

COVID-19 Industry Update 20: Results of the Visitor Profile & Expenditure Research Study, Take Action Now, Count on Me NC & More

October 14, 2020

Greetings to Travel Partners,

As we navigate the ever-changing travel landscape, the Wilmington and Beaches Visitor Profile and Expenditure Research Study results provide helpful insights by recent and repeat visitors. Read on for key study results, along with industry news and the latest Covid-19 travel research. The Wilmington and Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau continues to share the latest research, resources and safety guidelines with partners and stakeholders.

CURRENT UPDATES

NC Governor Roy Cooper recently signed Executive Order 169 moving the state of North Carolina forward with a **Phase 3 “Safer at Home” order (began October 2)** to further ease restrictions. Under Phase 3 (set to expire on Oct. 23):

- Large outdoor venues with seating greater than 10,000 may operate with 7% occupancy for spectators.
- Smaller outdoor entertainment venues, such as arenas or amphitheaters, may operate outdoors at 30% of outdoor capacity – or 100 guests, whichever is less.
- Movie theaters and conference centers may open indoor spaces to 30% of capacity – or 100 guests, whichever is less.
- Bars may operate outdoors at 30% of outdoor capacity – or 100 guests, whichever is less.
- Amusement parks may open at 30% occupancy, outdoor attractions only.
- The limits on mass gatherings will remain at 25 people indoors and 50 people outdoors.
- The [11 p.m. curfew on alcohol sales](#) for in-person consumption in locations such as restaurants and outdoor bars extended to Oct. 23.
- Face coverings must be worn in public places & outdoors if unsafe distancing (age 5+).
- More details: [Executive Order 169](#) and [Phase 3 FAQ](#).

WILMINGTON AND BEACHES CVB UPDATES:

- **Visitor Profile & Expenditure Research Study:** During the Strategic Recovery Plan/Program of Work presentation to the travel industry, the CVB released highlights from the destination’s Visitor Profile and Expenditure Research Study, providing insights into three key areas: visitor trends, demographics, and satisfaction, along with a summary of key takeaways. A document with topline findings from the study is available [online](#). -----
- **2019 Visitor Impact:** Domestic visitors to and within New Hanover County spent a record \$658.78 million in 2019, an increase of 7.5 percent from 2018. Last year the travel and tourism industry directly employed more than 6,680 people in New Hanover County, which ranks 8th in visitor spending among the state’s 100 counties. The data comes from an annual study commissioned by Visit North Carolina, a unit of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. The 2019 visitor impact illuminates the importance of travel and tourism to our community, especially in terms of jobs, small businesses, economic growth and quality of place.” Read the [full press release here](#). -----
- **ICYMI:** In case you missed it, the CVB’s annual Strategic Recovery Plan/Program of Work [virtual presentation](#) to the travel industry is available online, along with Lodging Summaries, Product Profile and other online resources at www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/program-of-work.

- **Visitor Information Riverbooth Update:** Repairs to the safety railing along the Riverwalk are underway. This is the first step in renovating the center which was built nearly 30 years ago. The project will update the center to better serve our downtown visitors. A fence has been installed around a portion of the Riverwalk for public safety. While the Visitors Information Center and public restrooms will remain open as construction allows, a pedestrian detour has been established as a safety precaution.

CAN VISITORS COUNT ON US? Visitors continue to seek safe practices so Visit NC produced a [short video](#) about becoming a Count On Me NC business. If your business is not participating in this free statewide hospitality safety training program, you are missing out on free exposure to more than 203,000 potential visitors who frequent the [Count On Me NC](#) website. The fall campaign is underway, and we need more participating businesses in New Hanover County to show visitors that they can count on us! All it takes is a half-hour on [www.CountOnMeNC.org](#) to breeze through the training module, then download the toolkit with certificates, logos, and visuals. Once completed, your business will also be added to the [WilmingtonandBeaches.com](#) [list and map](#) of partners with certificates.

DOWNTOWN ALIVE UPDATE: Downtown Business Alliance's outdoor street dining and shopping initiative, [Downtown Alive](#), was extended through Oct. 18, 2020 and expanded to include "parklet" outdoor seating along streets that cannot be closed to traffic. Currently a total of 32 restaurants/retailers participate in the program with hopes of retaining the outdoor parklet dining concept beyond the October 18 deadline and possibly as a year-round program.

TAKE ACTION TODAY: COVID RELIEF NOW! Join the U.S. Travel Industry in demanding Congress finish the work they started and pass, at the very least, a standalone bill that provides relief for small businesses. Time is running out—we must ACT NOW to secure our broader industry as much relief and protection as possible. Forms and links to members of Congress: [www.ustravel.org/CovidReliefNow](#) and <https://www.ustravel.org/toolkit/power-travel-coalition-advocacy-toolkit>.

STATE/LOCAL RELIEF GRANTS & LOANS

Reminder: N.C. Covid-19 [Rapid Recovery Program](#) to Help Small Businesses application deadline is Oct. 15, 2020. The N.C. Covid-19 Rapid Recovery loan program expanded services to reach more N.C. small businesses in need of loans, focusing on underserved, diverse businesses. The Rapid Recovery program has adapted, adding key updates to help N.C. hospitality businesses: <https://ncrapidrecovery.org>.

Mortgage, Utility & Rent Relief (MURR) Packages Available: Businesses that experienced extraordinary disruption and were unable to open due to COVID-19 may be able to get assistance through the Mortgage, Utility and Rent Relief (MURR) Program at [www.nccommerce.com/murr](#).

[CFCC's Small Business Center](#) has received a third allotment of \$50,000 from the NC Legislature to assist small businesses in the Cape Fear region who are struggling as the result of COVID-19. Funding must be distributed by December 31, 2020. Local small businesses who are struggling are encouraged to call 910-362-7216.

RETOOLNC: The Purpose of [RETOOLNC](#) is to help address the challenges that certified NC HUBs and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms are facing as they recover from the pandemic. The HUB Small Business Impact Grant (RETOOLNC) will be administered by the Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB Office) in partnership with the [Carolina Small Business Development Fund \(CSBDF\)](#) and the [NC Institute for Minority Economic Development \(the Institute\)](#). Application: <https://theinstitutenc.org/retoolnc/>

NEW TRAVEL RESEARCH:

[Longwoods International COVID-19 Travel Sentiment Study - Wave 21](#)

[Destinations International White Paper: American Resident Sentiment Towards Tourism](#)

[Destination Analysts Update on Coronavirus' Impact on American Travel-Week of October 12](#)

[Smith Travel Research – U.S. hotel results - Week ending October 3](#)

[The Harris Poll COVID-19 Survey - Wave 32](#)

[U.S. Travel Association: Weekly Coronavirus Impact on U.S. Travel Expenditures \(October 8\)](#)

TRAVEL INDUSTRY RESOURCES REGARDING COVID-19

During these challenging times in the ever-changing situation and effects of COVID-19, the following resources offer helpful information, industry guidance, research and more.

[NC Restaurant & Lodging Association](#) (guidance updates and more)

[Visit N.C. tourism webinars](#)

[N.C. Travel Industry Association Newsletter](#)

[Destinations International](#)

[U.S. Travel Association](#)

[EDPNC - NC Business Relief Resources](#)

[Southeast Tourism Society](#)

State of North Carolina Updates:

[All COVID-19 Executive Orders](#)

[N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services COVID-19 updates](#)

[NCDHHS - Prevent & Protect Tool Kit](#) (includes signs)

New Hanover County / City of Wilmington Updates:

[New Hanover County Public Health](#)

[City of Wilmington COVID-19 information](#)

Reopening & Safety Guidance:

The Wilmington and Beaches [COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Resources page](#) includes a Travel Industry [Reopening & Safety Guidance section](#) with NEW & UPDATED links to trade and government resources that our industry can use to reopen safely.

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Thank you. We invite your feedback to help the CVB respond to industry needs and concerns.

Be well and stay tuned.

