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# newslink

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## **MID-YEAR MARKETING UPDATE IN JUST TWO WEEKS**

[Register now](#) to join industry leaders from all sectors of North Carolina's travel industry at the Division's Mid-Year Marketing Update, taking place in less than two weeks – Sept. 22, from 1-4:30 p.m. at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh. This year's program will feature remarks from N.C. Cultural Resources Secretary Linda Carlisle and N.C. Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco.

Dr. Mike Walden, economist and William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor at North Carolina State University, will discuss "What's Ahead for the U.S. Economy?" Widely known for his ability to relate larger economic trends to individual consumers, Dr. Walden will provide his perspective on current economic issues, with an overview of the broader economy and how it may influence North Carolina's travel and hospitality sector in the coming year.

Lynn Minges will offer an update on Division programs, followed by the Partner Program Forum. During this facilitated discussion, Division staff will highlight partner program successes and provide updates on current and new opportunities, seeking input from industry partners to help fuel 2010-2011 program planning and development.

For the complete agenda and registration information for the Mid-Year Marketing Update, Sept. 22 at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh, click [here](#).

## **U.S. SENATE EXPECTED TO APPROVE TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT**

A bipartisan group of 80 U.S. Senators voted late Tuesday to move to a final vote on the Travel Promotion Act, which would create a public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier international travel destination and communicate U.S. security and entry policies. "Senators from both sides of the aisle today embraced a common sense, taxpayer-free way of stimulating the American economy, creating jobs and strengthening local communities from coast to coast," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. "We encourage prompt passage of this legislation and rapid consideration in the House of Representatives."

The Senate is expected to vote on the bill late Wednesday afternoon. Tuesday's cloture vote was a powerful sign that there is sufficient support in the Senate to gain the 51 votes needed for final approval of the bill. The U.S. House of Representatives passed a similar measure in 2008 and is considering a companion bill, H.R. 2935. However, the House is currently focused on health care legislation, and the U.S. Travel Association says next week's [Travel Leadership Summit](#) is an ideal time to make the case for passage there. The Division will lead North Carolina's delegation of 16 tourism leaders to the summit on Sept. 16-17 in Washington, D.C., where they will meet with members of Congress to underscore the importance of the travel business to North Carolina's economy.

Oxford Economics estimates that a well-executed promotion program would attract 1.6 million new international visitors to the United States and would generate \$4 billion in new economic stimulus and \$321 million in new federal tax revenue each year. The U.S. Travel Association estimates that this program would create nearly 40,000 new American jobs in the first year. The Congressional Budget Office reports estimates that the Travel Promotion Act will reduce the federal budget deficit by \$425 million over ten years.

## **U.S. TRAVEL OUTLOOK EXAMINES CURRENT INDUSTRY TRENDS**

Signs of an economic recovery are beginning to appear, according to the most recent U.S. Travel Outlook. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by only one percent in the 2nd quarter, after four consecutive quarters of decline. Housing is beginning to level off, and "cash for clunkers" sales will reflect positively on the economy in the third quarter data. Even with these small glimmers of hope, however, economists warn that recovery will be long and difficult. Consumer spending remains

stagnant, with cost-cutting being noted across all demographic groups. Consumer confidence also showed conflicting results in August.

Lodging performance continued to decline. According to Smith Travel Research (STR), who are now updating their forecasts monthly rather than quarterly, even though 2010 will improve slightly, there will still likely be decreases in all major indicators through year-end 2010. [Click here](#) for North Carolina's latest STR data.

Business travel continues to languish, with declines in the meetings sector showing the greatest declines. Though these declines affect some destinations more than others, many experts believe that the "AIG Effect" has permanently changed the meetings business and that there may now be much more emphasis on the return on investment for meetings. Meetings, events and performance incentive travel in the United States are currently responsible for almost 15 percent of all domestic travel. [Click here](#) for more information on the U.S. Travel Association's "Meetings Mean Business" campaign.

On a positive note, consumers are expressing a renewed desire to travel, as leisure travel continues to outperform business travel. According to the U.S. Travel Association's July TravelHorizons survey, almost two-thirds of U.S. adults plan to take at least one leisure trip in the next six months. The average number of trips also increased. Though many destinations are seeing record declines, other destinations appear to be benefitting from incentives and attracting in-state and neighboring state travelers. Visits to [national parks](#) were up 4.5 percent through July (NC national park visits were up about 2 percent through July).

For more information from the September edition of the U.S. Travel Outlook, visit <http://www.ustravel.org/resources/Outlook/09/June.htm>.

### **DIVISION ASSISTS NEWSWEEK/BUDGET TRAVEL FEATURE ON N.C. APPLE FESTIVAL**

The Division's PR team worked with Newsweek/Budget Travel to feature the N.C. Apple Festival in Hendersonville in its "This Weekend" segment on its Web site. To view the result, visit [http://current.newsweek.com/budgettravel/2009/09/this\\_weekend\\_celebrate\\_north\\_c.html](http://current.newsweek.com/budgettravel/2009/09/this_weekend_celebrate_north_c.html).

### **GOV. PERDUE PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL PARK REDEDICATION**

Gov. Beverly Perdue participated in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's 75th anniversary rededication ceremony last week. Rangers estimated more than two thousand people joined Gov. Perdue, Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen, U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and other dignitaries - including singer/songwriter Dolly Parton. Gov. Perdue celebrated the Park's 75th anniversary standing onstage literally with one foot in North Carolina and one foot in Tennessee: "when we are here, there is no North Carolina or Tennessee. There is only this most precious of national resources, the

Great Smoky Mountains," she said. For more details, visit <http://www.newsobserver.com/2188/story/1672804.html>

### **BROWN MOUNTAIN OVERLOOK'S MAKEOVER UNVEILED**

Last week, the city of Morganton, county and state officials held a rededication of the Brown Mountain Overlook after two years of planning and work. The overlook had long been neglected, with trees blocking the view of Brown Mountain and the possible sighting of the mysterious Brown Mountain Lights. Refurbishing the overlook was a joint effort, say officials. The U.S. Forest Service cut more than 180 trees, with plans to sell the timber. Markers also have been added to the overlook that identifies the area and gives a history of the Brown Mountain Lights. To find out more, visit <http://www2.morganton.com/content/2009/sep/02/overlooks-makeover-unveiled/news-local/>.

### **GRAPE DAY AT RALEIGH FARMERS MARKET – SEPT. 11**

The N.C. Wine & Grape Council is sponsoring Grape Day at the Raleigh Farmers Market from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Sept. 11. Grape Day will include N.C. wine tasting, muscadine grape sampling, grape dessert sampling, recipes and more. To find out more, visit <http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/facilities/markets/raleigh/promos.htm>.

### **STS TOP 20 EVENTS FOR APRIL-MAY-JUNE DEADLINE OCT. 9**

The deadline for nominating events to the Southeast Tourism Society (STS) for its Top 20 Events for April-May-June 2010 is **Oct. 9**. To be considered, an event must have an attendance of at least 1,000 and be in its third year of existence. There is a \$10.00 entry fee required per event. Top 20 Events strongly encourages entrants to support nominations by providing supporting material such as photos, posters, brochures, press releases, news clippings and/or volunteer programs. To find out more, visit <http://www.southeasttourism.org/top20/>.

### **GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: VENUE AND EVENT RECYCLING**

Starting Oct. 1, in accordance with N.C. House Bill 1465 of the 2005 Session, plastic bottles will be banned from disposal at N.C. landfills. Although plastic bottles only make up a small part of residential waste, they make up a significantly higher percentage of waste at tourism businesses and events. Implementing a recycling program is not only important because of the new plastics disposal ban but, according to a study by PGAV (<http://www.pgav.com/images/Destin%2012-08.pdf>), recycling is becoming increasingly important to potential guests and visitors. The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance have developed a number of resources to help your business implement a successful recycling program. These include the Partnership for Bar & Restaurant Recycling ([www.partnership4recycling.org](http://www.partnership4recycling.org)), The Green Plan for Hotels ([www.p2pays.org/hospitality](http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality)), and Event and Venue Recycling ([www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling](http://www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling)). To contact your local recycling coordinator for information on how to get involved, where to recycle or information on other services offered in your area, visit <http://p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html>. For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov), or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

## **AP NOTES WATERFALLS AND FALL FOLIAGE MIX IN NORTH CAROLINA**

An Associated Press article last week noted that some of the prettiest places to see fall foliage in Western North Carolina also offer scenic views of waterfalls. Whether traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway, driving other mountain roads or hiking, there are a variety of waterfalls for viewing along with the fall foliage. To find out more, visit [http://www.usatoday.com/travel/destinations/2009-09-02-north-carolina-foliage\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/travel/destinations/2009-09-02-north-carolina-foliage_N.htm).

## **US AIRWAYS MAGAZINE PROFILES ASHEVILLE**

In its September issue, US Airways magazine turns its City Profile on Asheville. Highlights include articles on the best of Asheville, its history, its diverse economy and its scenic location. To find out more, visit [http://www.usairwaysmag.com/city\\_profiles/city/asheville/](http://www.usairwaysmag.com/city_profiles/city/asheville/).

In the same issue, the magazine includes the article “Luxury Alert” about new and remodeled hotels that are worth the splurge. At the (admittedly-biased) top of the list is the new Ritz-Carlton in Charlotte, set to open next month. To find out more, visit [http://www.usairwaysmag.com/articles/luxury\\_alert/](http://www.usairwaysmag.com/articles/luxury_alert/).

## **CHAPEL HILL AMONG TRAVEL + LEISURE’S GREAT COLLEGE TOWNS**

In its September issue, Travel + Leisure lists its picks for great college towns – and features Chapel Hill. Noting there are distinctions between college towns and other American cities, the Dean Dome and Tar Heel basketball are strong draws during basketball season. To find out more, visit <http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/americas-coolest-college-towns/11?label=americas-coolest-college-towns>.

## **DEPRESSION-ERA PROJECTS BECAME TOURIST DRAWS FOR ASHEVILLE**

Tourism did not pull Asheville out of the Great Depression, but efforts to attract more visitors that began during that era shaped the leisure travel industry in the area for years to come. The start of public access to the Biltmore House, establishment of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the opening of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park all occurred during the 1930s, and each event was shaped at least in part by the terrible conditions of the local and national economies. The Asheville Citizen-Times looks at how the openings of the Biltmore House, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park have affected the area. To find out more, visit <http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2009909060351>.

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

**Discounts Help Keep Tourist Areas Afloat** – North Carolina's beaches and mountain towns bid a bittersweet goodbye this past weekend to the summer tourism season as vacationers sought one last warm-weather getaway before fall. But despite the weekend's gloomy conditions on the coast and on the bankrolls, most destinations expect declines from this summer to be less drastic than in 2008 due to aggressive marketing campaigns aimed at frugal travelers. To find out more, visit <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/local/story/933382.html?q=tourism>.

**Only Half of Travelers Use Web to Get There** – Americans are traveling despite the economy, but only about half are using the Internet to research and make travel arrangements, according to a new study. About 117 million Americans – or about 52 percent of U.S. adults – have taken at least a two-day trip in the last two years. But only 47 percent of them used to Internet to research travel services. And 39 percent of recent travelers say online media actually influenced their choice of travel services, with hotel/bed and breakfast Web sites having the most influence. The data is per Ad-ology Research's study on media influence on consumer choice in travel services. The firm says online content also influenced 34 percent to visit local attractions and events, like amusement parks, zoos, and concerts. Traditional media influenced 27 percent of travelers and 32.7 percent of those visiting local attractions. To find out more, visit [http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art\\_aid=112840](http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=112840).

### **MEDIA LEAD**

**Meetings at Presidential Places** – Vickie Mitchell, editor of Small Market Meetings, seeks information about meeting venues that have presidential ties for a November feature (ties must be more significant than “George Washington slept here”). She is only interested in venues that regularly book meetings or events and are located in smaller cities (second-tier and smaller). Contact Mitchell by e-mail only at [vmitchell@smallmarketmeetings.com](mailto:vmitchell@smallmarketmeetings.com). **Deadline: Sept. 21.**

### **“NORTH CAROLINA WEEKEND”**

For the week of Sept. 10 on UNC-TV's “North Carolina Weekend,” take in the art of the Annual Sculpture Celebration in Lenoir. Watch one or all of the five plays by O. Henry, presented by the Greensboro Historical Museum. Lift at glass at Raffaldini Vineyards and Winery in Ronda. Go kayaking along the Alligator River. And “After Dark” samples the scene at Savoy in Raleigh. *(Please note: listings are subject to change.)*

Exclusively underwritten by the N.C. Division of Tourism, “North Carolina Weekend” airs Thursdays at 9:00 p.m. with repeats on Fridays and Saturdays *(please check local listings)* on UNC-TV. In addition, UNC-TV has made recent editions of “North Carolina Weekend” available online. For more information or to download a podcast, visit <http://www.unctv.org/ncweekend>.

### **UPCOMING INDUSTRY MEETINGS & EVENTS**

**Sept. 9-10** -- Blue Ridge Parkway Association Regional Membership Meeting, Natural Bridge, Va.

**Sept. 10** – N.C. Business Travel Association Education Day Meeting, Charlotte

**Sept. 11** – N.C. Grape Day, Raleigh Farmers Market

**Sept. 16-17** – Travel Leadership Summit, Washington, D.C.

**Sept. 22** – Mid-Year Marketing Update, Raleigh

**Oct. 26-28** – Marketing Outlook Forum, Little Rock, Ark.

**Nov. 12-13** – NCTIA Annual Meeting, Greensboro

**Nov. 19-20** – MPI-CC Meeting, Raleigh

### **SHARE THE “NEWSLINK”**

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for "NewsLink," contact Publications Director Kathy Prickett at (919) 733-8302 or via [kprickett@nccommerce.com](mailto:kprickett@nccommerce.com).

**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).