.C. WE AREN'T SURE HOW MUCH YOU ENJOY THE WONDERFUL HERE."

SOUTHEAST VALUE SEASON



Raleigh, N.C.
Wish You Were Here

With our meeting venues, we're preparing to welcome back groups and individuals. And, of course, our outdoor spaces have never been as beautiful and accessible as they are now. In short, we've put out the welcome mat for you to discover exactly what makes the Raleigh area truly original.

ACCOMMODATIONS
More than 20 full-service meeting hotels, located in and around Raleigh, eagerly await your group for enough space — from the conveniently located downtown campus hotels

RESTAURANTS
Raleigh, N.C., is a vibrant marketplace of culinary delights. With more than 100 award-winning chefs and restaurants with unique dining concepts and award-worthy dishes, these restaurants are the heart of the city. And, of course, our outdoor spaces have never been as beautiful and accessible as they are now. In short, we've put out the welcome mat for you to discover exactly what makes the Raleigh area truly original.

OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES
Escape the indoors by getting into the

Wish You Were Here for Meetings and Conventions

We're really excited to welcome them back again. We look forward to seeing you in person at our Raleigh Convention Center complex—the first multi-venue complex in North Carolina to achieve a Global Best Practice Award (GBPA)™ accreditation, the gold standard for prepared facilities. It's one of many examples of the steps our meeting spaces are taking to make sure you and your attendees are safe.

As all our venues prepare to welcome large groups back safely, our restaurants, hotels, museums and retail spaces remain open and eager to invite you in with enhanced COVID-19 safety guidelines in place. And, of course, our outdoor spaces have never been as beautiful and accessible as they are now. In short, we've put out the welcome mat for you to discover exactly what makes the Raleigh area truly original.

CONTACT: Malinda Harris, CMP, CACE - Director of Sales
Visit Raleigh - 800.845.8459 - sales@visitRaleigh.com
visitRaleigh.com/wishmeetings



WISH YOU WERE HERE



★ Count ON ME NC ★

LET'S PLAN



VISIT RALEIGH

Raleigh, N.C.

@visitRaleigh

visitRaleigh.com

800-845-8459

Malinda Harris, CMP, CACE

Director of Sales

sales@visitRaleigh.com

visitRaleigh.com/wishmeetings

20 major meeting hotels

20+ award-winning restaurants

20+ miles of greenways

20+ miles of parking

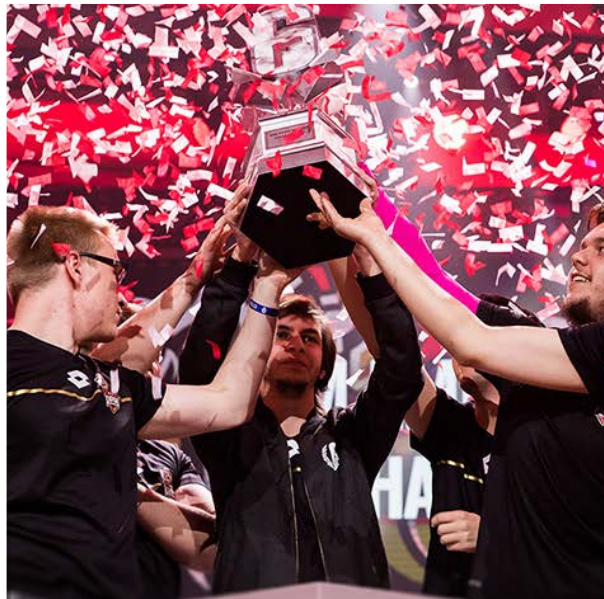
More than 20 outdoor markets

20+ community through RCI's International Airport

Museums and art galleries

76

OCTOBER 2020 • SMARTMEETINGS.COM



**WISH YOU
WERE HERE**

RALEIGH, N.C.

We miss hosting sports—from esports tournaments to soccer championships and everything in between. As Greater Raleigh makes its way back into the game, we're doing everything in our power to protect the health and safety of visiting athletes, coaches and fans. And

SPONSORED CONTENT

PRESENTED BY GREATER RALEIGH SPORTS ALLIANCE
6 Key Traits of an Ideal Esports Event Destination



Location, location, location

An event's location is pivotal to its overall success. What's more, destinations are sometimes deemed ideal based on their status as a travel hub or even their time zone. East Coast cities, for example, are favorable for the Eastern Time Zone – optimal for reaching European Asian livestream markets. As an additional advantage, metro areas in Raleigh, N.C., are easily accessible by various modes of transportation.

Technology expertise and infrastructure

Beyond venues with ample square footage and room configurations, ideal destinations possess the technology expertise to help an event smoothly. Being able to provide assurances for things like bandwidth capacity and redundancy of networks gives a destination a leg up in decision process. Greater Raleigh, with its esports-ready venues routinely scouted by global production professionals, is a prime example of this.

"An online audience will lose interest quickly if the streaming coverage is going in and out."

Loren Gold
Executive Vice President, Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau

**WISH YOU
WERE HERE**



We can't wait to welcome you back to Greater Raleigh, N.C.

We really miss hosting all kinds of sporting events here. We're so looking forward to seeing more players, teams and coaches giving it their all on our fields, courts and tracks again. Hearing how much you enjoy our sporting facilities, hotels and the authentic and memorable experiences discovered beyond the playing field is always music to our ears.

Some of our sports venues are already welcoming back events. Others like the Raleigh Convention Center are preparing to do so when possible. In the meantime, our restaurants, hotels, museums and retail spaces are open and eager to invite you in with enhanced guidelines to help keep visitors safe. And, of course, our outdoor spaces have never been more beautiful and accessible as they are now. See what's open at visitRaleigh.com/wish.

The welcome mat is out for you to rediscover what makes Greater Raleigh a true original. Beach out to us if you have any questions about planning your next sporting event, whether it's this year, the next or beyond.

WHY GREATER RALEIGH?

- World-class venues and facilities
- Centrally located on the East Coast
- Fly confidently through RDU International Airport
- 160 hotels with more than 17,000 rooms
- Proven track record of hosting major events

[SEE WHAT WE'RE DOING TO KEEP SPORTS EVENTS SAFE](#)



Count on ME NC

CONTACT US



**WISH YOU
WERE HERE**

RALEIGH, N.C.

We miss hosting sports—from esports tournaments to soccer championships and everything in between. As Greater Raleigh makes its way back into the game, we're doing everything in our power to protect the health and safety of visiting athletes, coaches and fans. And we can't wait to welcome you back for sporting events yet-to-come.

Count on ME NC



raleighsports.org/wish



ADVERTISING

SPORTS

329,011

display ad impressions

412

display ad clicks

79,941

email ad impressions

2,302

email ad clicks

105,300

print ad impressions

423

podcast engagements



ideaWORKS
IMAGINE • CREATE • INNOVATE

WISH YOU WERE HERE

RALEIGH, N.C.

Art, history and science up close again. Many museums, historic sites and activities in Raleigh are now open for you and your family to enjoy again. As you find your way back to places you love, rest assured that local businesses and attractions are following **Count On Me NC** guidelines and taking the necessary steps to keep you safe.

★ **Count ON ME NC** ★

visitRaleigh

visitRaleigh.com/wishfamily

Escape the indoors and find plenty of wide open spaces to enjoy over and over.

visitRaleigh

★ **Count ON ME NC** ★

LET'S RIDE

WISH YOU WERE HERE

RAL TODAY

Today's newsletter is brought to you by visitRaleigh.com.

[Top Things To Do Now](#)



ADVERTISING

RESIDENT

2,603,459

display ad impressions

3,187

display ad clicks

155,191

email ad impressions

154

email ad clicks

147,000

print ad impressions

11,943

website visits tracked

WISH YOU WERE HERE

visitRaleigh

Count ON ME NC

visitRaleigh.com/wish

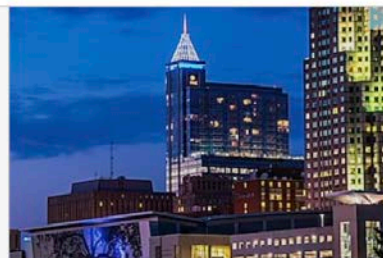
0:29 / 0:30

SPONSORED CONTENT

Put These Top 10 Things in Raleigh, N.C., on Your Holiday Travel List—Travel Safe! [🔗](#)

BY: [Visit Raleigh](#)

'Tis the season to travel safely! Experience these 10 things in Raleigh with Count On Me NC standards in place for your peace of mind.



ADVERTISING

LEISURE

FIND YOUR PERFECT TRIP

NATIONAL PARKS



VISIT THE NATIONAL PARKS

Your complete guide to planning a trip to the U.S. National Parks, including an interactive map and several road trip itineraries.



SPONSORED CONTENT



TREAT YOURSELF FOR THE HOLIDAYS IN RALEIGH, N.C.—TRAVEL SAFE! [🔗](#)

By [Visit Raleigh](#)





**WISH YOU
WERE HERE**

Escape the indoors. From our greenways to our waterways, Raleigh, N.C. has plenty of amazing, fresh air experiences and wide open spaces for visitors to come and enjoy. And as more indoor spaces like museums, art galleries and restaurant dining rooms begin to open, rest assured that we are taking the necessary steps to keep you safe. **Learn more and plan your trip at visitRaleigh.com/wish**

★ *Count
ON ME* **NC** ★



visitRaleigh.com/wish



ADVERTISING

LEISURE

42,527,195

non-native ad impressions

33,481

non-native ad clicks

1,341,760

native ad impressions

4,065

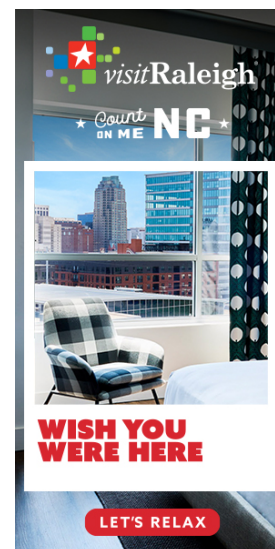
native ad clicks

272,439

print ad impressions

144,778

website visits
tracked





STATE TOURISM

CO-OP PARTNER PROGRAM



By midyear 2020 North Carolina's legislature had appropriated \$10 million in incremental CARES Act funding to Visit North Carolina to help further the recovery of the entire state's travel and hospitality economy. This funding was in addition to an initial \$5 million to be invested by Visit N.C. in a Count On Me NC safety-focused campaign and recovery-related research initiatives.

Visit N.C. subsequently released a new Partner Program that encouraged participation from its statewide partners:

- As directed in the legislation, the program would develop and implement COVID-19 specific concepts, strategies and materials tailored to educate people on ways to travel in a safe and socially distant way and prevent community reintroduction of the epidemic.
- The program would help rebuild N.C.'s vital travel and hospitality sector and begin restoring the industry's positive economic impact on small businesses and employment in all 100 counties of the state.
- The recovery partnership program would provide for equitable distribution of stimulus credits to recognized destination marketing organizations (DMOs like GRCVB).
- The program would create expanded cooperative marketing options allowing Visit N.C. and its DMO partners to collaboratively inspire safe travel planning and visitation to N.C.

In the latter half of 2020, Visit N.C. executed this program to stimulate safe travel in-state and within drive markets, with Count On Me NC-related advertising and other promotions always-on until funds for the program had been exhausted fully in Dec. 2020.

GRCVB ultimately leveraged \$100,000 in cooperative credits from Visit N.C., augmenting area marketing and promotional reach through the state tourism organization's campaign buying power. GRCVB also received \$10,750 in recovery grant support from the state legislative allotment.



**WISH YOU
WERE HERE**

RALEIGH, N.C.

The **City of Raleigh**, **Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau** and **Raleigh's Business Alliances** come together in support of the **WISH YOU WERE HERE** campaign. These organizations partner to drive business growth, advocacy, tourism and positive community impact in Raleigh. Our city and districts have missed having you—your energy, your questions and your delight. With new and enhanced safety guidelines in place, many merchants, museums, attractions and sites are open. We believe with all our hearts there are great days ahead, and Raleigh, N.C.'s welcome mat is always out for you!



visitRaleigh.com/wish

Pictured: Neuse River Greenway Trail

Black Dollar
Blue Ridge Corridor Alliance
Cameron Village Merchants' Association
Downtown Raleigh Alliance

Five Points Business District Association
Glenwood South Neighborhood Collaborative
Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce
Hillsborough St. Community Services Corp.

Midtown Raleigh Alliance
New Bern Avenue Corridor Alliance
Person Street Partnership
Shop Local Raleigh



The Wish You Were Here graphical device and theme adopted by GRCVB for its recovery plan was embraced initially by other economic development allies as well, **including the Glenwood South Neighborhood Collaborative and Midtown Raleigh Alliance.**

The other entities joining in the themed campaign with consumers/other audiences were encouraged to at least use the social media hashtag(s) developed, and they had the option to freely use the graphical device/other creative assets developed in their self-funded, paid promotions or derivative campaigns around Wake County being executed during 2020–2021.



Another early adopter of the unified recovery theme, **the City of Raleigh Office of Economic Development and Innovation (OEDI) redeployed its resources following the first impacts from COVID to support rebuilding demand for Raleigh’s business community** in two new ways while mindful of customer/visitor safety.



OEDI organized a derivative print ad campaign in late 2020, accepting co-op participation from any of the City’s business alliances to submit their area/district-specific ad creatives calling for residents to return to safely patronizing reopened businesses. This co-op advertising reached readers of *Indy Week*, *Qué Pasa*, *Triangle Downtowner Magazine* and *The Triangle Tribune*.

OEDI also partnered with Raleigh Arts to offer the Impact Partner Grant + Creative Wish You Were Here initiative, which is now funding 14 projects from seven business alliances in early 2021—all of which provide financial assistance to local artists while enhancing visibility for Wish You Were Here messaging and promoting regrowth of demand for small businesses/City districts.

NICE FEEDBACK:

- “Threshold 360 effortlessly captured the beauty of all four venues at the Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts. We couldn’t be more happy with the end result and know our patrons and clients will find the virtual tour very helpful.” – **Sarah McAlister, Marketing Manager, Duke Energy Center**
- “This drone endeavor is such a great accomplishment in this day and age of challenges and obstacles.... We had spread the word, and each and every small business was thrilled and anxious to prepare and be directly or indirectly part of the production. This was a huge motivator for them, truly reinforcing the message that ‘Somebody really cares about us!’” – **David Clappier, President, Five Points Business District Association**
- “This virtual tour will be an impactful way to share information about Marbles Kids Museum and help draw visitors back to Raleigh as we recover from the pandemic shutdown.... [It] will help our marketing efforts and will be fun for kids and families to watch when planning a visit to Marbles while in Raleigh.” – **Jamie Bockover, Senior Event Coordinator, Marbles**
- “Peace of mind goes a long way in 2020, and [RCC] is so excited to offer meeting and event planners the ability to tour our sweeping 500,000-sq.-ft. venue.... Seeing a floorplan is one thing, but a virtual walkthrough allows our current and prospective clients to feel 100% confident in their decision to book with us.” – **Mary Deifer, Marketing Manager, Raleigh Convention Center**
- “We are hopeful that with all the incredible work the Bureau has done in recent years that recovery for the tourism, hospitality and sports industries that are such a strong economic driver here will be swift. Thanks also for the tool kit. We will be sharing out social media posts for your campaign in the coming weeks and months. We are happy to assist Threshold 360 and Destination Virtual Tours with filming in Cary as needed.” – **Jennifer Warner, Senior Marketing Manager, Town of Cary**
- “Thank you for doing such great work, especially during this pandemic. Keep it up!” – **Sam Ratto, Co-Founder/CEO, Videri Chocolate Factory**

We wish to thank the Wake County Board of Commissioners and Wake County Government staff for their support and leadership efforts to ensure tourism remains a vital economic engine for the county/destination.



Note: If you have detailed questions or would like to review more detailed data about any of GRCVB's initial tourism rebuild and recovery activities in 2020, please contact GRCVB staff at brand@visitRaleigh.com. More information about the post-COVID work of GRCVB also is forthcoming in the CVB's 2020–2021 Annual Report.



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