

VISITNC

# newslink

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

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## 1. REGISTER NOW FOR MID-YEAR MARKETING UPDATE

[Online registration](#) is now open for the Division's Mid-Year Marketing Update, scheduled for Sept. 22 at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh from 1-4:30 p.m. The registration fee is \$50.

Dr. Mike Walden, economist and William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor at N.C. State University, will provide his perspective on current economic issues. Dr. Walden's many activities include publishing the North Carolina Economic Outlook Series. Widely known for his ability to relate larger economic trends to individual consumers, Walden will give an overview of the broader economy and how it may influence North Carolina's travel and hospitality sector in the coming year.

Held annually each fall, the Mid-Year Marketing Update program will also feature updates on many of the Division's key programs, along with an opportunity for dialogue and input into the development of upcoming marketing-related projects and initiatives. Mark your calendar and make plans to attend. For more information about the Update or to register, visit [www.nccommerce.com/tourism](http://www.nccommerce.com/tourism) or contact Heidi Walters at (919) 715-6702 or via [hwalters@nccommerce.com](mailto:hwalters@nccommerce.com).

## **2. SENATE TO VOTE ON TRAVEL PROMOTION BILL AFTER LABOR DAY**

The U.S. Senate is scheduled to hold a vote on the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 (S. 1023) during its first day back in session after Labor Day. The Senate cloture vote scheduled for 5:30 p.m. EDT on Sept. 8, was part of a deal struck by Senate Democratic and Republican leaders that also will preclude any amendments being offered and attached to the travel promotion legislation. The goal with the cloture vote is to gain 60 or more votes in the Senate in order to limit further debate and then have the Senate move expeditiously to a final vote on this critical measure.

The bi-partisan bill would create thousands of new jobs and spur economic growth by attracting millions of additional international travelers to the United States. It creates a public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier international travel destination and communicate U.S. security and entry policies. The bill specifies that travel promotion would be paid for – *at no cost to U.S. taxpayers* – by private sector contributions and a modest fee on foreign travelers who do not pay \$131 for a visa to enter the United States. Nearly every developed nation in the world spends millions of dollars to attract visitors.

The U.S. Travel Association urges travel leaders to lobby senators to vote in favor of S. 1023 on Sept. 8. The U. S. Travel Association is focused on securing commitments from Senate Republicans who have already co-sponsored the legislation. Senate Republican votes for travel promotion will help to avoid a partisan, party-line vote on the bill, and will also ensure the 60 votes necessary to move to a final vote and passage out of the Senate. Both North Carolina senators, Richard Burr and Kay Hagan, have indicated they support the bill.

Meanwhile, over in the U.S. House of Representatives, additional co-sponsors have been added to its version of the legislation (H.R. 2935). The bill currently has 61 co-sponsors, including Representatives Howard Coble, Sue Myrick and Heath Shuler. More commitments for co-sponsorship are piling up and will be officially added when the House resumes work after Labor Day.

## **3. JOIN NORTH CAROLINA'S DELEGATION TO TRAVEL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

With the action heating up on travel promotion, and so many other important issues coming to the fore in Washington, the time is right for North Carolina's travel leaders to visit the nation's capital Sept. 16-17 for the 4th Annual Travel Leadership Summit. It is imperative that the tourism industry make its case to Congress. The number of states sending delegations to this year's event continues to grow with 25 states signed up.

TLS will take place at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill beginning with an orientation for first-time delegates at 5 p.m. on Sept. 16. The formal program kicks off on Sept. 17 at 7:30 a.m. featuring an agenda of legislative updates, issues briefings and guest speakers, followed by Hill visits. Among the speakers is NBC White House correspondent Chuck Todd who will discuss the new Administration and Congress and his views as one of Washington's leading observers. For more information and to join North Carolina's delegation to the Travel Leadership Summit, visit <http://www.ustravel.org/govtaffairs/summit/index.html>.

#### **4. LAST CHANCE FOR FABULOUS FUN FALL GETAWAYS & GIVEAWAYS**

Time is running out to participate in the Division's Fabulous Fun Fall Getaways program, which begins the week of Sep. 14. With overwhelming response to the Division's fall color/fall fishing program, the deadline for participation is this **Monday, Aug. 24**. Visitors are invited to sign-up on VisitNC.com to win weekly giveaways and become eligible to win one of several grand prizes. Designed to communicate all there is to do in North Carolina in the fall, themes highlight wine, harvest, fishing, golf, scenic drives, events & festivals, spooky N.C., pirates and more. In addition to VisitNC.com, the Division's fall programs utilize print and interactive media, public relations, radio and weekly eNewsletters to communicate with travelers. This program is offered on a first-come, first-served basis, as space is limited. Contact [partners@visitnc.com](mailto:partners@visitnc.com) to be included in the weekly giveaways (tickets, passes, green fees) or grand prize programs (minimum two-night stay plus dining), or to take advantage of other programs for the fall.

#### **5. VISITNC SWEEPS SETS RECORD FOR 2009**

The Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills Sweepstakes drove record traffic to VisitNC.com on Aug. 5, with 20,908 visits in a single day. As part of the Division's sweepstakes program, sweeps eNewsletters were sent to VisitNC.com's subscriber base of over 160,000. The monthly blast and the additional drop to Budget Travel's "Real Deals" subscriber list have resulted in over 16,000 entries in just 10 days.

Additionally, VisitNC.com provided 126,309 downstream hand-offs to partner sites in July. Downstream traffic is one of VisitNC.com's measurement tools, realizing that linking visitors to partner Web sites is yet another key indicator of intent to travel to North Carolina. For more information on sweepstakes or any of the Division's partner programs, contact Nina Holbrook at [nholbrook@lkmideas.com](mailto:nholbrook@lkmideas.com).

#### **6. MEDIA STORIES ON TOURISM'S ECONOMIC IMPACT ON COUNTIES**

Since the release by the Division of the "2008 Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties," several news outlets have spotlighted their local areas. Some of the counties who received media attention were:

Cabarrus: <http://www2.independenttribune.com/content/2009/aug/13/visitor-spending-rises-majority-nc-counties/>

Dare County: <http://www.ncnn.com/content/view/4792/123/>

Davidson: <http://www.the-dispatch.com/article/20090812/ARTICLES/908129982>

Mecklenburg:

[http://charlotte.bizjournals.com/charlotte/stories/2009/08/10/daily31.html?ed=2009-08-13&ana=e\\_du\\_pub](http://charlotte.bizjournals.com/charlotte/stories/2009/08/10/daily31.html?ed=2009-08-13&ana=e_du_pub)

Onslow: <http://www.jdnews.com/news/onslow-66572-county-increased.html>

Randolph: <http://www.courier-tribune.com/articles/2009/08/12/news/cn1.txt>

Surry County: <http://mtairynews.com/bookmark/3181651>

Triad region:

[http://triad.bizjournals.com/triad/stories/2009/08/10/daily40.html?ed=2009-08-12&ana=e\\_du\\_pub](http://triad.bizjournals.com/triad/stories/2009/08/10/daily40.html?ed=2009-08-12&ana=e_du_pub)

#### **7. COURT: TVA MUST CONTINUE TO CURB POLLUTION**

A federal judge in Asheville rejected a request by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for a delay in installing controls on air pollution that blows into Western North Carolina.

U.S. District Court Judge Lacy Thornburg denied a motion by the utility to put off construction of scrubbers and other equipment at four of its power plants until the appeal of a lawsuit is settled. Thornburg's ruling in January set emissions limits and timetables for the installation of pollution control equipment. The measures are needed to clean up air pollution that harms the health of North Carolina residents, obscures mountain vistas and damages forests, Thornburg said. He ordered that improvements to the four plants closest to North Carolina be in place by the end of 2011. The Division's Lynn Minges, Grandfather Mountain's Harris Prevost and Biltmore's Bill Cecil, Jr. were among those who testified during that trial. To find out more, visit <http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090819/NEWS01/908190310/1009>.

#### **8. RAIL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES TELESEMINAR FOR SMALL TOWNS – AUG. 31**

In North Carolina, some towns are rebuilding depots for new passenger rail service. Others are sharing their heritage with tourists through rail museums. Town leaders are hoping to see an increase in their bottom lines. Who is paying for the new rail ventures? What is the expected payoff for communities to venture into the world of the railroad? What are some of the grants available and how do you get them? These are some questions that will be discussed during a teleseminar on Aug. 31, from 10-11:00 a.m. Representatives from Conover, Oakboro and Hillsborough will share their experience on identifying opportunities, landing grants and dealing with challenges. The teleseminar is being sponsored by [www.SmallWander.com](http://www.SmallWander.com), a Web site designed to promote small towns as tourist destinations. For more information or to register, contact John Delconte at (919) 241-5001 or via [john@smallwander.com](mailto:john@smallwander.com).

#### **9. GREENING N.C. TRAVEL: KEEPING COOL**

With the summer heat in full swing, tourism businesses across the state are turning to their air conditioning systems to keep guests cool. In doing so, many tourism businesses are seeing a dramatic increase in their utility bills. But by following some simple guidelines, such as using ceiling fans, programmable thermostats and proper maintenance of your HVAC system you can reduce your energy bill while keeping guests comfortable. For a list of simple practices, visit [http://energy-conservation.org/documents/Waystoreducesummercoolingcosts\\_000.pdf](http://energy-conservation.org/documents/Waystoreducesummercoolingcosts_000.pdf) and [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=heat\\_cool.pr\\_hvac](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=heat_cool.pr_hvac). For more information on reducing your cooling bills, visit <http://www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25985.pdf> (commercial-sized systems) and [http://www.ncsc.ncsu.edu/admin/include/upload/media/docs/factsheets/Heating\\_Cooling\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.ncsc.ncsu.edu/admin/include/upload/media/docs/factsheets/Heating_Cooling_fact_sheet.pdf) (residential-sized systems). For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, 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).

#### **10. NGT INCLUDES 2 N.C. AMONG “DRIVES OF A LIFETIME”**

In its September issue, National Geographic Traveler offers its “Drives of a Lifetime,” noting sometimes it's the journey, sometimes it's the destination – and sometimes, it's both. Among the list is the Cherohola Skyway, which ascends from an elevation of just over 930 feet near Tellico Plains, Tenn., to 5,390 feet at the road's highest point, the Santeetlah Overlook. Also included is the Lighthouse Coast, a 114-mile drive that cruises Corolla to Ocracoke Village. The magazine's suggestions span the globe for

the world's most beautiful, interesting, and off-beat road trips. To find out more, visit <http://traveler.nationalgeographic.com/drives>.

### **11. WASHINGTON POST SPOTLIGHTS MUSIC IN ASHEVILLE**

In this past Sunday's Travel section, the Washington Post spotlighted Asheville and the music that is such a part of the area. In Asheville, music is everywhere. From church bells and buskers to pipe organs and drum circles, the city pulses with soundtracks as different as the experiences it has to offer. But, the article continues, it's not just music that draws people to the area. To find out more, visit

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/14/AR2009081401600.html>.

### **12. "NORTH CAROLINA WEEKEND"**

For the week of Aug. 20 on UNC-TV's "North Carolina Weekend," enjoy the great outdoors at Wilson Creek. Take a trip to Ghost Town in the Sky in Maggie Valley. Wander among the shifting sands of Jockey's Ridge State Park in Nags Head. Tee it up at Tobacco Road Golf Club in Sanford. The "Marker Minute" steps back in time at the Barker House in Edenton. And the "House Special" samples the fare at the Old German Schnitzel Haus in Hickory. *(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>.

### **13. UPCOMING INDUSTRY MEETINGS & EVENTS**

**Aug. 30-Sept. 1** – ESTO, Lake Tahoe, Nev.

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

**Sept. 22** – Mid-Year Marketing Update, 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](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).