



Greetings!

Welcome to a special edition Industry Update in conjunction with [National Travel and Tourism Week](#). Celebrated annually the first full week in May, NTTW was created by Congress in 1983 to elevate the economic power of travel in the U.S.

Last year, NTTW highlighted the Spirit of Travel in recognition of our industry's resiliency. This year, we start a new chapter, one where the [POWER OF TRAVEL](#) will drive recovery and help define the path forward in the wake of a global pandemic.

This past year was beyond challenging. The coronavirus pandemic devastated every sector of the travel industry with staggering declines in 2020, affecting every community in the country, including New Hanover County.

The Wilmington and Beaches CVB continues to be in awe of how local hospitality and travel partners responded by pivoting and adapting to ever-evolving executive orders, CDC guidelines, and visitor expectations.

Hope is now on the horizon as the most recent [Destination Analysts Coronavirus Travel Sentiment Index Report](#) shows that levels of comfort with travel and travel readiness continue to rise and enthusiasm for travel continues to increase.

Together we will lead the industry's role in bringing back our vibrant community, restoring our economy, rebuilding our workforce, and reconnecting with our valued visitors. Collectively, we are the **Power of Travel**.

Here are some points to consider as we share the **Power of Travel** with staff, local residents, business owners, community leaders, elected officials, friends and family:

The Power of Travel has been a consistent driver of New Hanover County's economy and workforce, and 83% of travel and tourism-dependent businesses and organizations are small businesses.

In the **United States**...

- A robust travel industry provides significant economic benefits for the nation, generating more than \$2.6 trillion in economic output in 2019, with \$1.1 trillion spent directly by travelers.
- Spending by travelers has aided state and local governments alike, generating \$180 billion in tax revenue in 2019 to support essential services and programs.
- In 2020 travel spending was down nearly \$500 billion, costing the U.S. economy \$1.1 trillion.
- The total number of U.S. travel-supported jobs fell by 34%, from 17 million in 2019 to just 11 million in 2020.
- The rebound of travel will drive the rebuilding of the U.S. economy and American workforce.

In **North Carolina**...

- Prior to the pandemic, Travel and Tourism was among the state's fastest growing industries and domestic travelers spent a record \$29.2 billion in North Carolina in 2019.
- Early estimates from Tourism Economics indicate that travel spending in 2020 was down -37% and that tax revenues were down by -31%.

In New Hanover County...

- Visitor spending infuses millions of new dollars into our local economy each year that helps to fund beach nourishment, the convention center, lifeguard programs and more.
- In 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic impact of Tourism was estimated at a record \$658.78 million, and the local travel industry provided more than 6,680 jobs, supporting a payroll of \$158.15 million. It also generated approximately \$57.91 million in state and local tax receipts, representing a \$245.85 tax saving to each county resident.
- The Power of Travel will revive New Hanover County and drive us forward to a more prosperous future.

The Power of Travel can help drive both recovery and our nation forward.

As we prepare to welcome visitors back to Wilmington and our island beaches, the Wilmington and Beaches CVB thanks you for your dedication, support, and outstanding efforts to move forward.

And in case you missed our industry partner webinar earlier this week, you can watch the recording using this link:

[IP update & Tourism Week Webinar-20210504 1353-1](#) (password: **Ec8F6Umy**). Keynote speaker Lynn Minges, president/CEO of NCRLA, delivers timely and relevant information on grants, advocacy efforts, and an inspiring NTTW message for our destination. Kimberly Vince-Cruz shares Destination Analysts encouraging key research findings and Tom Hickey with French West Vaughan presents strategic marketing updates. Also included are Room Occupancy Tax collection and CVB updates.

With Gratitude & Best Regards,

Kim Hufham

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New Hanover County's tourism industry generated more than \$658.78 million in annual economic impact in 2019, created 6,680 jobs and contributed \$58 million to the state and local tax bases. Each county resident saved an estimated \$245.85 in annual taxes.

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