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January 11, 2012

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1. U.S. TRAVEL'S DOW, CAROLINA PANTHERS' MORRISON FEATURED SPEAKERS AT N.C. GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE



Why is everyone making tracks for Concord this spring? It's because of the [N.C. Governor's Conference on Tourism](#). Top speakers Roger Dow and Danny Morrison will

be featured during the conference, March 11-13 at the Embassy Suites in Concord. U.S. Travel Association President & CEO Roger Dow will share his perspective on issues and opportunities for the nation's travel industry, including ways to reduce barriers to international visitors, improve the travel process and prove the value of travel. Danny Morrison, president of the Carolina Panthers, has proven strategies to ensure a unique customer experience for live football at a time when it's easier to stay home and watch on TV. Learn how these strategies can help you inspire customer loyalty from your visitors.

Cabarrus County tourism partners are rolling out some special discount packages for you to enjoy pre-conference. Check out [www.visitcabarrus.com/ncqc](http://www.visitcabarrus.com/ncqc) and plan to arrive early.

For hotel reservations, please call (704) 455-8200. To ensure the group rate, identify yourself as a N.C. Governor's Conference on Tourism attendee, or provide the group code (CHT). If you prefer to register online, click [here](#). The cut-off date to secure the \$135 rate is **Feb. 27**.

Watch NewsLink or visit the [Governor's Conference website](#) for frequent updates, including a link to [online registration](#), the conference agenda and hotel information. To learn more about becoming a sponsor, contact [Heidi Walters](#) at (919) 715-6702.

## **2. 'BACHELORS & BACHELOTTES' NEEDED FOR GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE SESSION**

The Division is recruiting destination representatives who are attending the N.C. Governor's Conference to compete for a "date" with a prominent media "bachelor" or "bachelorette" and a chance to showcase their community for two days. The panel session is based on the 1960's hit "The Dating Game," so the media will be asking the destinations a series of questions about their community's tourism assets, with the ultimate goal of choosing one of the three communities for a two-day visit to that destination.

To be considered, please answer the short survey below and submit to [Maureen Haley](#).

- Name, title and organization.
- From your perspective, what is the most compelling current tourism story idea from your destination?
- If your destination were a person, describe its personality in 50 words or less.

## **3. N.C. STRONG AT ABA MARKETPLACE, HIGHLIGHTS N.C. FOR 2013 EVENT**

More than 35 industry partners joined the Division at the American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace 2012, one of the premier industry events for group travel, held Jan. 6-10 in Grapevine, Texas. To give all delegates at this year's Marketplace a preview of what to expect when [Charlotte hosts ABA Jan. 5-9, 2013](#), the Division, Visit Charlotte and numerous N.C. partners hosted the final night's dinner event, with the Alice in Wonderland-related theme "Welcome to Wonderland." Assistant Sec. Lynn Minges addressed the group and helped take them on a journey "down the rabbit hole to experience the wonders of North Carolina." Over 3,600 attended the trade show, including more than 700 tour operators. The Division alone had more than 30 appointments with tour operators during the week, and combined with the appointments taken by NC industry partners, tourism in the state was heavily promoted to all operators at the show. The North Carolina contingent also hosted an invitation-only dinner at Austin Ranch for more than 70 tour operators.

Partners attending ABA included Academic Travel Services, Asheville CVB, The Billy

Graham Library, Biltmore Estate, Cabarrus County CVB, Carolina Premium Outlets, Charlotte Motor Speedway, Christian Tours, Coach America, Days Inn Oceanfront Wright Brothers, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Fayetteville Area CVB, Flat Rock Playhouse, Hampton Inn Asheville, Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel, Hilton Garden Inn Kitty Hawk, Holiday Inn Biltmore East Blue Ridge Parkway, NASCAR Hall of Fame, North Carolina's Northeast Commission, Outer Banks VB, Ramada Plaza Resort & Conference Center, Visit Charlotte and Young Transportation. The Division met with industry partners Monday evening to share leads and discuss market trends. The Division will make these qualified leads available in the coming weeks; contact [Kristi Driver](#) at (919) 733-7413 to receive them via e-mail.

Motorcoaches bring millions of visitors who support local economies, and provide efficient, flexible and cost effective transportation. According to the ABA Foundation's Economic Impact of the Motorcoach Tourism Industry, the motorcoach industry has a [direct impact in North Carolina](#) of \$708,506,637 and directly contributes over 10,000 jobs to the state. For more information, click [here](#).

#### **4. DIVISION'S TRAC WORKS TO HELP BUSINESSES TO SMITHFIELD AREA & SURROUNDING COUNTIES ON FEB. 16**

The Division is bringing its Tourism Resource Assistance Center (TRAC) program to Smithfield on **Feb. 16** from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Johnson County Visitors Bureau on 235-A East Market Street to meet one-on-one with local and regional tourism-related businesses to help them engage more fully with programs offered by Commerce and its partners. Offered in partnership with the Johnston County VB, TRAC will bring the Division's program managers to the area for a day of one-on-one discussions of the nuts and bolts of working with the Division. Independent artisans, dining, lodging, retail entrepreneurs, and outdoor, event and attractions owners and managers from Smithfield and surrounding towns and counties are encouraged to drop by. There is no charge to attend and no reservation is required. Businesses will be able to learn about the Division's research, development and marketing services, and discuss best practices in reaching travelers, the media and increasing tourism visitation and spending.

Representatives from the N.C. Dept. of Commerce will also be on hand to discuss services it provides businesses such as strategic planning, assistance with identifying funding sources, and as liaisons with other local, state and federal agencies.

Attractions, lodging, dining, retail outlets and events comprise the state's \$17 billion tourism industry and sustain jobs for nearly 200,000 North Carolinians. For additional information on this session, to schedule a specific appointment time or to learn more about scheduling a TRAC visit to your community, contact [André Nabors](#) at (919) 733-7502 or [Eleanor Talley](#) at (919) 733-0869.

#### **5. 'ONE TREE HILL'S' IMPACT FELT BEYOND TV SHOW**

"One Tree Hill" was more than just a beloved TV series shot in Wilmington. The show's tentacles reached throughout Wilmington's film community, keeping crew – ranging from prop masters to carpenters – [employed and allowing the area to recruit future productions](#). Essentially, "One Tree Hill" kept the Wilmington film community in business. Crew members said everybody in the community worked on the show at some point during its nine-year-run. Johnny Griffin, director of the Wilmington Regional Film Commission, said the show allowed the film commission to market Wilmington by showing producers a successful production being shot in the city and provided work and revenue for businesses, including tourism from fans. The show spent about a million

dollars an episode for nine seasons starting in 2003, Griffin said. The series averaged about 20 episodes a season spending more than \$180 million in the region.

## **6. U.S. TRAVEL OUTLOOK EXAMINES INDUSTRY TRENDS TO WATCH**

The U.S. economy is expected to continue modest growth in 2012, says the [January issue of the U.S. Travel Outlook](#). While some uncertainty remains, recent economic data has outperformed expectations. The housing market is showing slight gains, and the labor market appears to be strengthening. Employment in the travel industry rose by 7,000 in December and accounted for seven percent of jobs created last year.

The U.S. Travel Association expects about a 1.5 percent increase in domestic travel in 2012, while international travel to the U.S. is expected to increase by over 3 percent. Hotel demand is expected to slow in 2012, though ADR is expected to pick up to about an increase of 4 percent over 2011. Business travel is forecasted to do well this year. According to Deloitte, 85 percent of business travelers surveyed expect to take the same number or more trips in 2012 than in 2011. Nearly half of the younger (18-29-year-olds) say they prefer their favorite hotel brand even if the location isn't the most convenient. They also prefer working in more social settings such as the lobby or common areas.

Leisure travel is expected to grow about 1.5 percent this year, led by auto travel. The Hotel Interactive Trend Watch 2012 notes people are traveling just as much, but by car and children are determining the travel agenda. These markets are the ones to tap. Traveling sports teams and even spelling bees are giving parents reasons to book rooms. Most travelers, however, expect to spend about the same as this year. According to a new research study by the Atmosphere Research Group, pricing pressure is frustrating many leisure travelers.

Robert Rauch, president of a San Diego-based hospitality management company, has compiled and released his list of Top 10 hospitality industry trends for 2012. Many of the trends are related to technology changes. Rauch predicts that online bookings will continue to grow modestly and there will be more mobile bookings and research. Google, according to Rauch, is projecting that mobile will overtake PCs as the most common Web-based device by 2013. Social media will continue to transform connections with travelers. Says Rauch, by 2016 half of the travel industry will be using social media as a way of generating revenue and bookings.

Marketing trend reports are common, especially at the beginning of the year, reports American Express Open Forum, but Landor brand strategy consultants have spelled out the most relevant for the coming year. The popularity of abstract brands will force marketers to become better storytellers, says Landor, and don't forget about the Boomers. There are 77 million of them in the U.S. and they control over half of discretionary spending and eighty percent of leisure travel. Another trend to follow is the ever-increasing use of photos online. Over 90 billion images have been uploaded to Facebook, says Landor. 2012 will see more and more marketers expressing their brands by regularly sharing photos electronically. As well, new applications such as Pinterest and Instagram are easily allowing photography to be used in powerful ways. To read the full article, click [here](#).

What about QR codes? Quick-response codes are everywhere these days, but [are people using them?](#) Not really, says Ad Age Digital. The codes are a great idea in theory, but only 5 percent of Americans who own mobile phones actually use them. People are confused about how to scan them, there is little uniformity among the applications that read them, and many who have used them were disappointed by the usefulness of the information offered by

them, or the fact that they were simply redirected to the company's website. This doesn't mean that marketers will stop using them, but companies need to make sure that the consumers they are targeting understand how to use them. For example, the Ad Age Digital report says, Macy's initiative last spring to educate consumers about its QR codes exceeded expectations and got much positive feedback. Use of the codes tripled after the companies national TV ad campaign educating consumers about the codes.

## **7. VISITNC.COM TENT CARDS, WINDOW DECALS STILL AVAILABLE**

Tent cards and window decals for industry partners wishing to promote tourism in North Carolina through VisitNC.com are still available. The tent cards and decals can be displayed on tabletops in restaurants and shops, at attractions, and in accommodations, including rental properties. The collateral pieces promote vacation ideas and special offers on lodging, attractions and dining using a Quick Response code (QR), a 2D bar code that contains information that can range from a website to a phone number. The tent cards fold to 4 ¾ inches high by 4 inches wide; the window decals are 5 inches high by 4 inches wide.

Using a QR code is easy, you just need a smartphone with camera and an app. Simply hold your phone up to the QR code so that you can see it on your screen. There is a pause while your phone captures the information, then the app opens to a Web page based on the info inside the QR code. The QR code on the VisitNC window decals and table tents will take a visitor to the special offers page, where they can find discounts and deals on lodging and activities throughout the state.

To order tent cards or window decals, e-mail [visitnc@ncommerce.com](mailto:visitnc@ncommerce.com) with your name, affiliation and shipping information, along with the quantity desired of each piece. While there is no cost for these materials, quantities are limited, so order yours today.

## **8. CALL CENTER INVITES ON-SITE PRESENTATIONS & UPDATED DVDS**

Schedule your presentation at the 1-800-VISIT-NC Call Center today to ensure the operators are aware of the latest tourism developments in your specific county or area. These armchair presentations allow the Call Center staff to hear first-hand about an area, its attractions and new sites. The operators also offer feedback about specific questions they receive about an area and their suggestions for additional information that would be helpful to them in fielding inquiries. The Call Center is located in Raleigh at the N.C. Correctional Institution for Women. There, the operators answer calls to 1-800-VISIT-NC and mail Travel Guides to callers and Web users. To schedule a presentation, contact [Teresa Smith](#) at (919) 715-5900.

In addition, tourism entities are invited to send the latest DVD about their area to the Call Center to be used to keep the operators up-to-date. Please mail them to Visitor Services Program Manager Wally Wazan, N.C. Division of Tourism, 4324 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4324.

## **9. DIVISION OFFICE LOBBY PROMOTES FAYETTEVILLE AREA**

The Fayetteville Area CVB is using the lobby of the Division's Raleigh offices to showcase the area's attractions through the end of February. The display features items highlighting attractions and activities in the area such as ZipQuest, Museum of the Cape Fear, Airborne & Special Operations Museum, Veterans Park, Fayetteville SwampDogs, and the area's Cultural Heritage Trails.

To promote your county through the Division's lobby, contact [Cynthia Ferguson](#) at (919)

733-7479.

#### **10. NATIONWIDE TOUR EVENT MOVES TO CHARLOTTE-AREA GOLF CLUB**

The Nationwide Tour's Chiquita Classic is [coming to the Club at Longview in Weddington](#) Sept. 27-30. The 72-hole, 156-player event will be televised by The Golf Channel and will come late in the Nationwide Tour season when players are trying to lock down spots in the top 25 on the money list which will qualify them for the PGA Tour in 2013. Chiquita announced in November it would move its headquarters to Charlotte from Cincinnati. The company has a three-year sponsorship agreement with the Nationwide Tour event at the Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course.

#### **11. N.C. SPORTS HALL OF FAME NAMES EIGHT NEW MEMBERS**

The N.C. Sports Hall of Fame announced its [newest class](#) last week. The 2012 inductees are Wilt Browning, Wray Carlton, M.L. Carr, Sam Esposito, Dr. Jerry McGee, Kristi Overton Johnson, Lennie Rosenbluth and Henry Trevathan. The honorees will be enshrined during the 49th annual induction banquet on May 10 in Raleigh.

#### **12. NCDOT HOLDING PUBLIC MEETINGS ON PROPOSED TOLL INCREASE TO RIDE FERRIES**

The NCDOT announced four public meetings this month to answer questions and receive comments about the [proposed toll increase for ferry routes](#). The new tolls will take effect April 1 as required by law after the General Assembly mandated NCDOT increase ferry revenue to \$5 million annually. Meetings are scheduled in Swan Quarter on Jan. 18, Washington on Jan. 19, Morehead City on Jan. 30, and Southport on Jan. 31. For more information, contact [Jamilie Robbins](#) at (919) 707-6085.

#### **13. STATE OFFERS CAR RECHARGING AT REST AREAS NEAR BURLINGTON & BENSON**

The N.C. Dept. of Transportation has unveiled four EV Charging Stations at [rest areas near Burlington and Benson](#) -- one each on both sides of Interstate 40/85, near the Guilford-Alamance County line and the other set at a rest area near Benson, at the junction of Interstate 40 and Interstate 95. This is in response to a growing number of electric vehicle traveling the highways. For now, DOT won't require payment to use the new stations. State law bans the agency from taking money at rest stops for anything other than vending-machine snacks and drinks. DOT obtained the machines using a \$247,000 grant from the N.C. Dept. of Commerce.

#### **14. DPAC RANKED FOURTH AMONG TOP U.S. ENTERTAINMENT VENUES**

More than 414,000 fans attended shows and events at the Durham Performing Arts Center in 2011, placing it [among the top theaters in the United States](#). The ranking comes from entertainment industry magazine Pollstar, which ranked the Durham Performing Arts Center fourth, behind Radio City Music Hall, Coliseum Theater at Caesars Palace and the Fox Theatre of Atlanta.

#### **15. VOTE FOR BEAUFORT FOR BUDGET TRAVEL'S AMERICA'S COOLEST SMALL TOWN 2012**

Budget Travel is seeking America's Coolest Small Town – and Beaufort is among the 10 nominees. To vote or to find out more, click [here](#). The contest closes **Jan. 31**.

#### **16. N.C. GREEN TRAVEL: WINERIES MAKING LIKE A GRAPEVINE**

Grapes, like all other plants, convert energy from the sun's rays. And a number of wineries are also taking advantage of the [sun's energy to produce power](#). Solar energy

and grape growing seem to go hand-in-hand for many wineries, ranging from the [very large](#) to [boutique](#) operations. The need for hot water has led many wineries to install [solar hot water systems](#). Other wineries are using the sun's energy to [produce electricity](#). Electricity produced by the sun at wineries is being used for everything from [powering insect traps](#) to [charging electric vehicles](#). And wineries are not the only beverage producer using renewable energy. [Breweries](#) are also using solar energy. Learn more about renewable energy at wineries and breweries during the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Jan. 24 free webinar. To register, click [here](#). For more information on the webinar, contact [Nathan Hingtgen](#). For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit [Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative](#).

## **17. SURVEYS, INDUSTRY, MARKETING & TRAVEL TRENDS**

**Hoteliers See Green in 'Green' Tuxedos, Tablecloths** -- As more U.S. hotels get out of recession-era cost cutting mode and into update mode, they appear to be more interested in "green" products - at least in one particular category. Textile makers say as hotels get ready to buy [new table linens and uniforms](#), they're seeking out green products that in some cases can trim their laundering bills such as machine-washable tuxedos for banquet waiters and polyester tablecloths recycled from plastic bottles.

**Cities Not Looking to Raise Visitor Taxes** -- For business travelers who'll be back on the road this new year, there's some good news: [Cities don't appear eager to increase taxes for renting a room or eating a meal](#). The National League of Cities says it's not aware of any move to raise taxes on the travel industry, with a spokesperson saying, "Any increase in taxes affects the marketability of that community, and so it's never done without careful consideration." While a handful of cities have raised travel-related taxes to deal with deep budget gaps the last year or two, some other cities have looked to travel taxes to support specific projects such as convention centers. However, a spokesperson for the GBTA Foundation notes, raising taxes on hotel rooms, restaurants or car rentals can ultimately backfire if it leads corporate meeting and travel planners to steer their dollars to cheaper destinations.

**Hotel Industry Enters 2012 on Solid Footing** -- [Hotels will continue to see strong growth in 2012](#), primarily driven by rate increases and strong, steady demand for hotel rooms, according to TravelClick's December 2011 North American Hospitality Review (NAHR). The NAHR is based on actual hotel bookings from Q4 2011 through Q3 2012. Over the next twelve months, committed occupancy is up 3 percent year-over-year; average daily rate (ADR) is up 3.6 percent; and revenue per available room (RevPAR), the top-line indicator, is tracking ahead by 5.3 percent. Charlotte, which hosts the Democratic National Convention this year, is projected to have the strongest occupancy growth in 2012.

**Web Tools Play Increasing Role in Agency Marketing** -- The American Society of Travel Agents has released the results of its exclusive 2011 Technology and Web Usage Report, which found that a substantial number of travel agents are using [elements of Web 2.0 to enhance their networking and marketing efforts](#). The study found that most agents are using Web 2.0 for promotion and brand-building rather than as a revenue or lead generator. In addition, 2011 saw a very large increase -- more than tripling-- in agencies providing mobile access to itineraries for their clients. Now in its seventh year, the survey is the only report of its kind that specifically looks at online booking revenue, Internet usage, Web 2.0 marketing, and website development from the agency's' point of view. The survey also looks closely at how agencies use the Web for supplier research and

booking.

**Fast-Casual Restaurants Gobble Up Market Share** -- Fast-food eateries are in the throes of drive-thru Darwinism as more upscale upstarts, such as Chipotle Mexican Grill and Panera Bread Co., grab market share from the likes of Taco Bell, Subway and Wendy's. Chains that are fancier than fast-food options but cheaper than sit-down alternatives are part of a hybrid sector known as [fast-casual](#) that is maturing into one of the food industry's strongest. That category is tapping into growing demand for more healthful, specialty foods that are still speedily served and moderately priced. Fast-casual is steadily poaching fast-food customers looking for better quality and sit-down diners seeking cheaper prices, according to one analyst.

**Major Changes Predicted at Airports by 2020** -- By 2020, all airports will be paperless and bags will be electronically tagged, according to the From Chaos to Collaboration report released by technology expert Amadeus. In addition, fingerprint boarding passes and eye-scanning passport control are a few of the [technological innovations](#) that will take the stress out of travel. For the full report, click [here](#).

## 18. MEDIA LEADS

**Events & Attractions Info Sought** – Writer Greta Lint seeks press materials for festivals, events and attractions for an article outlining places to visit and things to do in Spring 2012. Send press materials and 300 dpi images to [greta@gretalint.com](mailto:greta@gretalint.com). Deadline to submit information is **Jan. 13**.

**Identifying All North Carolina's Military Memorial by County** – Operation North State is working on a project to "Identify All North Carolina's Military Memorial by County," stating that, currently, there is not a complete listing in the state of all military memorials. The information can be [e-mailed](#), mailed to Operation North State at 151 Windemere Ct., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27127, or submitted [online](#) in the supplied input form. Needed information includes the memorial's name and complete address, who/what the memorial honors, date of dedication/placement, what is the memorial (road, building, flagpole, etc.), the construction materials and designer/artist (if known), and the condition of the memorial. The submission must include the name, phone and e-mail of the person submitting the information. In addition, Operation North State is hoping visitor and tourism centers around the state will contact the local media in their area to feature this project to help get folks involved.

## 19. 'NORTH CAROLINA WEEKEND'

For the week of Jan. 12 on UNC-TV's "[North Carolina Weekend](#)," get your chill on at Winterfest in Blowing Rock. Laugh out loud during the Annual Bold-Faced Liars' Showdown storytelling competition in Laurinburg. Take the kids to Discovery Place Kids in Huntersville. Enjoy the great outdoors at South Mountain State Park in Morganton. And the "House Special" samples the fare at Char in Boone. (*Please note: listings are subject to change.*) "North Carolina Weekend" is exclusively underwritten by the N.C. Division of Tourism. In addition, UNC-TV has made recent editions of "North Carolina Weekend" available online.

## 20. UPCOMING INDUSTRY MEETINGS & EVENTS

**Jan. 12** -- Vinifera Advisory Committee Meeting, Dobson

**Jan. 13** -- Muscadine Advisory Committee Meeting, Raleigh

**Jan. 13** – ANA Mini-Conference, Greenville

**Jan. 19** – N.C. Coast Host Meeting, Pine Knoll Shores

**Jan. 19-20** – MPI-Carolinas Chapter, Myrtle Beach, S.C.  
**Jan. 19-29** – Sundance Film Festival, Park City, Utah  
**Jan. 21-23** -- NC/SC Carolina Showfest Conference, Charlotte  
**Jan. 25-27** - N.C. Main Street Conference, Clayton  
**Feb. 16** – Division’s TRAC Meeting, Smithfield  
**Feb. 21** – N.C. Travel & Tourism Board Meeting, Raleigh  
**Feb. 22** -- 2nd Annual N.C. Conference on Sustainable Viticulture, Marshall  
**Feb. 24** – NC’s Northeast, State of the Region, TBD

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### **FEEDBACK WELCOME**

The N.C. Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development is committed to serving North Carolina's tourism industry. If you have feedback regarding any of the Division's programs, let your voice be heard at [visitnc@nccommerce.com](mailto:visitnc@nccommerce.com).