

Six NC counties launch African-American Experience trail

A regional tourism initiative designed to connect people with Black heritage and historical sites kicked off June 19th – or Juneteenth.

The African American Experience of Northeast North Carolina highlights the contributions of African Americans while encouraging a better understanding of the region's cultural heritage.

The digital program is a collaborative effort by tourism officials in Pasquotank, Camden, Currituck, Perquimans, Chowan and Dare counties.

Visit Elizabeth City Executive Director Corrina Ruffieux said that each of the six counties has significant sites important to the African-American community and to the history of the six counties.

Getting people to visit those sites will drive tourism and have an economic impact on the region, Ruffieux said.

"It is essentially a digital African American heritage and history trail," she said. "Our mission is to inspire exploration and appreciation for the African American experience of Northeast North Carolina and ultimately drive cultural tourism and economic impact."

Some of the African American Experience historical sites include the Pasquotank River, the Historic Jarvisburg Colored School in Currituck, the Colored Union Soldiers Monument in Perquimans, the Pea Island Cookhouse in Dare, the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site in Chowan and Dismal Swamp State Park in Camden.

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Photo: dailyadvance.com

The Historic Jarvisburg Colored School, shown in a 2014 file photo, is one of six sites included in the new African American Experience.

Juneteenth is day when last slaves learned of freedom

Juneteenth celebrates when the last enslaved African Americans learned they were free. The Civil War ended in April 1865, but word

didn't reach the last enslaved Black people until June 19, when Union soldiers brought the news to Galveston, Texas.

Historic driving tour based on months of research

Months of research, interviews and meetings culminated in Pender County (NC) Tourism's launch of its African American Heritage Trail on the day before Juneteenth.

"This project could not have been accomplished without the help of 23 local historians and families who want to preserve the history and legacy of African Americans in Pender County," said Pender County Tourism Director Tammy Proctor.

The African American Heritage Trail is a driving tour that features a

number of locations that are important to African-American history and culture.

"We selected sites in this inaugural launch where visitors can park and see a location," said Olivia Dawson, Pender County tourism assistant. "We hope visitors will take selfies and photographs as they travel the African American Heritage Trail and send them to us to share on Facebook."

Researchers gained insight from **Continued on page 2**



Photo: tourism.az.gov

Arizona Tourism works to create more hiring

When the COVID-19 pandemic displaced thousands of hospitality workers, the Arizona Office of Tourism scrambled to help people find jobs at places like grocery stores and hospitals by connecting them with employers who needed their skill sets.

A year later, AOT Deputy Director Becky Blaine, who organized that effort to connect employees and employers, finds herself once again helping job hunters. This time, she wants to bring them back to the tourism industry.

“Now we’re finding, as you know, things are opening back up, there’s more consumer confidence happening. People are traveling again now that they’ve

been vaccinated. We really have to ramp back up our tourism workforce across the state,” Blaine said.

She said some Arizona resorts are operating at reduced capacity due to a lack of staffing. A sellout evening might be 80% of rooms available instead of 100%.

To help Arizona tourism and hospitality businesses recruit talent, the AOT is working with Pipeline AZ and ARIZONA@WORK to connect employers with job seekers.

The effort kicked off with a June 23 virtual hiring event.

– *azcentral.com*

Idaho State Parks struggling to find staff

The Idaho State Park system is seeing huge attendance numbers, with more than seven million people passing through Gem State parks last year alone. But it's not all good news.

Some popular attractions, like the Eagle Island waterslide, are sitting unused because no one is available to operate it.

And it's a similar story at other state parks as well.

“Throughout the system we need approximately 26 more seasonal rangers to come on, and staffers to help us get through the year,” said Craig Quintana, Senior PIO for the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation.

– *idahonews.com*

Pender County

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people, stories and events that impacted the development of Pender County from the time of the Revolutionary War to the Civil Rights Movement and beyond.

Highlights include Canetuck Community Center, a restored Rosenwald school, the community of Edgecombe’s Manhollow Missionary Baptist Church and Sloop Point School, Poplar Grove Plantation, which is part of the Gullah Geechee National Corridor, the Pender County Courthouse, and Moores Creek National Battlefield’s Old Stagecoach Road.

“The African American Heritage Trail in Pender County is a project that will never be finished,” said Proctor. “We will continue to expand and add to the trail as more fascinating histories are uncovered.”

– *wect.com*

Experience trail

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Tourism officials from the six counties formed an advisory committee of regional Black community members and historians that have significant knowledge of the African American experience to help design the digital platform, which includes a website, Facebook Page and Instagram account.

She said the committee has been meeting every other week for four months.

Ruffieux said the launch is just the beginning of the effort and that tourism officials will work to improve it moving forward.

– *dailyadvance.com*