



Rowan County Tourism: January 2026 Month in Review

As we welcomed a new year, January set a strong and intentional tone for 2026, building on the momentum of record-breaking overnight visitation in 2025. Through strategic capital projects, compelling seasonal storytelling, and meaningful partnerships, we maintained visitor engagement during a traditionally slower travel period while laying the groundwork for continued growth throughout the year.

January: Month at a Glance

Strategic Focus Areas

- Seasonal Content & Experiences
- Group Travel Development
- Weather Communication Strategy
- Capital Projects Advancement

Key Accomplishments

What We Built: RailWalk development nearing completion, creating a signature destination experience.

What We Told: Wine About Winter, Valentine's Day experiences, and proactive winter weather communications kept visitors informed and engaged.

Who/What We Engaged: Trapp Hill Coon Hunters event, Rowan-Salisbury School System conference booking, Wine About Winter package guests, future travelers

Building Momentum: Hotel & Lodging Impact

	November	December	January	YTD as of 1/31
Occupancy (This Year)	69.6%	56.5%	60.4%	
Occupancy (Last Year)	70.4%	57.2%	56.7%	
ADR (This Year)	\$120.15	\$109.01	\$110.26	
ADR (Last Year)	\$112.88	\$105.64	\$104.75	
RevPar (This Year)	\$83.65	\$61.62	\$66.63	
RevPar (Last Year)	\$79.50	\$60.42	\$59.36	
Revenue (This Year)	\$1,990,052	\$1,514,739	\$1,637,953	
Revenue (Last Year)	\$1,891,375	\$1,485,351	\$1,459,208	

Tourism Capital Projects: Building Our Future

Strategic infrastructure investments are shaping the experiences, stories, and sense of place that visitors remember and share. These projects strengthen Rowan County's brand identity while supporting local pride, workforce development, and long-term economic vitality by creating spaces that connect residents and visitors to our culture, history, and natural assets.

01

RailWalk & Farmer's Market

Status: Near Completion.

03

Website Redesign

Status: Under Construction.

02

Wayfinding Signage

Status: Near Completion.

04

F&M Bank Trolley System

Status: Planning Phase.

Telling Our Story: Winter Campaign Success

January's communications strategy maintained visitation momentum during a traditionally slower travel period while strategically positioning Rowan County for the year ahead.

Seasonal Storytelling

Winter-focused content emphasized Wine About Winter and Valentine's-themed experiences, encouraging visitation through emotionally driven storytelling. Our messaging highlighted cozy, memorable moments that resonate with couples and flexible travelers.

Proactive Weather Communications

Winter weather served as an important communication channel to keep visitors informed about closures, travel conditions, and what to expect.

Digital Influencers

Influencer partnerships were intentionally paused in January to steward budget resources and plan strategically for higher-impact, busier travel seasons later in the year.



Digital Storytelling

January's digital strategy leveraged SEO-driven, high-intent content and flexible travel messaging to capture short trips, day trips, and last-minute planners, with a seasonal focus on Wine About Winter and Valentine's Day experiences.

January Content Focus:

- Website Updates
- Winter experiences & events
- Romantic & seasonal travel
- Local spotlights
- Stay & Play packages
- Looking ahead

Numbers at a Glance

Social Media

581,497

Total Reach
Year-to-date

56,564

Total Social Following
Year-to-date

14,608

Total Engagement
Year-to-date

Stay & Play Packages

VISA Overnight Package

3 Packages | 5 Room Nights

Wine About Winter

17 Packages | 29 Room Nights

Website Analytics

33,209

Website Pageviews

18,122

Website Active Users



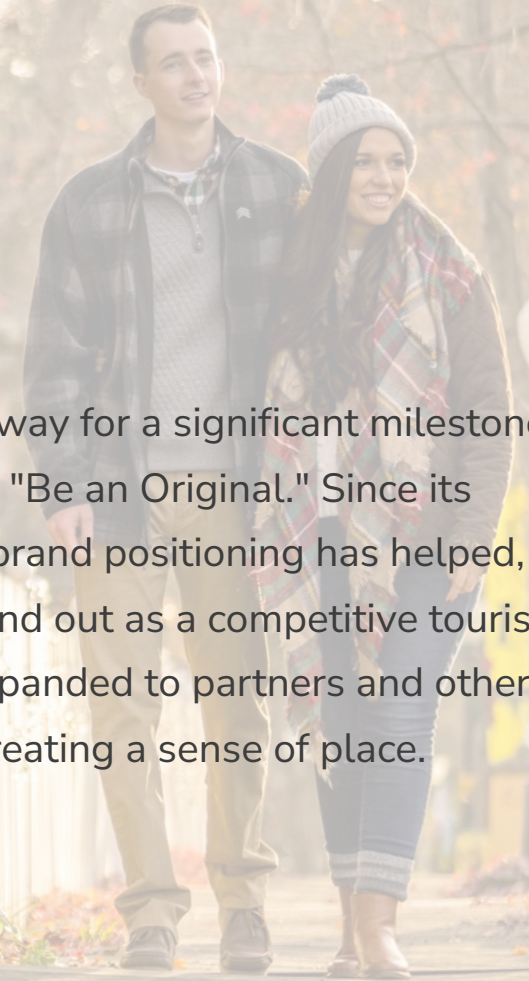
Looking Forward: Be an Original Turns 10

**VISIT
ROWAN COUNTY**

NORTH CAROLINA

Be an original.®

Early planning is underway for a significant milestone: the 10th anniversary of "Be an Original." Since its launch, this distinctive brand positioning has helped, not only Rowan County stand out as a competitive tourism destination, but also expanded to partners and other County departments, creating a sense of place.



Group Travel & Community Engagement

Strong community partnerships and engagement with visiting groups are essential to creating a welcoming, cohesive destination experience. In January, strategic outreach to new and existing partners supported tourism growth and enhanced visitor services.



Group Travel

- Trapp Hill Coon Hunters
- Rowan-Salisbury School System- "A Day in the District"



Community Engagement

- New RailWalk Business: Crafty Buffalo Kitchen & Taphouse
- Rowan County Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala
- Perspective Tourism partner meeting: Mooresville Dragway
- RailWalk dedication celebration planning
- Kannapolis Cannon Ballers



F&M Bank Trolley System

Rentals

2026 YTD: 47

2026 Revenue: \$1,800

Upcoming Rentals: Wine About Winter, Community Events, Bridal Expo, Winery Tour



Expanding Our Story: Looking Ahead to February

As we move into February and early spring, the story of tourism in Rowan County will continue to evolve. Capital projects, partnerships and content will guide our efforts.

What We are Building

RailWalk Development & Celebration

Wayfinding Development

Partner Update Videos

Website Redesign

App Outdoor Trails

F&M Bank Trolley System

America 250

What We are Telling

February & Early Spring Storytelling

Seasonal Events & Experiences

Stay & Play Packages

Adapting to Current Travel Trends

Who/What We are Engaging

Partner Relations

Partner Content Spotlights

Hospitality Appreciation Night

Group Business

Future of the F&M Bank Trolley System

Trolley Big Picture Information:

2013 Purchase Price: \$130,000

2026 Trolley Replacement Price:
\$225,000

Insurance Payout: \$70,829

Projected 10-year Sponsorship:
\$60,000

New Trolley Option:

Required Deposit for New Trolley:
\$67,000

Due Upon Receipt: \$158,000
(FY 27-28)

- 38% of Annual Development Budget to Cover New Trolley
- \$125,000 (32%) of Development Budget Already Committed to RailWalk Repayment

Used Trolley Market Options:

2014 Hometown Trolley:
Diesel, 28-passenger, ADA,
191,557 miles: \$113,000

2011 Hometown Trolley:
Gasoline, 19-passenger, ADA,
81,000 miles: \$89,000

Future of the F&M Bank Trolley System

2-Trolley System FY24-25

Total Revenue: \$70,000

Operating Expenses: \$16,000

Drivers Expenses: \$29,000

Net Profit: \$25,000

2024 Total Rentals: 134

2024 NCTM Approximate Rentals: 40

2024 2-Trolley Rentals: 24

2025 Rentals: 106

(lost approximately 30 rentals due to stolen trolley)

1-Trolley System

2026 Current Bookings: 50

Projected 2026 1 Trolley-Rentals: 75

- NCTM purchased their own buses
- Increase in surrounding private sector vendors
- Surrounding trolley providers are offering additional inventory as our offerings have decreased
- Turn away large rentals, groups, specialty tours
- Driver retiring