COVID-19 - Industry Update 13: April 22, 2020

Greetings to Travel Partners,

During this period while non-essential travel remains on pause, the Wilmington and Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau continues to share the latest COVID-19 updates, resources and research.

Current Update

On April 21, NC Governor Roy Cooper announced a new executive order to help furloughed workers whose employers have paid them a severance or furlough payment. These employees will now qualify for unemployment compensation.

On April 19, the Town of Wrightsville Beach Opened Beach and Sound Side Beaches with Limitations and Parking Closures to the General Public. For details on mandatory restrictions, fines and towing: www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com/DocumentCenter/View/3646/4192020-PRESS-RELEASE-SOS-Amend-4-and-Beach-Openings-with-Limitations

On April 20, the Kure Beach Town Council voted to amend the Kure Beach State of Emergency Declaration to extend the ban of Short Term Rentals until April 29, 2020: www.townofkurebeach.org/sites/default/files/uploads/covid-19_declaration_april_20_2020.pdf

The NC Restaurant & Lodging Association (NCRLA) reports that the NC House of Representatives COVID-19 Economic Support Working Group released their latest version of the Small Business Emergency Loan bill which makes more restaurants and hotels eligible for consideration of those loans. Thanks to NCRLA's efforts, the bill language now states that loan prioritization will be given to independently owned establishments with 100 or fewer full-time equivalent employees determined as of the State of Emergency. The bill is expected to pass the House next week. NCRLA will advocate to the Senate that this loan program is much-needed for N.C.'s restaurants and hotels: www.ncleg.gov/documentsites/committees/house2019-199/Economic%20Support%20Working%20Group/April%2021,%202020/2019-MCa-210B%20v7.pdf.

New Travel Research:

Weekly Coronavirus Impact on Travel Expenditures in the U.S. (April 16, 2020 update): www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/media_root/document/Coronavirus_WeeklyImpacts_04.16.20.pdf

Longwoods International COVID-19 Travel Sentiment Study–Wave 6 (April 21, 2020): https://longwoods-intl.com/news-press-release/covid-19-and-travel-sentiment-wave-6

Destination Analysts Update on Coronavirus' Impact on American Travel (week of April 20, 2020) – ***As American travelers increasingly feel better that the worst of the coronavirus may soon be over, one-in-five say a trip will be one of their first post-shelter-in-place activities:*** **www.destinationanalysts.com/update-on-coronavirus-impact-on-american-travel-week-of-april-20**

Smith Travel Research – Hotel Performance Weekly Analysis - Key Points for U.S. & Canada (April 16, 2020): https://str.com/data-insights-blog/covid-19-webinar-summary-5-key-points-us-canada-16-april

The Harris Poll COVID-19 tracker: https://theharrispoll.com/the-harris-poll-covid19-tracker/

Adara COVID-19 Traveler Trends: https://adara.com/traveler-trends-tracker/

Below are updates from state and county officials, followed by CVB updates and helpful links.

State of North Carolina Updates:

All COVID-19 Executive Orders: www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina/executive-orders

N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services COVID-19 updates: www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina

New Hanover County Updates:

New Hanover County State of Emergency: https://health.nhcgov.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3-28-2020_COVID-19_Prohibitions_Restrictions.pdf

Stay at Home Order FAQ Sheet: https://health.nhcgov.com/your-environment/public-health/coronavirus/stay-at-home-order-faqs/**.**

New Hanover County Public Health updates:

https://health.nhcgov.com/your-environment/public-health/coronavirus/

New Hanover County Reduce Risk Resources and Helpful Information in English and Spanish: https://health.nhcgov.com/your-environment/public-health/coronavirus/reducerisk/

Wilmington and Beaches CVB Update:

Marketing

Earned Media

Social Media

- Reaching out to past influencers to see if they are open to sharing content from the destinations
- Highlighting local partners relevant to current #StayAtHome trend, getting outdoors, inspiration for future travel
- Re-releasing relevant videos previously shared on social channels, along with past FB/Instagram Lives
- Generated two Zoom background photos (Riverfront, Oceanfront) https://www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/virtual-tours/#zoom
- Creating a bingo card to be shared on social with things visitors have done or wish they could do in the destination in the future; sharing via IG Stories
- Developing National Tourism Week promotion and video using social media channels to connect, unify and support each from afar, rallying around the #SpiritOfTravel

Public Relations

- Distributed Virtual Experiences pitch to in-state media outlets
- Began drafting 48-Hour Itineraries for future promotion of in-state/regional road trip ideas
- Compiled May/June blog topics featuring soft outdoor adventures, virtual garden tours, family summer vacations in the day of social distancing, wreck diving off Wilmington's coast, and staycation ideas for nearby road trippers and residents looking to vacation close to home and stay in accommodations that put them right in the action on the beach, riverfront and throughout the area

Summer Content Marketing

- Developing Summer seasonal website pages to launch in May
- Developing May eblast to CVB subscribers

Ways You Can Assist the CVB:

- Share your post-COVID-19 safety policies. Send to cvbpr@wilmingtonandbeaches.com.
- Share virtual events, activities, tours. Send to cvbpr@wilmingtonandbeaches.com.
- Inform CVB of closings, re-openings, occupancy levels and meeting/event cancelations
- Respond to CVB surveys (answers are confidential; we report total percentages, trends)

Wilmington and Beaches COVID-19 Resource Pages:

- COVID-19 Hospitality Employer & Employee Information (updated frequently): www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/covid-19-hospitality-resources

- CVB COVID-19 Visitor Information: www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/covid-19-visitor-info
- Virtual Tours and Events: www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/virtual-tour

TRAVEL INDUSTRY UPDATES & RESOURCES

Visit NC is hosting tourism webinars related to COVID-19, including last week's presentation on Shifts in Social Media Strategy due to COVID-19, now available online at http://partners.visitnc.com/COVID-19 and https://www.visitnc365.com/.

N.C. Travel Industry Association Newsletter (April 17, 2020): https://nctia.travel/news.php#Newsletter

Southeast Tourism Society webinars: www.southeasttourism.org/webinars**.**

VRBO Coronavirus Information: www.vrbo.com/info/media-center/press-releases/PR_2020/vrbo-covid-19-coronavirus-information/

Southeast Tourism Society Top 20 Events – Deadline extended: The deadline for nominating events for Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 events for October-November-December 2020 has been extended to ***May 15***: https://www.southeasttourism.org/top-20-events

ADDITIONAL COVID-19 RESOURCES:

Below, please find some additional COVID-19 resources. To see previously listed resources, please refer to past Industry Updates or you can access a complete list via the Partner Extranet.

LOCAL, STATE & NATIONAL ASSISTANCE:

N**ew Hanover County Resources & Assistance page** (food/supplies, mental health, and more): https://health.nhcgov.com/your-environment/public-health/coronavirus/resources-assistance/

NC Dept. of Commerce Employment Security – Federal Unemployment Assistance updates: https://des.nc.gov/need-help/covid-19-information/federal-unemployment-assistance

The new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, to help families purchase food for children impacted by school closings due to COVID-19, has been approved for North Carolina. NCDHHS is working to operationalize the program and families will begin to receive this benefit in coming weeks. P-EBT eligible families already receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will receive an additional benefit on their existing EBT card: www.ncdhhs.gov/news/press-releases/ncdhhs-provide-additional-food-benefits-more-800000-children-impacted-covid-19

USDA Food & Nutrition Service - Meals for Kids program: www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Get My Payment App: www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment

The U.S. Treasury and the IRS have developed a Non-Filer tool for Social Security retirement beneficiaries who have qualifying children and did not file a tax return in 2018 or 2019: www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here.

Hunger Free America Coronavirus Response Outreach & Relief: www.hungerfreeamerica.org/coronavirus-response-outreach-and-relief

FaceBook COVID-19 Travel Industry Groups:

- www.facebook.com/groups/tourismemergency
- www.facebook.com/groups/TourismCOVID19

Additional Resources by Zip Code: www.FindHelp.org

National Endowment for the Humanities Emergency Funding to Cultural Institutions Affected by Coronavirus. Eligible institutions include museums, archives, libraries, historic sites, universities, and other educational institutions. The deadline to apply is May 11, 2020. For details and application: https://www.neh.gov/program/neh-cares-cultural-organizations

US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Save Small Business Fund, a grantmaking initiative offering short-term relief for small employers in the U.S.: https://savesmallbusiness.com/

US Chamber of Commerce Independent Contractors Guide to CARES Act Relief: www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/uscc_coronavirus_independent-contractors.pdf

Capital Associated Industries Coronavirus Updates for NC Employers: www.capital.org/s/coronavirus

NC Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 Briefings and Webinars for Businesses: https://ncchamber.com/covid-grid/upcoming-briefings-and-webinars/

NC Small Business Center Network offers no-cost online webinars on a variety of topics: www.ncsbc.net/events.aspx?mode=4

SCORE Cape Fear Region – Coronavirus Small Business Resource Hub: www.score.org/coronavirus

Cape Fear Community College Small Business Center offers free one-on-one confidential business counseling: www.ncsbc.net/reg.aspx?mode=counsel&center=75080&subloc=0

The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) updated job openings across the state: https://edpnc.com/north-carolina-immediate-employment-opportunities/

CDC & FDA & FEMA GUIDANCE

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Travel Health (updated frequently): wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel

FEMA Coronavirus Fact Sheets: www.fema.gov/coronavirus/fact-sheets#

FEMA Coronavirus Rumor Control: https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus/rumor-control

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Thank you for keeping the CVB informed. Your feedback is very important and helps us to respond to industry needs and concerns as the situation evolves.

Be well, keep safe and stay tuned.