

visitnc newslink

A publication of the North Carolina Department of Commerce
Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development



Governor's Conference starts this Sunday

With nearly 500 travel industry leaders and marketing partners already registered, there is still time to plan your trip to the [2012 N.C. Governor's Conference on Tourism](#), in Concord March 11-13 at the Embassy Suites. Register on-site and join travel industry leaders and marketing partners from across North Carolina for a dynamic, educational program and valuable networking opportunities.

Preview exciting new cooperative marketing opportunities planned for 2012-13 at a special partner workshop, led by Director of Marketing Wit Tuttell, kicking off this year's conference at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Assistant Sec. Lynn Minges will showcase the campaign's goals, strategies, greater digital emphasis and new creative during the Division Update Tuesday morning. Throughout the conference, learn about all the available programs, how best to invest and extend your marketing dollars in collaboration with the Division, and have time to follow-up with Division staff, agencies and media partners for more details to find the best fit for your organization.

Sally Hogshead will distinguish what makes you fascinating and how to communicate that in 9 seconds or less. 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



RetireNC.com launched

Retirement marketing is a priority for numerous destination marketers across North Carolina, as confirmed in the Division's September 2011 survey of travel industry partners. Research has shown a strong connection between tourism and retirement relocation as prospective retirees explore locations and visit frequently before reaching a decision. In support of the N.C. Dept. of Commerce's Community Development Division and its Certified Retirement Community Program, the Division of Tourism has launched [RetireNC.com](#), a new microsite within the VisitNC.com family of sites. RetireNC.com provides an easy gateway for prospective retirees wanting to learn more about the quality of life advantages of retiring in North Carolina. The site provides an overview of retirement areas and those communities that have successfully completed the state's certification process. Lumberton is featured as North Carolina's first Certified Retirement Community on RetireNC.com and

customer loyalty from your visitors.

Visit the [Governor's Conference website](#) to learn more about the entire program, including the three keynote presentations and the unveiling of the Division's new branding and strategic marketing plan. While the Embassy Suites room block is sold out, other accommodations are available in close proximity to the conference. The [Great Wolf Lodge](#) is offering a \$99 rate during the conference (use code GWL2012). The [Marriott Courtyard](#) and [Residence Inn](#) are both within walking distance of the conference.



Applications being accepted for the N.C. Certified Retirement Community Program until July 31

During its last session, the General Assembly charged the Division with marketing the state's Certified Retirement Communities, which have been officially recognized for positioning themselves to attract retirees as an economic and community development strategy. The [Certified Retirement Community program](#) is for communities that are positioning themselves for retiree attraction as an economic and community development strategy. North Carolina currently enjoys a robust in-migration of retirees to the state, and the program seeks to attract retirees and those planning to retire to make their homes here. The program encourages mature market travel to North Carolina to evaluate future retirement desirability and to visit those who have chosen to retire in North Carolina.

To learn more about the program and download an application, please visit the N.C. Dept. of Commerce's Community Development Division's [website](#). For questions or more information, contact [Charlie Thompson](#) (919) 571-4900 or

more communities are currently engaged in the application process. The Division will be supporting the effort with additional marketing initiatives including search engine marketing, media relations outreach, the Travel Guide and more. North Carolina communities active in retirement marketing should be sure to link to [RetireNC.com](#).

To learn more about the Division's retirement marketing initiatives, contact Tourism Development Manager [André Nabors](#) at (919) 733-7502.

Community leaders interested in N.C.'s Certified Retirement Community Program and the certification process should contact [Charlie Thompson](#) at (919) 571-4900.



Vallis Simpson's Whirlingig in Lucama

Southern Living's 'Heroes of the New South' honors Simpson

Vollis Simpson, the Wilson County artist famous for his wind-powered whirlingigs, was featured in Southern Living's March issue as one of the magazine's "[Heroes of the New South 2012](#)." The Division used its PR Hotline to spread the word that the magazine was seeking nominations, and the N.C. Arts Council's entry for Simpson hit the right notes. The [feature on Simpson](#) included a full-page color photo showing the artist and his kinetic creations, which are collected nationally and internationally as well as in the state. *Southern Living* awarded honorable mentions to Ben Owen III of Seagrove and Jeff Polish of Chapel

[André Nabors](#) at (919) 733-7502.



Director of Tourism Marketing Wit Tuttell and Assistant Sec. Lynn Minges confer before news interview

"Deeper Connections" campaign release garners media attention

The March 1 launch of the Division's "Deeper Connections" advertising campaign led to media coverage in several North Carolina and national outlets. Assistant Sec. Lynn Minges was interviewed March 1 in [The News & Observer](#), and live on the air on the [WTVD-Raleigh 4 p.m. newscast](#). Minges was also interviewed by News 14 Carolina. The following day, the story was picked up by the national travel website [Travel Pulse](#), and [The Winston-Salem Journal](#). The Winston-Salem Journal story was also picked up by [Travel Smart News](#).

First half of 2011 shows large increase in Canadian visitation and spending

The first half of 2011 saw more than half a million (643,600) Canadian visitors to North Carolina, with more than 250,000 of them staying overnight. Total Canadian visitors spent over \$74 million in the state during this time period, according to recent data received from Statistics Canada - up 23 percent from the first half of 2010. N.C. ranked 10th in total visitation and 12th in overnight visitation by Canadian visitors to a U.S. state during January through June of 2011.

The majority of Canadian visitors during the first half of 2011

Hill/Durham in the [Arts & Culture](#) category and to the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust in Highlands in the [Eco-Preservation](#) category.



The North Carolina aisle during Travel South Showcase featured one-on-one meetings

N.C. focuses on driving group travel to N.C. during Travel South Showcase

Seventeen industry partners joined the Division at the 30th annual [Travel South Showcase](#), March 4-7 in Louisville, Ky., to promote group travel to North Carolina. Travel South Showcase draws 600 tourism professionals, including tour operators and journalists interested in learning about group travel opportunities to and within the American South. The only regional marketplace focused solely on the South, Showcase highlights Southern cultural, musical, artistic and culinary heritage.

On Sunday, Assistant Sec. for Tourism, Marketing & Global Branding Lynn Minges provided a formal briefing for tour operators and media on 'What's New' in North Carolina, in addition to offering group travel opportunities, such as Biltmore, Charlotte Motor Speedway, Grandfather Mountain, Old Salem, Cherokee, NASCAR Hall of Fame, North Carolina Zoo, Outer Banks and Battleship *North Carolina*. In partnership with the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, the N.C. delegation promoted a new quad-state marketing initiative while hosting a luncheon on Monday. The initiative, 'Mountain History,

were from Ontario (58 percent) and Quebec (23 percent). Most trips were leisure in nature, with 87 percent of visitors traveling to North Carolina for vacation or to visit friends and family. The average length of stay per visitor party was 3.6 nights, an increase from 3.2 nights in 2010.

For more information on this research, contact [Marlise Taylor](#) at (919) 733-7278.



Rethmeier: Conventions, elections provide advocacy opportunities

Blain Rethmeier, senior vice president of public affairs for the U.S. Travel Association, recently spoke with *Travel Weekly* about the Vote Travel campaign. He said the current election season provides "a prime opportunity to tout the enormous contributions that the travel industry delivers to the country." Rethmeier, who previously worked with the American Insurance Association and before that served under President George W. Bush as special assistant for communications, also cited National Travel and Tourism Week as an opportunity "to put travel on the map and showcase the power of our industry, and make policymakers recognize that this is a \$1.8 trillion industry that supports 14 million American jobs and that our views and our policy priorities are important."

He also cites the upcoming national political conventions in Charlotte and Tampa as "unique opportunities." At the conventions, "you'll have thousands of people descending upon these cities and taking part in what our industry provides on a daily basis: meetings and conventions. We hope to have a visual presence so that folks recognize that the travel industry is making [the conventions] possible. We are also hoping to go into those cities in advance of the conventions ... and provide a sort of back-of-the-house tour of what goes into putting on a convention." To read more of Rethmeier's interview, click [here](#). To learn more about the Vote Travel campaign, click [here](#).

Culture, Music & More,' includes the states of North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. This program will market the mountain areas of each of these states, by introducing newly developed multi-state itineraries. Group Travel Manager Kristi Driver scheduled appointments with tour operators throughout Showcase, while Public Relations Manager Margo Metzger had appointments with journalists.

Participating partners were Asheville CVB, Billy Graham Library, Biltmore, Cabarrus County CVB, Crystal Coast TA, Days Inn Oceanfront Wright Brothers, Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Travel & Tourism, Holiday Inn Biltmore East, Flat Rock Playhouse, NC I-95 Destinations, NASCAR Hall of Fame, Outer Banks VB, Ramada Plaza Outer Banks, Visit Charlotte, Visit Winston-Salem, and Wilson VB.



Toolkit provides planning assistance for National Travel & Tourism Week

National Travel & Tourism Week - May 5-13 - is a collective effort to promote the power of travel through customized events in communities nationwide, and this year's theme is [Vote Travel](#). The goal is to enhance the country's economy, security and perception, and recognize the cultural and social benefits created by travel and tourism. In North Carolina, Travel & Tourism Day is Wednesday, May 16.

To facilitate your local recognition of N.C. Travel & Tourism Day, use the toolkit below. From media advisories to sample

Welcome Centers schedule Tourism Week activities

The Division also works with industry partners to hold events throughout the state's nine Welcome Centers for National Travel & Tourism Week to say thank you to the state's visitors and to showcase area attractions. Scheduled dates are May 7: I-40 West; May 9: I-77 North; May 10: I-26 East, I-77 South and I-95 North; and May 11: I-26 West, I-85 North, I-85 South, and I-95 South. To coordinate participation at one of the N.C. Welcome Centers, please [contact a Welcome Center manager](#).



Cape Hatteras National Seashore

N.C.'s National Parks boost economy, support jobs

Visitors to the National Park System contributed more than \$31 billion to local economies and supported 258,000 jobs throughout the United States in 2010, an increase of \$689 million and 11,500 jobs over 2009, according to a report issued by the National Park Service (NPS) last week. North Carolina is among the states receiving the greatest economic benefits from NPS visitor and payroll spending. In 2010, there were more than 17 million recreational visits to national parks in North Carolina, resulting in more than \$700 million in visitor spending and supporting more than 11,000 jobs. To read the entire report and to see details by park, click [here](#).

proclamations, you'll find examples below from the U.S. Travel Association to help you localize your Travel & Tourism Week activities. [Download the full toolkit here](#) or download individual pieces using the links below:

- [Logos](#)
- [How To Rally: Staging Travel Rally Day in Your Community](#)
- [Great Ideas to Celebrate National Travel and Tourism Week](#)
- [Rally Day Sample Invitation Letter for Elected Officials](#)
- [Rally Day Sample Invitation Letter for Industry/Community](#)
- [Rally Day Checklist](#)
- [Sample Proclamation](#)
- [Sample Media Advisory](#)
- [Sample Op-Ed](#)
- [Sample Press Release](#)
- [Social Media Tips](#)
- [Sample Proclamation](#)
- [Power of Travel Coalition Advocacy Webinar Series](#)
- [Power of Travel Coalition Sign Up Sheet](#)
- [U.S. Travel Answer Sheet](#)

To access Division research on the economic impact of tourism in your county, click [here](#).



N.C. I-795: 'smoothest road in nation'

Interstate 795 in Eastern North Carolina, known for years as one of the state's worst road-building blunders, now is being honored as the [smoothest asphalt highway in the United States](#). S.T. Wooten Corp. of Wilson won a \$5.9 million contract to rebuild an 8-mile section of I-795, and now its repair work has won the top award from a national industry group: the National Asphalt Pavement Association gave Wooten and the N.C. Dept. of Transportation its 2011 Sheldon G. Hayes Award for excellence in asphalt pavement construction. Wooten officials will celebrate the honor with NCDOT engineers today at a state Board of Transportation meeting in Raleigh. The road was examined by pavement experts from Auburn University after it was rebuilt in 2009, and scrutinized for its smoothness by more experts again last year. 'This is the highest asphalt pavement award that there is, and it's highly sought after, and there's a lot of competition,' said Christie Barbee, executive director of the Carolina Asphalt Pavement Association. 'It's not as simple as dumping something black out there and then rolling over it.'



Cherohola Skyway

National Scenic Byways in N.C. could suffer from funding cuts

Just as a recent report illuminates the [Blue Ridge Parkway's economic impact](#) on its gateway communities, pending federal legislation could deal a blow to the parkway and other scenic roadways across Western North Carolina. The proposed American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act of 2012, introduced by U.S. Rep. John Mica, of Florida, aims to [repeal the National Scenic Byways Program](#), which was established in 1992 to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. A Senate version of the bill would keep funding for the byways program, shifted to general funding to be distributed by the states rather than at the federal level, said Anaise Berry, president of the National Scenic Byways Foundation. In the past decade, the parkway has received more than \$1 million in grants from the federal program, part of \$9.5 million in byways funds the state has received since 1992. "We're working with legislators to

DNC to generate \$6 million for Cabarrus County

Cabarrus County in September will host hundreds of delegates from nine states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia for the Democratic National Convention. The 11 delegations will be clustered at various hotels near Bruton Smith Boulevard at Exit 49 of Interstate 85. Hotel assignments for the 6,000 delegates expected at the 2012 DNC were announced earlier this month. Together, the delegations are expected to generate about \$6 million for the Cabarrus area, according to the Cabarrus County CVB. John Mills, executive vice president with CVB, said the influx of visitors could boost business for dry cleaners, event planners, restaurants, hotels, retail and other area attractions. 'The economic impact is very powerful,' said Mills. 'Those are conservative numbers, but we want to put out a number we are comfortable with.'



SoCon tournament returns to Asheville, expected to bring \$4 million to area

Thousands of fans crowded downtown Asheville last Sunday for men's and women's semifinal games for the Southern Conference basketball tournament, giving area businesses a big boost during what is typically a slow time of the year. The SoCon tournament, back in Asheville after a 16-year absence, is expected to have an annual economic impact of about \$4 million.

educate them on the benefits of the program on tourism, economic development programs and as a catalyst for visitor-based economic development, especially in rural areas," Berry said. National Scenic Byways in North Carolina are the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Forest Heritage National Scenic Byway, the Cherohala Skyway, and the Outer Banks Scenic Byway.



Orchid Conservatory Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden in Belmont

Daniel Stowe to host garden gala for DNC

Walt Israel, director of Gaston County Tourism, hopes Democratic National Convention participants visit Gaston County. Israel hopes Gaston hotels will attract the overflow from the service end of the convention - media people, Secret Service staff and the like. They're more likely to be around for weeks instead of the shorter stays by the delegates. Gaston has about 1,480 hotel rooms available, and there will be stiff competition for that space on Labor Day weekend and the week before. That's when the Shelby Hamfest is held in Dallas. Four years ago, the event moved from the Cleveland County Fairground in Shelby to Gaston County. Last year, about 12,800 ham radio enthusiasts from 30 states showed up. Many camped in RVs, but lots more stayed in local hotels.

In early February, convention officials announced a dozen venues had been picked for delegate receptions, and the list includes a



Asheville, Biltmore hosting 2016 Cyclo-cross

USA Cycling has selected Asheville and Biltmore Estate to host the [2016 Cyclo-cross National Championships](#). The five-day national championships will be in January 2016. The race is expected to bring in 1,500-1,800 athletes and up to 5,000 spectators, VanCamp said, with an estimated economic impact of more than \$1 million during the typically slow time for tourism. Cyclo-cross is a spectator-friendly event. The discipline combines elements of road cycling and mountain bike racing on a closed course of varying terrain, including grass, pavement, dirt, mud, sand and gravel. At times, racers must dismount and carry their bikes. According to USA Cycling, cyclo-cross is the fastest growing segment of cycling sports in the country, with a 200-percent growth in participation in the past five years.

New National Water Trails System to promote healthy, accessible rivers

U.S. Sec. of the Interior Ken Salazar last week unveiled the [National Water Trails System](#), a new network that will increase access to water-based outdoor recreation, encourage community stewardship of local waterways, and promote tourism that fuels local economies across America. Salazar signed a [Secretarial Order](#) that establishes national water trails as a class of national recreational trails under the National Trails System Act of 1968. The order sets the framework for Secretarial designation of water trails that will help facilitate outdoor recreation on waterways in and around urban areas, and provide national recognition and resources to existing, local water trails. Chattahoochee River Water Trail in Georgia will be the first river to be designated as a National Water Trail under the new system. The National Park Service will

Gaston site - Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden in Belmont. The garden will host an outdoor party for up to 700 people on the evening of Sept. 2. The garden will look a little different in the fall when the convention delegates arrive than it does now. Plants will have had all summer to develop, and butterflies will be at their peak. The garden tells the story of the butterfly life cycle through exhibits and a special area at the top of the Meadowood Walk. The 'Summer of Color' display of 250 plant varieties will be going on and give the delegates plenty to talk about after their visit to the garden.

Within 380 acres along the banks of Lake Wylie, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden already has a national reputation. Attendance is about 110,000 people annually - from all 50 states and several foreign countries. It has been named one of the top 25 gardens in the country by HGTV and was named one of the top 10 gardens at which to enjoy fall by USA Today.



CIAA brings big business to uptown Charlotte

The 100th anniversary of the CIAA Tournament appears to have been [a successful one](#) for uptown Charlotte businesses. According to the Charlotte Regional Visitors Bureau, the 2011 CIAA Tournament pumped \$44.3 million into the city's economy. Organizers expected this year's event to have an even greater impact. Last year organizers said more than 190,000 people attended CIAA events. Bar and

coordinate the national water trail nomination process. With each designation, signage, technical assistance and resources will be provided to build on and promote the development of quality water trails. Water trails that are designated can become catalysts for restoring the health of local waterways throughout the community.



NPS announces upcoming concessions business opportunities

The National Park Service intends to issue three new prospectuses in early May soliciting for proposals in response to business opportunities to operate lodging, retail, food and beverage and campground facilities within the Blue Ridge Parkway, including:

- Folk Art Center: Craft Sales and limited food and beverage services at the Folk Art Center in Asheville. The Folk Art Center is located at Milepost 382.0. The existing concessioner does not have leasehold surrender interest in the facilities. The total gross receipts were \$1,602,257 in 2010.
- Peaks of Otter: Lodging, retail, and food and beverage visitor services at Bluffs Lodge in Laurel Springs plus Virginia's Peaks of Otter Lodge near Bedford and the Rocky Knob Cabins near Meadows of Dan are combined under one concession contract. Bluffs Lodge and Coffee Shop, located at Parkway milepost 241, near Laurel Springs includes a 24-room hotel, coffee shop and small gift shop Peaks of Otter Lodge, located at Parkway milepost 86, near Bedford, Va., includes 63 guest rooms, a restaurant and lounge and two gift shops. Rocky Knob Cabins, located at Parkway milepost 174, near Meadows of Dan, Va., is comprised of 7 rustic cabins with kitchens and a central bath/shower house. The total gross receipts for

restaurant owners said the crowds this year already seemed to be larger. One fan said, "I plan to spend about \$5,000 this weekend. I've already spent more than \$1,000 and we've only been here a few hours." He and his friends expected to attend several of the CIAA parties in uptown, where some of the parties had cover charges of nearly \$200.



Concord company excited to see their work in 'Hunger Games'

ButlerBuilt Professional Seat Systems - normally associated with motorsports - is going to get to see several of their hand-crafted seats on the big screen this month. Starting March 23, the [shop is going to see their chairs](#), their work in 'The Hunger Games,' the movie that is set to be the biggest blockbuster of the year. 'The art director and one of the prop people came down, described what they needed,' said a ButlerBuilt worker. The chairs were a perfect fit for one of the scenes in 'The Hunger Games,' so the prop director ordered a dozen of them.

the operations included in this solicitation were \$4,151,615 in 2010.

- Otter Creek: Retail, food and beverage and campground visitor services at Virginia's Otter Creek will be combined under one concession contract. Otter Creek Restaurant, Gift Shop and Campground, located at Parkway milepost 61, include a 65-site campground, restaurant and gift shop/camper store. The total gross receipts for the operations included in this solicitation were \$270,659 in 2010.

For questions or comments, please contact [Laura Nelson](#), concessions management specialist, at (828) 348-3407. National Park Service prospectuses are posted, in full, on the Service's Commercial Services [website](#).



N.C. GreenTravel: Waste reduction at a property

The [NC GreenTravel](#) recognition program gives almost 30 points for waste reduction measures. This includes points for having a soap reuse program, using bulk or dispensers for guest amenities, but the majority of the points come from having a recycling program in place and recycling various items. Many items are already most likely recycled in the back-of-the-house, such as cardboard and aluminum, but far fewer attractions and accommodations have recycling in the front-of-the-house. Typically, there are two separate but related reasons why tourism organizations are hesitant to have a front-of-the-house recycling program. The first is because many guests use front-of-the-house recycling bins like a trash bin, which means staff must sort through the recycling or just throw the recycling in with the trash. The second reason is because management fears having such a program will detract from the visitor experience. Every attraction and accommodation should develop its own recycling program to meet the needs of its guests and staff, but there are some [general resources](#) that have been developed that can help you get started on developing a program for your business. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact [Tom Rhodes](#) at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or [Alex Naar](#) at (252) 737-1346.



Division Lobby.

Division office lobby promotes Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba counties

The Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Hickory Metro CVB, and the Burke and Alexander TDAs are using the lobby of the Division's Raleigh offices through April 30 to showcase their areas' attractions. The display features items highlighting things to see and do in the region. Prominently featured in the displays are exhibits from the Hickory Metro CVB spotlighting the Hickory Metro Theater, Catawba Science Center, Hickory Furniture Mart and area furniture galleries, Green Room Community Theater, The Beanstalk Journey, South Mountains State Park and the Catawba Valley Pottery & Antiques Festival. Additionally, Valdese is highlighted with a *what is Waldensian* mannequin and Historic Valdese destination guide. Caldwell County features a variety of artwork including metal sculptures by Keith Willis and pottery pieces plus brochures and books. Caldwell County also displays hints of the in-progress project by artist Thomas Sayre.

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

T+L: Blowing Rock among America's Prettiest Winter Towns

Travel + Leisure named Blowing Rock among its [America's Prettiest Winter Towns](#), places where you can wander among beautiful historic streets with eclectic businesses and scenic surroundings. For [Blowing Rock](#), the magazine noted the Blue Ridge Parkway passes by this century-old mountain town, whose Main Street has shops for antiques, crafts, even dulcimers. Streams trickling through quiet forests banked with snow inspire exploring and reflection.

Surveys, Industry, Marketing & Travel Trends

PhoCusWright: Managed U.S. business travelers: Monitored or manhandled? - A new report from PhoCusWright reveals that despite being governed by travel policy, a majority of managed business travelers in the U.S. still have [considerable discretion over which travel brands and booking channels they use](#). According to *PhoCusWright's U.S. Business Traveler: Managed, Unmanaged and Rogue*, less than 15 percent of managed business travelers are required to use a particular airline, hotel or car rental company when they travel, and less than a third must use their company's preferred booking tool or agency. While companies frequently encourage the use of certain brands or booking methods, their policies are flexible and provide business travelers the leeway to make travel planning decisions based on convenience, price and other factors.

Electric vehicles get boost from hotels and car rental companies -- Hoteliers and car rental companies are taking steps, jointly and independently, to [increase both the number of electric vehicles available for rent and the number of stations to recharge them](#). The steps, albeit small ones, mark the travel industry's first major effort to serve a broader contingent of customers looking to save both gas and the environment by driving plug-in vehicles. It has been about 15 months since the first mass-produced plug-in vehicles -- the Nissan Leaf, an all-electric vehicle, and the Chevrolet Volt, an extended-range



Wrightsville Beach featured sweepstakes on VisitNC.com

"Wrightsville Beach: Enjoy the Easy Island Life" sweepstakes is the March featured homepage sweepstakes on VisitNC.com, courtesy of the Wilmington and Beaches CVB. One lucky winner will win a three-night waterfront stay for four at the Blockade Runner Beach Resort, paddleboard or kayak rentals from Hook, Line & Paddle, a voucher for *Tide and Time* - the Wrightsville Beach Museum's book - and a \$500 Visa gift card to help with travel and entertainment expenses. If you're interested in hosting a sweepstakes on VisitNC.com, contact [Crandall Turner](#) at (704) 552-6565.

Statesville CVB names Peddicord executive director

Craig Peddicord has been named executive director for the Statesville CVB, effective March 12. He may be contacted then at (704) 878-3480 or via craig.peddicord@visitstatesville.org.

t ourism r esearch

N.C overnight travel

Eighty-four percent of overnight travelers to the state in 2010 drove (includes personal

plug-in hybrid -- debuted in the U.S. Today, approximately 500 plug-in vehicles are available at certain locations of Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Hertz, the two largest U.S. car rental companies. Meanwhile, hotels account for about 80 of the approximately 2,600 electric-vehicle (EV) charging stations in the U.S., according to the U.S. Dept. of Energy. Car rental companies and hotels are investing in the plug-in vehicle market at a time when sales are expected to surge as a result of a combination of improved vehicle technologies, greater environmental awareness and already high gas prices that are expected to continue to rise. Last year, green technology-focused Pike Research estimated that Americans will buy about 300,000 EVs and plug-in hybrid-electric vehicles in 2015, which is about 15 times last year's sales figures.

Henderson County T&T's Heltman retiring

Melody Heltman, executive director of Henderson County Travel & Tourism in Hendersonville, is retiring March 31. Beth Carden has been appointed the interim executive director, starting April 1. They may be contacted at (828) 693-9708 or via tourism@historichendersonville.org for Heltman and viewmnts@bellsouth.net for Carden.

automobile, rental, motorcycle and RV), while over twelve percent (12.5 percent) traveled by air. The average travel party size for all overnight North Carolina visitor parties was 2.1 people. Twenty-nine percent of overnight travel parties to the state included children in the party. See the latest data for your region [here](#). For more information, contact Tourism Research Manager [Marlise Taylor](#) at (919) 733-7278.



'North Carolina Weekend'

For the week of March 8 on UNC-TV's "[North Carolina Weekend](#)," take in a show by Opera Carolina in Charlotte. Check out the Dunhill Hotel in Charlotte. Enjoy Part 2 of a tour of Ben Long frescoes, this time in Charlotte. Relax with a hot cup at Dobrá Tea in Asheville. And the "House Special" samples the fare at The Mad Boar in Wallace. *(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.

Upcoming industry meetings & events

- March 4-7** - Travel South USA Showcase, Louisville, Ky.
- March 6** - N.C. Sports Association Meeting, Winston-Salem
- March 8-9** - Agritourism Networking Association Annual Conference, Asheville
- March 9-18** - South by Southwest (SXSW),

Austin, Texas)

March 11-13 - N.C. Governor's Conference on Tourism, Concord

March 15-16 - MPI-CC Meeting, Raleigh

March 19-21 - STS Spring Meeting, Tunica, Miss.

April 12-13 - DMANC Meeting, Smithfield

April 17 & 18 - Division's TRAC Program, Bryson City & Morganton

April 17-19 - NASC Symposium, Hartford, Conn.

April 21-25 - International Pow Wow, Los Angeles, Calif.



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