

VISITNC

newslink

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

In this week's NewsLink...

October 7, 2009

1. U.S. HOUSE EXPECTED TO VOTE ON TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT
2. N.C. FALL FOLIAGE ON NBC'S "TODAY" SHOW
3. DOW VISITS SPEEDWAY, JOHNSON & WALES DURING N.C. TRIP
4. SPORTSNC GEARS UP FOR BIG PRESENCE AT TEAMS 2009 IN NEW ORLEANS
5. CYCLE NORTH CAROLINA DRAWS LARGE ATTENDANCE
6. U.S. TRAVEL OUTLOOK EXAMINES CURRENT INDUSTRY TRENDS
7. NATIONAL BRIEFING FROM U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION
8. SAVE ON REGISTRATION AT MARKETING OUTLOOK FORUM, OCT. 26-28
9. CHARLOTTE AMONG CITIES SEEKING WORLD CUP GAMES
10. BUDGET TRAVEL SEEKING AMERICA'S COOLEST SMALL TOWN NOMINATIONS
11. DUKE ENERGY, UNC PLAN WIND TURBINES ON COAST
12. RITZ-CARLTON MAKES ITS CAROLINAS DEBUT IN CHARLOTTE
13. ABC TO AIR "HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS" DOC BEFORE OCT. 11 RACE
14. QUILT TRAIL IN WESTERN N.C.
15. AMERICAN EXPRESS BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPECTS RISE IN NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD IN 2010
16. GETTING GUESTS TO RECYCLE
17. BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY AMONG USA TODAY'S TOP FALL DRIVES
18. BEDANDBREAKFAST.COM HAS SEVERAL N.C. SITES AMONG WINNERS
19. CHANDLER NAMED BLUE RIDGE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
20. EVENTS SOUGHT FOR BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR
21. "NORTH CAROLINA WEEKEND"
22. UPCOMING INDUSTRY MEETINGS

1. U.S. HOUSE EXPECTED TO VOTE ON TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT

The U.S. House is expected to vote on the Travel Promotion Act this afternoon (Wednesday). The Senate passed the bill, 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, last month.

However, due to some arcane aspects of the lawmaking process, the bill will need to go back to the Senate for final passage. Given the legislation's significant and high-level support in the Senate, the U.S. Travel Association is optimistic that final passage will take place soon.

Last month, the Division led a contingent of 16 leaders from North Carolina's travel industry to the U.S. Travel Association's Travel Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C., with hundreds of travel colleagues from across the country, meeting with the state's congressional delegation to stress the recovery role that travel can play in the nation's economy. They specifically asked North Carolina's representatives in Congress to support the Travel Promotion Act.

2. N.C. FALL FOLIAGE ON NBC'S "TODAY" SHOW

The Division's PR team worked with Travel + Leisure over the last few weeks to secure a segment on fall color that ran on NBC's "Today Show" this past Saturday morning. Aired to a nationwide audience, the piece promotes fall travel and fall foliage in Western North Carolina during this critical travel season. The Great Smoky Mountains, apple picking, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad were specifically mentioned during the segment. Watch the clip at <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/vp/33151972#33151972>.

Earned TV spots like this one and many newspaper articles, such as recent ones in [The Charlotte Observer](#) and [USA Today](#), are the result of ongoing efforts of the Division's PR team. Such earned media is invaluable for promoting travel to North Carolina's local communities and it provides a boost to tourism for the whole state.

For more information on the Division's PR efforts, please contact Wit Tuttell at (919) 733-7420 or wtuttell@nccommerce.com.

3. DOW VISITS SPEEDWAY, JOHNSON & WALES DURING N.C. TRIP

Roger Dow, president and chief executive officer of the U.S. Travel Association, spoke at Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte Monday. During the next year, Dow will speak at all four Johnson & Wales campuses as a holder of the university's William R. Tiefel Professorial Chair. As industry leaders, Tiefel professors speak to hospitality students, adding insight and professional perspective to classroom learning.

While in Charlotte, Dow and Assistant Secretary Lynn Minges met with NASCAR and Lowes Motor Speedway officials.

In his presentation to students, Dow touched on the harsh realities of today's economic climate. He also offered hope despite a gloomy job forecast. Dow, who received an

honorary doctorate from Johnson & Wales in May, told students that with a rising unemployment rate and travel to the U.S. down 3.5 percent in 2007 from the mid-1990s, they are in for a challenge. But he added that hospitality is one industry in which skills are valued and transferable almost anywhere in the world. To read Dow's advice to students, [click here](#).

4. SPORTSNC GEARS UP FOR BIG PRESENCE AT TEAMS 2009 IN NEW ORLEANS

Over 30 delegates from North Carolina will market the state under the brand "sportsnc" at this year's TEAMS (Travel, Events And Management in Sports) conference in New Orleans, La. Running Oct. 13-17, TEAMS sessions, appointments and trade show offer a variety of opportunities for those with sporting event sites and destinations to meet with those who have sporting event rights holders. Delegates from North Carolina include sports commissioners, sports directors and various other sports development leaders.

North Carolina representatives attending include Lynn Minges, N.C. Dept. of Commerce; Frank Jernigan, Division of Tourism; Brain Ambuehl, Greensboro CVB; Mike Anderson, Visit Charlotte; Demp Bradford, Greensboro Sports Commission; Amanda Burgess, Burlington/Alamance County CVB; Mike Butts, Visit Charlotte; Hill Carrow, Sports Properties, Inc.; Tori Collins, Greater Raleigh CVB; Robert Cox, Burlington/Alamance County CVB; Scott Crotty, Visit Winston-Salem; Travis Dancy, Visit Lake Norman; Joel Dunn, Rocky Mount Sports Complex; Tara Hicks, Hickory Metro CVB; Chuck Hobgood, N.C. Amateur Sports; Bill McMillan, Charlotte Regional Sports Commission; Leah Mitcham, Mooresville CVB; Tim Morgan, Visit Charlotte; Jesse Newsom, Jacksonville Onslow Sports Commission; Mathew Pack, Wake Forest University; Kate Parker, Cabarrus County CVB; Jason Philbeck, Greater Raleigh CVB; Caroline Powers, Fayetteville Area CVB; Andrew Schmidt, Greenville/Pitt County CVB; Amanda Stokes, Cabarrus County CVB; Carolyn Swait, Crown Center; Mikie Wall, Wilmington/Cape Fear Coast CVB; Marva Wells, High Point CVB; and Kelvin Yarrell, Rocky Mount Sports Complex.

To find out more about TEAMS, visit <http://www.teamsconference.com>.

5. CYCLE NORTH CAROLINA DRAWS LARGE ATTENDANCE

More than 1,150 bicyclists from over 35 states and more than 4 countries participated in the 11th Annual Cycle North Carolina "Mountains to the Coast" bicycle tour. The ride began in the mountains of Blowing Rock and ended in the coastal town of Surf City. Additional overnight towns along the route included Lenoir, Statesville, Thomasville, Sanford, Dunn and Kenansville. Participants experienced the scenic beauty of North Carolina as they traveled rural country roads at a leisurely pace. During the week, participants experienced downtown celebrations, bluegrass bands, beach music bands, outdoor movies, NASCAR show cars, police escorts through towns, beverage gardens and wine tastings. And from Statesville to Thomasville 2000 NASCAR Champion Bobby Labonte joined the race.

Cycle North Carolina is one of the largest cross-state bicycle tours in the United States. Cycle North Carolina is designed to promote North Carolina's scenic beauty while providing substantial economic impact to small towns across the state. With a route already under development, the 2010 Cycle North Carolina "Mountains to the Coast" event will be held Sept. 27 – Oct. 3. For more information on Cycle NC, visit www.ncsports.org.

6. U.S. TRAVEL OUTLOOK EXAMINES CURRENT INDUSTRY TRENDS

While economists agree that the recession is likely over, the travel industry continues to wait for recovery to begin, according to the most recent U.S. Travel Outlook. The housing market continues to stabilize, and retail sales increases in August were the best in over three years; however, consumer confidence remains low, as consumers remain unsure about the short term outlook. Recent Gallup data suggests that consumer spending remains weak; even spending by upper-income households is lower than a year ago. Though travel will probably rebound somewhat during the next year, it will be several years before a full rebound is complete.

Lodging performance continues to decline. According to Smith Travel Research (STR), whose performance metrics all declined again in August, real improvement will not be seen until late 2009 when there will likely be favorable comparisons to 2008. STR's forecast on revenues has not changed, as they predict a 17 percent decrease for this year and a four percent decrease next year. The PricewaterhouseCoopers forecast suggests that occupancy will gain strength in late 2009 and 2010, but profits will suffer as properties continue to use discounts to attract visitors. For North Carolina's most recent lodging data, visit www.nccommerce.com/tourism/research.

On a positive note, while many destinations have seen visitor volume suffer this year, the national park system is looking at a record-breaking year. Nearly 232 million people have already visited national parks this year, and if visitation remains strong, 2009 numbers could top 288 million. National park attendance in North Carolina is up one percent from 2008. In particular, Cape Lookout National Seashore visitation is up 26 percent year-to-date (through September) and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park attendance (North Carolina portion) is up five percent year-to-date.

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

7. NATIONAL BRIEFING FROM U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

Registered Traveler Program – Last Wednesday, the House Committee on Homeland Security held a hearing on the state of domestic Registered Traveler (RT) programs. The major operator of domestic RT at airports around the country was the Clear program, which ceased operations this summer. The committee wanted to understand why the dominant RT program failed, if it can be resurrected and whether or not the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is willing to work with private vendors in the future to support the programs. While there was no consensus for why the Clear program failed, business representatives expressed hope that domestic registered

traveler programs could be resumed within months. The TSA will work with private sector companies to revive domestic RT, although there are doubts that the programs enhance security. U.S. Travel Association generally supports a domestic registered traveler program, but also believes TSA must continue investing in new technologies and adopt new practices to enhance security at airport passenger screening checkpoints. For more detail on the hearing, click here.

<http://homeland.house.gov/Hearings/index.asp?ID=214>

House Tourism Caucus Event – Last Thursday, U.S. Travel President and CEO Roger Dow, Jonathan Tisch, chairman and CEO of Loews Hotels and Chairman Emeritus of U.S. Travel, and several other travel leaders met with Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano at a breakfast hosted by the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus, co-chaired by Reps. Sam Farr (D-CA) and Roy Blunt (R-MO). The group discussed a series of homeland security programs that impact travel including the Visa Waiver Program, Model Ports-of-Entry and REAL-ID. Focus was also placed on ways to improve communication efforts between the Department and the travel community on H1N1 Flu.

8. SAVE ON REGISTRATION AT MARKETING OUTLOOK FORUM, OCT. 26-28

There are glimmers of hope on the horizon, but plenty of reason for caution. Frugal consumers and fewer business travelers have changed the travel landscape. Attend Marketing Outlook Forum, Oct. 26-28 in Little Rock, Ark., to get information you'll need to navigate the future. Purchase two registrations for the same company in a single transaction and save \$200. Attendees will also network with other industry colleagues and find strategies that work. To take advantage of the special registration offer, click [here](#). Then select the appropriate member/non-member option and be sure to follow the "to register more than one person" link at the top of the next registration screen to guarantee this savings. The offer ends **Oct. 16**. To find out more about Marketing Outlook Forum, presented by the U.S. Travel Association, visit

<http://www.tia.org/industrymeet/MOF/index.html>.

9. CHARLOTTE AMONG CITIES SEEKING WORLD CUP GAMES

Twenty-seven cities and thirty two stadiums – [including Charlotte and Bank of America Stadium](#) -- are vying to be included in the USA bid for the 2018/2022 FIFA World Cup. The USA Bid Committee invites everyone to read more about each one of these cities, learn about their soccer legacy and their respective stadiums and most importantly, sign the petition to bring soccer to your hometown.

Last held in the U.S. in 1994, the World Cup games draw thousands of fans, with an anticipated economic impact of nearly \$500 million. To vote for Charlotte or to read more about the U.S. bid for the 2018/2022 FIFA World Cups visit

<http://www.gousabid.com>.

10. BUDGET TRAVEL SEEKING AMERICA'S COOLEST SMALL TOWN NOMINATIONS

Budget Travel is taking nominations for America's Coolest Small Towns 2010. Here's what they are looking for: "First, your town must have a population under 10,000 – we're talking small towns, not big cities. It's also got to be on the upswing, a place that's beginning to draw attention – and new residents – because of the quality of life, arts and restaurant scene, or proximity to nature. And cool doesn't mean quaint. We want towns with an edge, so think avant-garde galleries, not country stores." The publication even offers five questions that should be considered for a nomination. To nominate, visit http://www.budgettravel.com/bt-srv/coolestsmalltowns/nominate_2010.html.

11. DUKE ENERGY, UNC PLAN WIND TURBINES ON COAST

Duke Energy and UNC-Chapel Hill said Tuesday (yesterday) they have signed a contract to place one to three wind turbines in Pamlico Sound, possibly paving the way for utility-scale wind farms on the N.C. coast. The demonstration project may be the first wind turbines placed in water in the United States. The project will also help gauge community reaction to the large towers, which have met resistance in the N.C. mountains. To find out more, visit <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/breaking/story/987770.html#>.

12. RITZ-CARLTON MAKES ITS CAROLINAS DEBUT IN CHARLOTTE

The Ritz-Carlton opened its first property in North or South Carolina on Oct. 1 – and it's in Charlotte. The 146-room hotel is the first Ritz to open in the U.S. this year and is the first in the chain to receive so-called "LEED" green-building certification. The hotel is smaller than most Ritz locations, which traditionally have 200 to 300 rooms, but it has typical amenities such as a ballroom, spa, wellness center and steakhouse. To find out more, visit <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/breaking/story/980445.html> and <http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Charlotte/Default.htm>.

13. ABC TO AIR "HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS" DOC BEFORE OCT. 11 RACE

In honor of his 25th anniversary in NASCAR, Rick Hendrick opened up his life -- warts and all -- for a feature-length documentary about his climb to the top. ABC network plans to show a shortened version of "Together: The Hendrick Motorsports Story" before the Oct. 11 NASCAR race. The full-length version goes on sale Oct. 31, and a portion of the proceeds from DVD and Blu-ray Disc sales will go to the Levine Children's Hospital in Charlotte. To find out more, visit http://www.usatoday.com/sports/motor/2009-09-30-3400826787_x.htm.

14. QUILT TRAIL IN WESTERN N.C.

Nearly 300 quilt panels have gone up so far in the counties of Ashe, Avery, Madison, Mitchell, Yancey and Watauga, forming a Quilt Trail of sorts. More are being added every month, and Haywood County is planning to start its own. County arts councils are spearheading the efforts. The idea is to celebrate local heritage and create community spirit while attracting tourists. Tracking down the panels has become a game for some. To find out more, visit <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/474/story/977950.html#>.

15. AMERICAN EXPRESS BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPECTS RISE IN NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD IN 2010

Following weakened demand this year, American Express Business Travel expects a pent up need for travel and meetings to be unleashed in 2010. This increased demand will likely cause rates to slightly increase in most travel categories by the end of 2010, according to the American Express Global Business Travel Forecast released last week. The Forecast also reports companies will have more formal oversight of their meeting planning and meetings spending in 2010. In addition, companies are expected to loosen purse strings on events and conferences, with potential in-roads made by travel category managers adopting strategic meetings management programs. To find out more, visit

http://www.mimegasite.com/mimegasite/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1004017174.

16. GETTING GUESTS TO RECYCLE

Guess how much trash the average hotel guest throws away every day. About two pounds – more than half of that paper, plastic, cardboard and cans that those same guests probably recycle at home. Yet according to a 2008 survey by the American Hotel and Lodging Association, just 40 percent of hotels have a recycling program. While some hotels sort and recycle guests' trash after it leaves the room, hospitality executives say starting an in-room recycling program is a lot more complicated than simply placing blue bins under the desks. To find out more, visit

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/business/energy-environment/06recycle.html?_r=1&ref=travel.

17. BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY AMONG USA TODAY'S TOP FALL DRIVES

The Blue Ridge Parkway is included among the "Top 10 Fall Foliage Drives Around The USA," a SmarterTravel.com article picked up in USA Today. The Web site offers its top 10 picks for not only the best places to be wowed by Mother Nature, but also things to see and do along the way. To find out more, visit

http://www.usatoday.com/travel/deals/inside/2009-10-01-fall-foliage-drives_N.htm.

18. BEDANDBREAKFAST.COM HAS SEVERAL N.C. SITES AMONG WINNERS

BedandBreakfast.com, an online bed and breakfast directory and reservation network worldwide, has announced the winners of its fifth annual web-based awards program for B&Bs and inns. Sobatta Manor Bed & Breakfast in Mount Airy and Pilot Knob Inn Bed & Breakfast in Pilot Mountain were among the Top 10 Overall. The Mast Farm Inn in Valle Crucis was among the Best Food winners. Scenic Overlook Bed & Breakfast in Pilot Mountain tied for Best Views. The Inn of the Patriots in Grover was the Best Place to Enjoy History. Taylor House Inn in Valle Crucis, Andon-Reid Inn Bed & Breakfast and Oak Hill on Love Lane, both in Waynesville, and Big Mill Bed & Breakfast in Williamston were among the Best in the South. Since launching the BedandBreakfast.com reviews program almost three years ago, inngers have submitted nearly 85,000 B&B reviews. The selection criteria for the Best of BedandBreakfast.com Awards included both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the independently posted reviews on BedandBreakfast.com. To find out more, visit

<http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/AwardsWinners.aspx>.

19. CHANDLER NAMED BLUE RIDGE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Angie Chandler has been named the executive director for the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, effective Oct. 26. Chandler currently serves as director of External Affairs with the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville. As of Oct. 26, Chandler may be contacted at (828) 298-5330 ext. 307 or via angie@blueridgeheritage.com.

20. EVENTS SOUGHT FOR BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR

Events are being sought for the Blue Ridge Parkway's 75th Anniversary 2010 Official Calendar Of Events, which will appear in the annual Parkway Directory publication of the Blue Ridge Parkway Association. To submit an event, go to the [Plan an Event](#) page on the Blue Ridge Parkway's 75th anniversary Web site and follow the instructions. Deadline for consideration is **Oct. 20**.

21. "NORTH CAROLINA WEEKEND"

To find what's scheduled for the week of Oct. 8 on UNC-TV's "North Carolina Weekend," visit <http://www.unctv.org/ncweekend>. 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 on UNC-TV. In addition, UNC-TV has made recent editions of "North Carolina Weekend" available online.

22. UPCOMING INDUSTRY MEETINGS & EVENTS

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

Nov. 12-13 – NCTIA Annual Meeting, Greensboro

Nov. 13 – Piedmont Triad Host Group Meeting, Greensboro

Nov. 19-20 – MPI-CC Meeting, Raleigh

Dec. 15 – N.C. Travel & Tourism Board Meeting, Raleigh

SHARE THE "NEWSLINK"

Want to share the "NewsLink" with a friend or colleague? Sign them up now at <http://www.nccommerce.com/tourism/newsletter/>. Should you have difficulty signing up for "NewsLink," contact Publications Director Kathy Prickett at (919) 733-8302 or via 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.