

**New Hanover County
Tourism Development Authority
2019/2020
Strategic Plan/Program of Work**



State of Tourism

- 2018 Tourism Expenditures of \$612.92 million – 6% increase
- NHC tourism generated \$54.27 million in local/state taxes
- More than 6,470 employed in travel & tourism related jobs - \$149.14 million in payroll
- Each NHC resident's taxes were offset \$228.31
- Maintained:
 - #8 ranking among NC's 100 counties
 - #2 ranking among coastal counties



Wilmington.C.
River District & Island Beaches

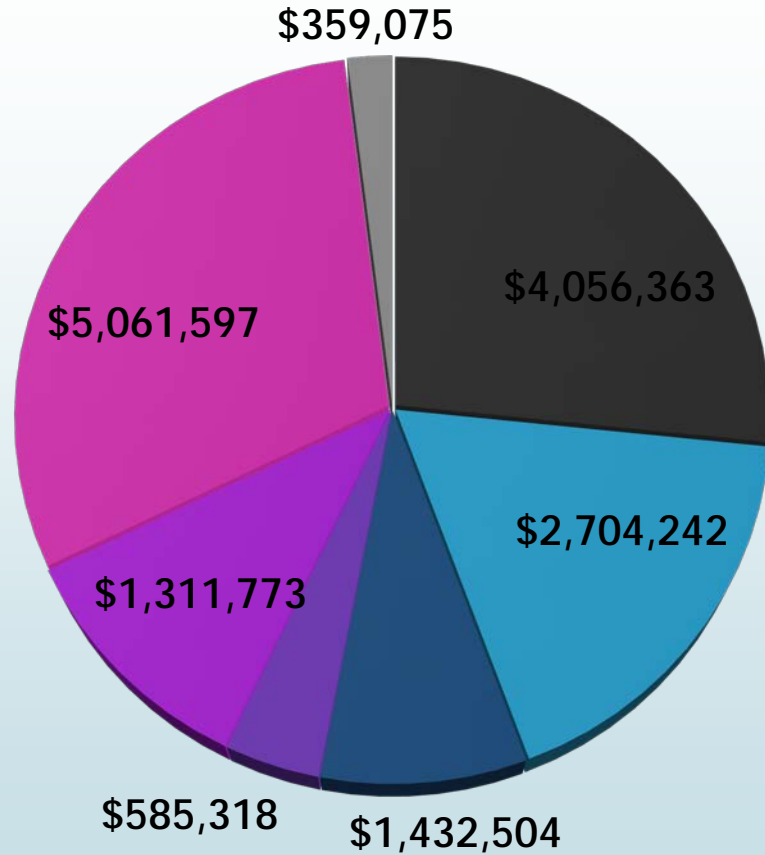
2018/2019 ROT Collections

- FY 2018/19 ROT collections up **20.39%**
- CY 2019 up **22.47%** (January thru June)
- 2nd 3% collections – FY 2018/2019
 - CB – **14.72%**
 - KB – **10.37%**
 - WB – **-2.32%**
 - Wilmington – **34.58%**
 - CC District – **32.87%**
 - District U – **19.3%**



Wilmington.C.
River District & Island Beaches

2018/2019 ROT Distribution

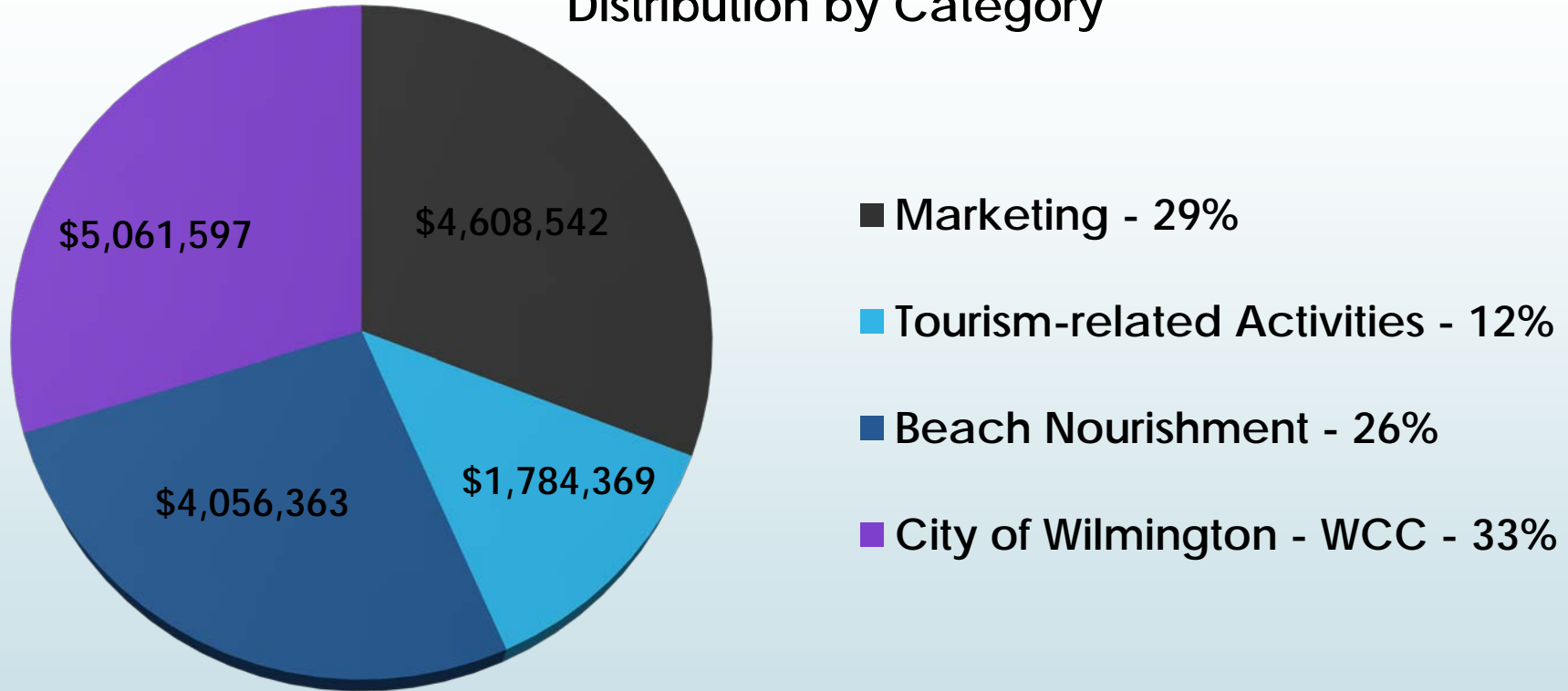


- Beach Erosion - 26%
- Tourism - CVB - 17.5%
- Carolina Beach - Mktg & Activities - 9%
- Kure Beach - Mktg & Activities - 4%
- Wrightsville Beach - Mktg & Activities - 8.5%
- Wilmington Convention Center - 33%
- District U - Mktg & Activities - 2%

Total 2018/2019 ROT Collections: \$15,510,871

2018/2019 ROT Collections

Distribution by Category



Total 2018/2019 ROT Collections: \$ 15,510,871

Legislative Issues

- School Calendar Law
- Occupancy Taxes
- Short term rentals
- Beach Renourishment & Inlet Dredging Funding
- Film grants
- Environmental issues

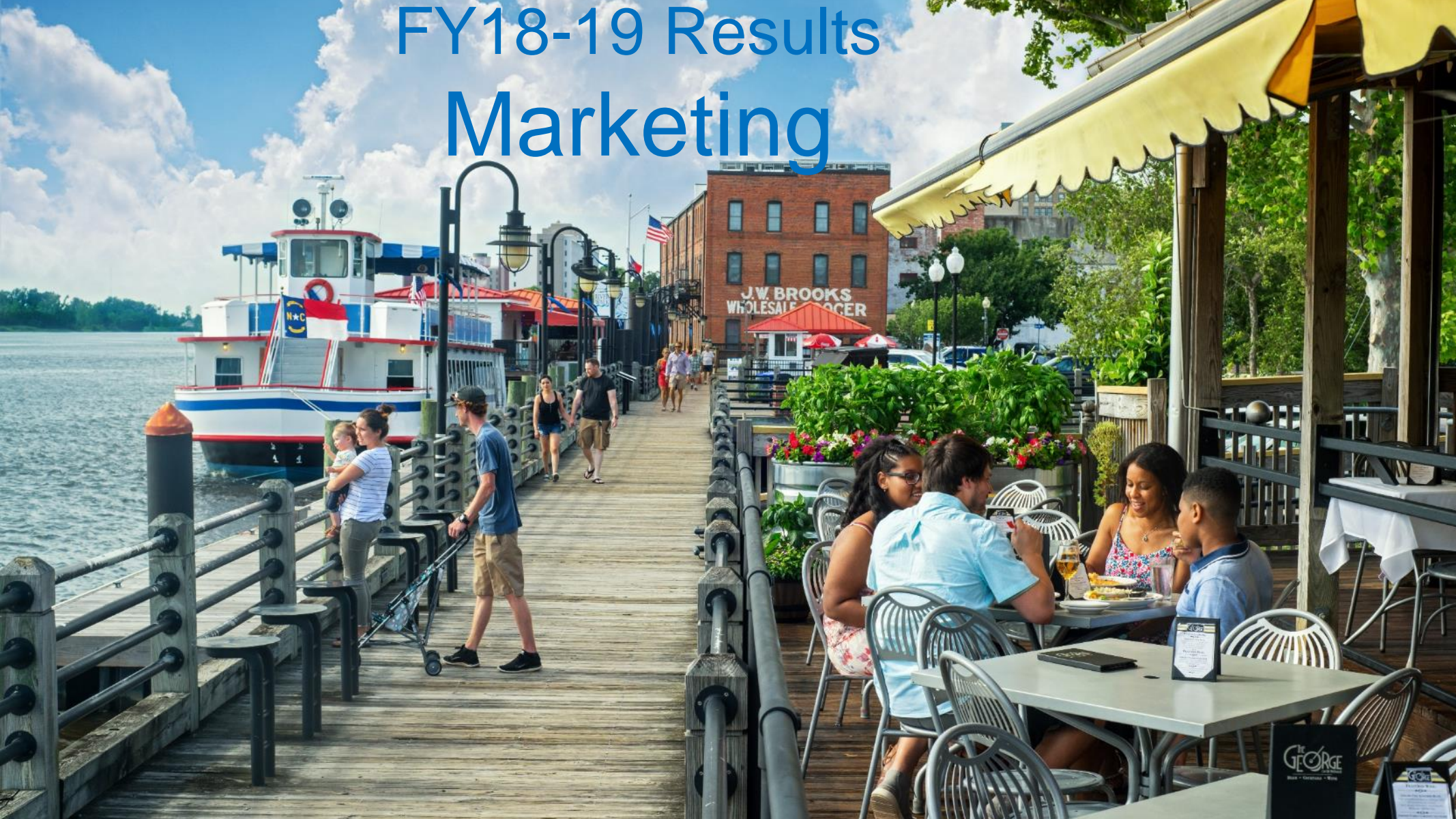


Challenges

- Beach Renourishment & Inlet Dredging
- Short term rentals
- Marketing
- Crime
- Safety
- Industry Participation
- Infrastructure
- Environmental Issues
- National Trends



FY18-19 Results Marketing



FY18-19 Marketing Highlights

- Launched **Hurricane Recovery Campaign** via strategic paid and earned media
- Developed **Locals' Digital Guide** offering insiders' tips on area things to do (featuring videos, blogs, feature stories and photos) as favored by millennial visitors
- Launched new **marketing automation platform** for email marketing campaigns
- Provided destination relevant content through **Trip Advisor's new personalized review site/social media platform and Google CVB Partnership Program**
- Published **56 blogs, 36 eSpecials, 16 seasonal page round-ups; produced 26 videos**
- Added **new pages to Visitors Guide** to feature special interests and popular website content
- Evaluated **website redesign**

Creative Overview

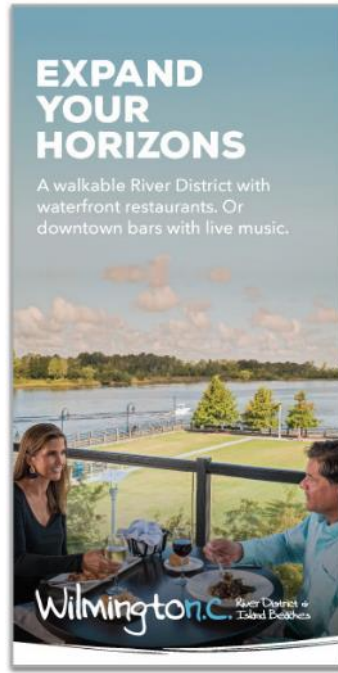




“cast away on new adventures”



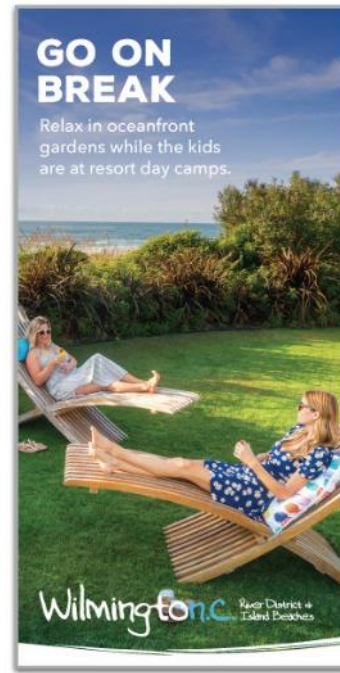
“embrace your fun side”



“expand your horizons”



“explore new turns”



“go on break”



"seek out hidden gems"

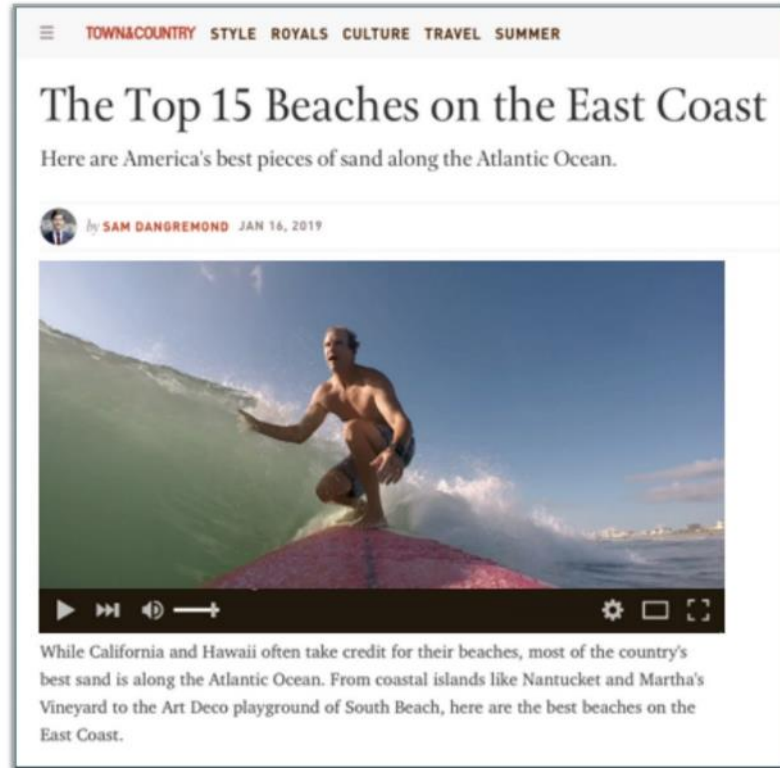


"cross your line in the sand"



"drink in the sights"

preroll / video

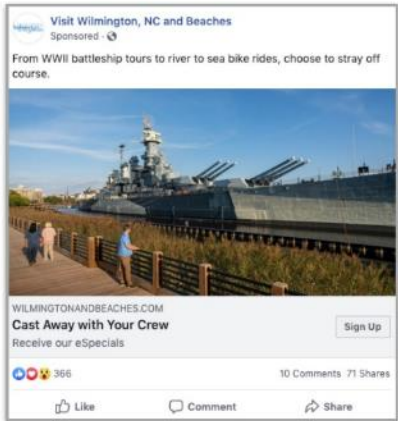


preroll

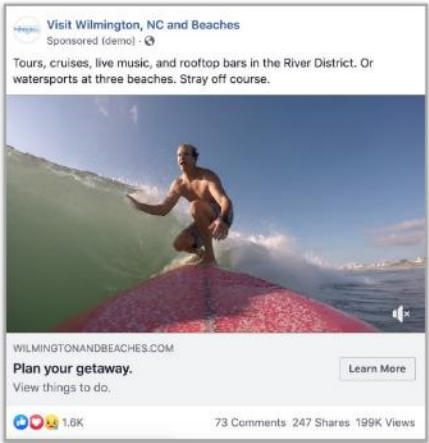


OTT

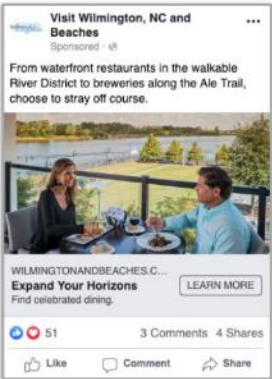
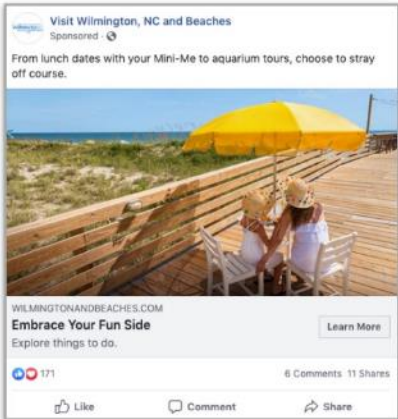
social



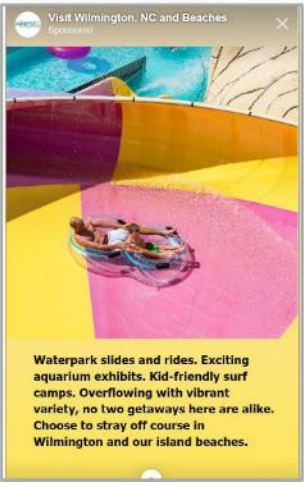
FB lead



FB video



FB news feed



IG stories



IG news feed

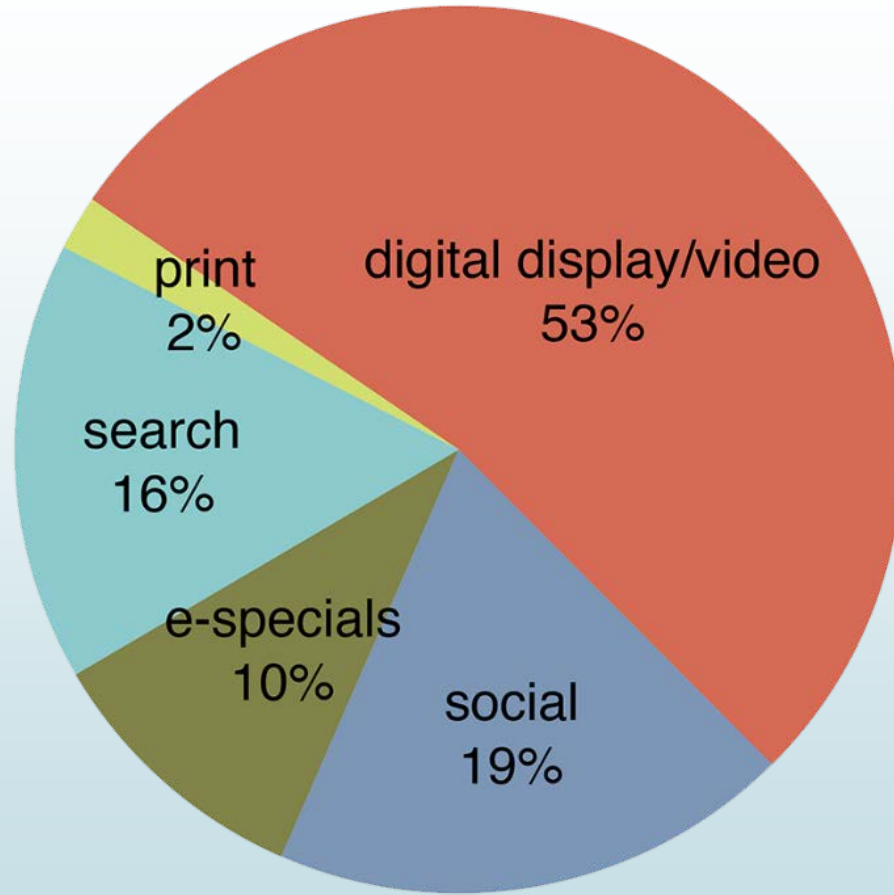


FB canvas

Campaign Results Overview



FY18-19 Inquiries



475,564 Total Inquiries

- **Total spend: \$855,680**
- **Overall campaign CTR performed 12x above industry benchmark**
- **Google Display** is the most cost efficient tactic; Spring search **CTR up 24%**
- **Social lead ads** performed highest in social channels with a **58% conversion rate for especial sign-ups**
- **Eblasts** have highest engagement of any tactic
- **Pre-roll video VCR is 92%**, 26% above industry benchmark; 4.9 million views

FY18-19 Travel Intent Indicators

Website Metrics

- Over **2.36 million** website sessions **up by 28%** and **4.75 million** page views **up by 11%**
- **Paid media** generated over **472,000** website sessions, representing 20% of total traffic
- **Downstream exit links** generated **429,000 clicks** to industry partners
- **Organic search traffic up by 34%**

FY18-19 Travel Intent Indicators

Conversion Metrics

- **E-Special subscribers** remained flat with transition to new marketing automation platform and cleaning of lists; Total area subscribers **120,000**
- **Visitor Guide requests up 32%**; Total area requests **130,000**

PR MEDIA OUTREACH RESULTS

27 EARNED PLACEMENTS

7 Print

19 Online

1 Broadcast

\$362K AD VALUE

\$1M PR VALUE






10M IMPRESSIONS



*Annual PR budget of \$27,000

TOTAL W&B SOCIAL SUBSCRIBERS = 163,478

TOTAL AREA SUBSCRIBERS = 436,703

| | FANS (as of 6.30.19) | % INCREASE (since 7.1.18) |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|
|  | 111,189 | 3.2% |
|  | 21,172 | 2.2% |
|  | 29,034 | 22% |
|  | 1,759 | 6.7% |
|  | 324 | 28% |

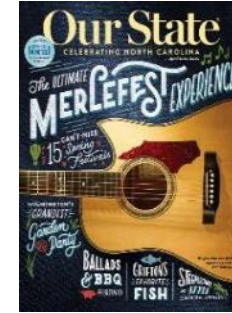
1,084,436 total area
engagements



Coverage Highlights



Budget Travel



USA TODAY



TRIPS DISCOVER

trivago magazine



WRAL TechWire



TRAVEL+ LEISURE



AARP Travel Center



CAROLINA parent

CHARLOTTE parent

The News & Observer



An Open Suitcase

ONLY IN YOUR STATE



PR Highlights 2018-2019:



- Hosted 48 Journalist/Blogger Press Trips
- Media FAM Tours:
 - Recovery Media FAM (coordinated by agency)
 - Visit NC 365 Pre-conference Media FAM
- TravMedia Intl. Media Marketplace
- TravelSouth Domestic Showcase
- Visit NC Media Events: NYC + Raleigh + Washington D.C.
- PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference
- Crisis Communications (Florence)
- Ongoing: Guest Blogs, National Travel & Tourism Week Observance, Holiday Event Guide, Navigator Newsletters



Public Relations/Communications FY 19-20 Strategies & Tactics

- **Support Marketing Dept. Initiatives**
- **Media Outreach:**
 - Themes for 2019-2020 include:
 - Ways to explore destination Beyond Summer
 - Stray Off Course
 - City + Beaches + Special Interests
- **Local Awareness of Tourism**





Sales & Services

FY 18-19 Groups Sales Results

Leads

| 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 |
|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|
| Leads | Leads | | Rooms | Rooms | | Delegates | Delegates |
| 196 | 196 | | 88,438 | 78,470 | | 82,877 | 72,820 |
| 0% | | | 13% | | | 12% | |

Booked Events

| 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 |
|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|
| Booked | Booked | | Rooms | Rooms | | Delegates | Delegates |
| 87 | 92 | | 35,292 | 37,730 | | 42,186 | 41,303 |
| <3%> | | | <6%> | | | 2% | |

Lost Business

| 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 |
|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|
| Lost | Lost | | Rooms | Rooms | | Delegates | Delegates |
| 99 | 117 | | 41,728 | 47,180 | | 32,135 | 35,552 |
| <15%> | | | <13%> | | | <10%> | |

Strategic Destination Plan



Destination Marketing

Strategic Goal: Enhance Destination Brand Awareness – To increase the market presence of the county’s community brand experiences and subsequent higher leisure travel conversion through targeted promotional strategies.

Tactics/Program Activity

Develop brand toolkit including destination branding, messaging, rights free images, and videos for download to assist industry partners in their marketing efforts

**Develop new website built for mobile-first experience to launch early 2021
Design includes responsive strategy, custom interactive thematic maps, three beach microsites, enhanced Blog program and more**

Develop bleisure marketing promotions within meetings & conventions marketing and advertising

Conduct visitor profile study and overall visitor spending analysis; interpret research results and distribute to industry partners, community and media

Work with ILM Airport consultants to determine direct air marketing partnerships

Develop direct flight/out of state aligned digital campaign



4 GREAT COASTAL Escapes

Waterfront meetings near major

Wilmington and the Beaches, North Carolina

Wilmington made *Southern Living* magazine's "The South's Best Cities" in 2019. Kim Hufham, president and CEO of the Wilmington and Beaches CVB, attributes this partially to the city's walkable River District, connected by a nearly two-mile scenic Riverwalk. Wilmington's Convention District is home to the Wilmington Convention Center—the largest convention center on North Carolina's coast.

"Its burgeoning River District combines the city's historic charm and rich past with modern design and new attractions, offering planners a fresh possibility to host a meeting at the coast," Hufham said.

Wilmington and the Beaches is 360 miles from Washington, D.C., and 300 miles or less from several major cities in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

Multiyear Research Program

Visitor Profile Study and Overall Spending Analysis

Addresses key areas such as:

- **Number of Visits**
- **Purpose of Visit**
- **Travel Season**
- **Lodging Used**
- **Itineraries/Activities/Events**
- **Trip Planning**
- **Budget/Amount Spent**
- **Method of Travel**
- **Origin of Travel**
- **Demographic Profile**
- **Opinions of Area**
- **Opportunities**



ARRIVALIST



IMPRESSION



MOVEMENT



ARRIVAL



MEASUREMENT

Visitation intelligence platform that offers insights and measurement tools to help make more informed marketing decisions

Tracks using GPS within a visitor's mobile device and is recorded upon entering the perimeter surrounding the destination

Answers key questions such as:

- **Media Lift** – How many visits were influenced by media?
- **Media Efficiency** – What are the most effective messages/content in influencing visitation?
- **Media Planning** – When should we be in market based on when visitors travel to our locations?
- **Origin Markets**- Which markets do visitors travel from?
- **Competitive Intelligence** – How are we performing compared to competitors?
- **Cross Visitation** – Where else are visitors going while in market?



Direct Flight Campaign

Objective

- Raise awareness of area as a vacation destination among top out-of-state markets that also have ILM direct flights

Tactics

- Programmatic approach (display/native, video) and targeting tactics (demographic, geographic, behavioral targeting, custom travel sites/app lists (Trivago, Google Trips, Trip Advisor, Cheap Flights, Airbnb, Delta, United, American) to efficiently reach potential visitors with a mobile skew and while they are researching travel

Timing: January-February 2020

- Ideal timing for spring/summer travel planning
- Allows coordination with PR efforts to these markets
- Short duration (2 months) allows effective media weight in each market (not spreading too thin)

Destination Sales and Services

Strategic Goal: Increase Destination Sales and Services – To achieve higher group travel conversion through targeted sales and services strategies.

| Tactics/Program Activity |
|--|
| Strengthen group meeting/convention center strategy among partners |
| Publish a Convention District brand identity and messaging toolkit |
| Secure increase in marketing funds to support a new meetings digital content and social advertising plan |
| Visitor Services needs assessment and strategy formulation |
| Assess county-wide information distribution system and digital assets needed to connect with visitors on mobile devices |

strengthen industry PARTNER strategy

- plan and execute a full year of HIP/DOS meetings
- clearly communicate CVB strategies and involve as many industry partners as possible
- bring restaurants and attractions to the table

One message

- invite and encourage industry partners to join us for tradeshow/sales calls
- search out and distribute relevant industry information through all available channels
- inform restaurants and attractions about groups that may be in town

Continuously evolve our Visitor Services to meet visitor needs

- search out the best locations to service our guests, increase number of on site booths
- offer dedicated event landing pages to our larger conventions
- Encourage “bliesure” activities for a better experience, and increased possibility of return

Enhanced visitor experience

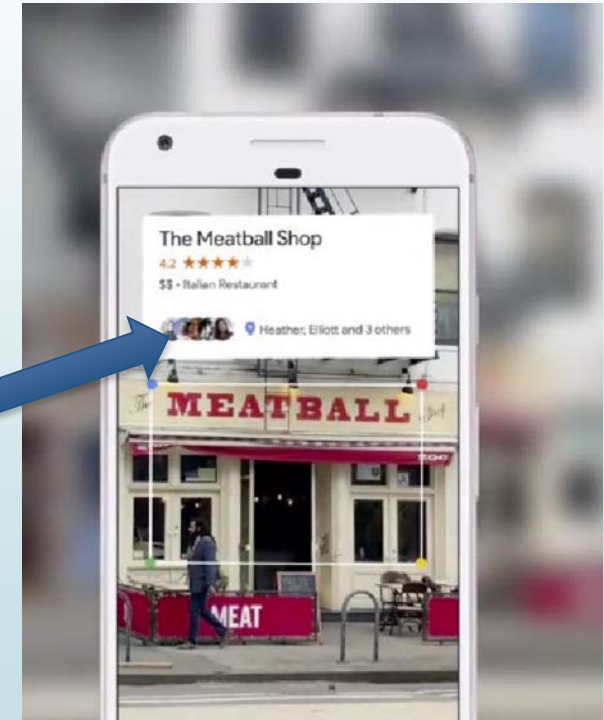
- increase the number of groups we service on site during their event
- gather and distribute restaurant and attraction coupons to large groups
- use locals guide/special interest content to diversify visitor engagement

Digital Conversion Assets

Develop personalized digital strategies for mobile platforms to improve marketing effectiveness and increase conversion in an on-demand world

Trends

- **Chat:** Text-based messaging services allow visitors in town to communicate in real-time with VIC specialists via their smartphone
- **Artificial Intelligence:** Alexa for Cities
- **In Destination, On-Demand:** Mobile Booking Engine Conversions
- **Visual Search and Augmented Reality:** Google's search vision of using mobile phone to point at something and get information
- **Social:** Visitor Center equipped with UGC displays in real-time



Destination Development

Strategic Goal: Facilitate Impactful Destination Development – To foster and fully support the development of more diverse and quality branded visitor experiences and related infrastructure.

Tactics/Program Activity

Utilize General Managers' Roundtables to lead discussion of tourism/hospitality workforce challenges, needs and solutions

Work with Chambers of Commerce, local governments and interest groups to communicate needs of tourism industry in workforce development strategy dialogue

Work with educational venues to address workforce needs for inclusion in annual curriculum

Assess county-wide special interest tourism assets to address the destination's highly seasonal leisure travel with the primary focus to impact off-season travel

Build themed special interests programming around activities/attractions available in addition to the beach that can provide a lucrative vacation experience during off-seasons

Special Interests Campaign



special interests strategy

- formulate and execute a comprehensive special interests tourism strategy (ways to experience the destination beyond the beach)

audience

.....

perception

today

tomorrow

Wilmington and
Beaches is a beach
destination

Wilmington and Beaches
is **more than just a
beach destination**
(beyond summer)

brand

city and beaches

city + beaches + food
+ breweries + culture
+ nightlife/music + parks/
gardens +wellness
activities

**fall audience:
special interests
focused**

**expanding demographics and geographies
to include these added tactics:**

- skew younger
- male targeting
- special interest targeting
- introduce northern out-of-state markets later
in the fall

why is this important?

- offset any “just a beach town” perceptions
- combat shoulder season visitation dip
- show the versatility the destination has to offer
- capture new lucrative audience segments

special interest strategic summary

Each season brings new ways to experience things beyond what other coastal communities - without the anchor of an urban city center like Wilmington – can offer.

Though it's a coastal destination, the area is much more than just a beach town. Take a stroll and find breweries, music, unique eats, local culture, and unrivaled experiences around every corner.

Our beaches, Wrightsville, Carolina, and Kure, are known for their stunning beauty and seasonal things to do, but there is a collection of unique activities to experience off the beaten path. Enjoy sand and surf, and venture beyond the beach and try something new.

Wilmington, NC and beaches is where you go to stray off course for a complete coastal experience in the city, at the beach, and beyond.

Special Interests Activities

Fit for Foodie

Arts, History & Culture

Hidden Sanctuaries/Hidden Gems

Nightlife/Ways to Experience Live Music

Craft Breweries + Craft Cocktails + Waterfront Food & Drinks with a View

Active Lifestyle + Wellness Activities

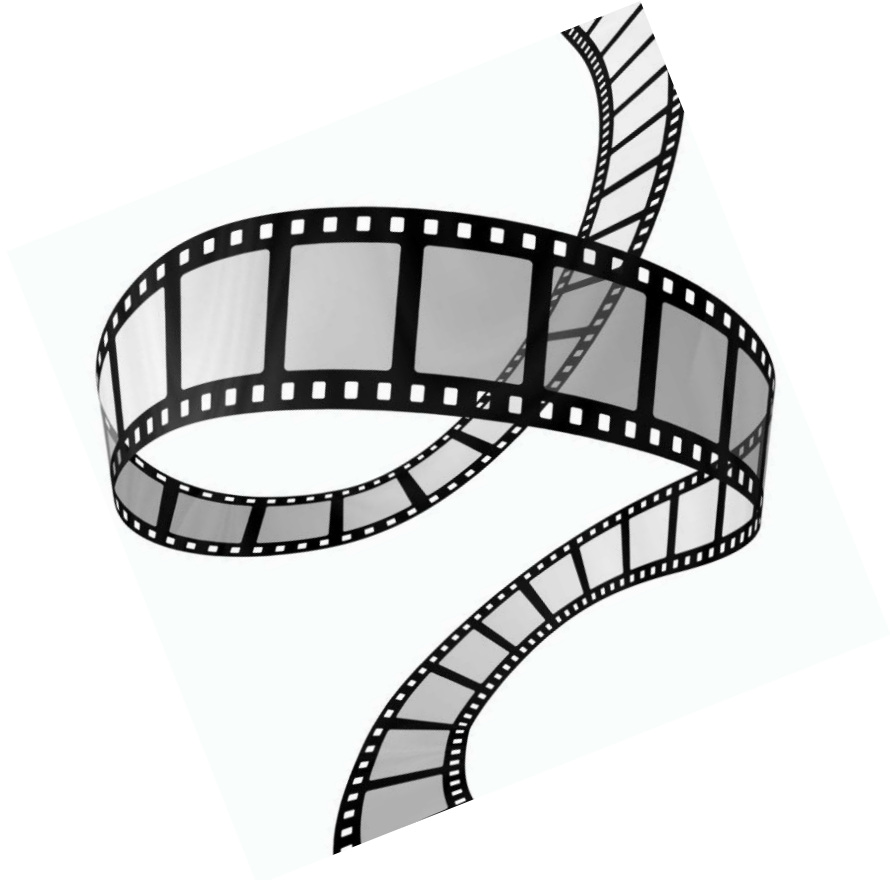
Eco-Adventure, Parks and Gardens

Experiences on the Water

Tours & Cruises

Neighborhoods

And now for your viewing entertainment....



Special Interests Creative

Objectives:

- Develop creative assets to tell stories through video that support activities and the people behind them in more depth
- Create visuals that move beyond water related activities in the spring and summer
- Build related website content for advertising and PR landing pages

STRIKE A NEW CHORD

Bluegrass jam sessions on the patio. Craft cocktails and farm- and sea-to-table fare. Carriage rides through one of the country's largest historic districts. With each neighborhood full of distinct character, Wilmington and its island beaches greet every visitor like a local. Whether you explore the historic charm or seek out funky new venues and speakeasies, choose to stray off course.

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Wilmington.c
River District +
Island Beaches
Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

WilmingtonAndBeachesTravel.com • 877-945-6386

EXPERIENCE A CHANGE OF PACE

Carriage rides through the historic district. Civil War fort tours. Downtown sculpture installations. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From the NC Azalea Festival to an oceanfront park, choose to stray off course.

Wilmington.C. River District &
Island Beaches

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

FIND YOUR OWN RHYTHM



Crafted cocktails at piano bars. Carriage rides through historic downtown. Majestic theaters. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From Harbor Island walking tours to celebrated waterfront dining, choose to stray off course.

WilmingtonAndBeachesNC.com • 877-945-6386

Wilmington.C. River District & Island Beaches

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

DRINK IN THE SIGHTS



Happy hours at rooftop bars. Brew Bus tours along the Ale Trail. Downtown gallery tours. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From the North Carolina Azalea Festival to world-class surfing, choose to stray off course.

WilmingtonAndBeachesNC.com • 877-945-6386

Wilmington.C. River District & Island Beaches
Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Breathtaking gardens and arboretums. Sunset concerts by the water. Yoga on a WWII battleship or a pier. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From jogging and hiking trails on The Loop around the island to wine and beer festivals, choose to stray off course.

Wilmington.c. River District & Island Beaches

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

TRY A NEW CRAFT



Blossoming craft breweries. Historic settings filled with art. Gourmet food tours. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From a haunted pub crawl to enchanted Airlie Gardens, choose to stray off course.

WilmingtonAndBeachesNC.com • 877-945-6386

Wilmington.C. River District & Island Beaches

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach



SAVOR HOMEGROWN FLAVOR

Jazz concerts at historic Bellamy Mansion. Civil War fort tours. Hollywood film sites. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From celebrated farm-to-table dining to an oceanfront park, choose to stray off course.

WilmingtonAndBeachesNC.com • 877-945-6386

Wilmington.C. River District &
Island Beaches

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

CAST AWAY WITH YOUR CREW

A World War II battleship tour. River-to-sea biking trails. Fitness events like IRONMAN 70.3 North Carolina. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From art and history museums for the curious to guided fishing charters, choose to stray off course.

Wilmington.C. River District & Island Beaches

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS



Walkable River District with waterfront restaurants. Concerts on the event pier. Scenic cruises and tours. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From Broadway shows to the Seafood, Blues & Jazz Festival, choose to stray off course.

WilmingtonAndBeachesNC.com • 877-945-6386

Wilmington.C. River District & Island Beaches

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

Fall is the perfect time to savor the blossoming foodie scene and the shades of scenic coastal landscapes of Carolina Beach. From new sea-inspired dining options to award-winning chefs elevating meals into art, your senses will soar with the flavors of the season. There are a lot of beaches in North Carolina, but only one Carolina Beach.



APPS & CHATS

STAY ORIGINAL



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CarolinaBeachStories.com | 800-833-3165

Trails, Undiscovered.

Besides hiking trails, eco-adventures, and favorite fishing spots, you can still find the kind of naturally beautiful beach you visited as a kid.

KureBeachTrip.com | 888-587-3224



North Carolina's Small Wonder



Experience a renewal in Wrightsville Beach this fall. Discover newly renovated venues and fall in love again with legendary favorites offering stunning new views. Delight in fresh farm-to-table menus crafted by notable chefs. Explore an uninhabited private island on an eco-tour. There's no better time to get away.

Get a fresh view.

WrightsvilleBeachGetaways.com 800-650-8921

DMO Advocacy and Community Relations

Strategic Goal: Engage in Influential Stakeholder Relations – To inform on the importance and value of tourism and the effective roles and responsibilities and beneficial impacts of the Wilmington and Beaches CVB.

Tactics/Program Activity

Develop **5 min. video** touting benefits of tourism in NHC

Publish **Fiscal Year-End Report**

Create Local Media Plan that expands **proactive outreach** on tourism benefits to NHC economy

Develop TDA/CVB role and importance of tourism talking points for speaking engagements

Establish **annual tourism legislative issues agenda** with NHCTDA Board of Directors

Present issues to the NHCTDA Board of Directors for tourism policy and process positions

Maximize relationships with elected officials and business/industry to keep all informed of key issues and garner support

Actively participate and utilize memberships in both state and local tourism organizations

Work with NHCTDA Board of Directors to **champion those issues** at the state and local levels

DMO Resources

Strategic Goal: Affect Higher Resources Performance – To function as a fiscally responsible and accountable organization through a talented team and leveraged partnerships.

| Tactics/Program Activity |
|---|
| Align annual destination Program of Work to priority strategic initiatives |
| Strategic plan biannual status review by NHCTDA Board of Directors |
| Strategic plan annual revisions/updates |
| Increase buy-in to holistic destination wide tourism programming |
| Meet with beach towns leadership to evaluate current procedures and committee make-up and effectiveness |

Thank You!

