

VISITNC - NewsLink for April 30, 2008

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1. N.C. TOURISM DAY – MAY 13

North Carolina's Tourism Day on May 13 is part of a statewide advocacy program designed to promote a wider understanding of travel and tourism as a major industry that is vital to the economic stability and growth of the state. Tourism contributes substantially to our cultural and social well-being and our state's quality of life. To assist in planning for N.C. Tourism Day and the week-long National Tourism Week (May 10-18) activities, the Division

has created a Web page to aid tourism-related entities around the state in their preparation for their own, localized Tourism Day festivities and tourism awareness campaigns. The site provides updated state and national quick facts, a sample proclamation for locally elected officials, sample press releases, and other ideas on how to spread the word about tourism's impact on our economy. For details, visit

<http://www.nccommerce.com/en/TourismServices/PromoteTravelAndTourismIndustry/TourismEvents/SeeAmericaWeek/index.htm>.

Scheduled events for N.C. Tourism Day on May 13 in Raleigh include:

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. – Tourism Booths/Displays, Legislative Building

11:00 a.m. – N.C. Travel & Tourism Board Meeting, Education Building, 4th Floor Boardroom

2:00 p.m. – NASCAR House vs. Senate Pit Crew Challenge, N.C. Museum of Natural Science, coordinated by Visit Charlotte

5:30 - 7:30 p.m. – VIP Reception (ticketed event), N.C. Museum of History

If you are interested in exhibiting or sponsoring the reception, contact Vince Chelena at (704) 333-3234 or via vince@themanagementoffice.com. State government agencies interested in exhibiting at Legislative Building can contact Lynn Lewis at lynn@originallwashington.com. Ticket cost and sponsorship information for the day's events is available at www.seenc.org.

North Carolina's Welcome Centers are celebrating National Tourism Week by setting aside a special day during National Tourism Week and inviting local attractions and accommodations to join them in thanking travelers for visiting the state. In addition, 2008 marks the Welcome Center program's 40th year of service, and each Welcome Center will serve birthday cake to celebrate (while supplies last). Tourism Day/Week activities are planned for: May 12 – I-40 West in Haywood County, I-77 South in Mecklenburg County and I-85 North in Warren County; May 14 – I-26 East in Polk County and I-77 North in Surry County; May 15 – I-95 North in Northampton County; and May 16 – I-26 West in Madison County, I-85 South in Cleveland County and I-95 South in Robeson County. For a preliminary listing of event information, visit

<http://www.nccommerce.com/NR/ronlyres/72D45A18-0126-4733-B7FC-EAFE8D2EDED5/2067/welcomeCenters2008.pdf>.

2. "BULL DURHAM" CELEBRATED ON FILM'S 20th ANNIVERSARY

Twenty years ago, the motion picture "Bull Durham" brought Durham, the Bull City, to the attention of folks nationwide. And, what they saw was good and consequently brought good things to Durham, some city and baseball officials say. The film's writer/director Ron Shelton and co-producer – and Durham native – Thom Mount attended an anniversary celebration at the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau's annual luncheon, where film clips were also shown. The film portrays a love story set in minor league baseball and is generally regarded as one of the greatest sports movies ever made. In 1989, the film was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay by Ron Shelton, and Susan Sarandon received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actress. The film also starred Kevin Costner and Tim Robbins. Diversity – something that historically has contributed to

Durham's sense of place – also comes through in the film, said Reyn Bowman, president and CEO of the Durham CVB.

Earlier today (Wednesday), a ground breaking ceremony was held at the historic Durham Athletic Park. It marked the beginning of the \$5 million renovation of the park, where "Bull Durham" was filmed and where the real Durham Bulls played, with some interruptions, from 1926 to 1994. Renovations are expected to be completed in November. The Minor League Baseball Fan Experience and Museum will cost \$50 million and is scheduled to open in two years. To find out more, visit <http://www.heraldsun.com/durham/4-946917.cfm?>

3. FEDERAL JUDGE APPROVES BEACH DRIVING AGREEMENT

This afternoon (Wednesday), a federal judge approved a settlement that allows off-road vehicles on Outer Banks beaches while protecting endangered wildlife along parts of the barrier islands. The proposed settlement came in a lawsuit against the park service filed by two environmental groups seeking protection of birds and sea turtles along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Under the agreement, fewer vehicles will be allowed on some sections of beach. It also requires enforcement of buffers around nesting areas, and bars night driving between May and November. To find out more, visit <http://www.newsobserver.com/1565/story/1054877.html>.

4. SUBMARINE NORTH CAROLINA COMMISSIONING THIS SATURDAY

Nuclear-powered submarines aren't a typical sight on the Cape Fear River. But one is now docked at the state port in Wilmington. The new submarine arrived at the port on Monday, beginning a week's worth of special events leading up to its commissioning Saturday. After that event, the 377-foot vessel will officially carry the same name as the battleship that sits across the Cape Fear River from downtown Wilmington – *USS North Carolina*. The Virginia class submarine will be the fourth ship of the Navy to carry the name "North Carolina." The original was *USS North Carolina* (1820-1836), the second (ACR 12) (1908 - 1921), and the third (BB 55) (1940 - 1947). Access to the submarine and commissioning ceremony is limited to the public as attendees at the commissioning ceremony will include government officials, members of the U.S. Navy, including principal speaker Secretary of the Navy Dr. Donald C. Winter, VIPs and local guests. Wilmington planned several events to welcome the submarine, including a special float at the Azalea Festival Parade earlier this month and a fireworks show planned for May 2. To find out more, visit <http://www.ssn777.com/index2.php>, http://www.ncports.com/news_detail_318.htm, <http://www.sublant.navy.mil/html/nc777.html> and <http://www.starnewsonline.com/article/20080429/ARTICLE/139109135/1015/news01>.

5. TRAVEL INDUSTRY EYES TAX REBATES

This week, the first of 130 million Americans will be getting tax rebate checks designed to help jump-start a sputtering U.S. economy. And travel marketers, already skittish about the effects of lofty airfares and record gas prices, are out to convince them it's their patriotic duty to spend the cash – up to \$600 for individuals, \$1,200 for couples and \$300 for a dependent child under 17 – on a trip away from home. But whether the come-ons will inspire plans for a summer vacation or spur resentment from debt-burdened consumers is open to debate. According to a USA Today/Gallup Poll of 1,016 U.S. adults earlier this month, only one in five respondents said they were likely to use part or all of the rebate money for a vacation or travel, and 64 percent said they were "not at all likely" to spend it

for that purpose. A March poll by travel insurance vendor Access America, meanwhile, found that 11 percent of surveyed households making at least \$50,000 in annual income planned to spend the rebate on travel. However, accommodations properties are offering their own stimulus packages to travelers. To find out more, visit http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2008-04-24-tax-rebate_N.htm.

6. SUMMER EMPLOYERS BRACE FOR SHORTAGE OF FOREIGN WORKERS

Employers around the country who thrive on seasonal business are preparing to lose thousands of foreign workers they've hired in past summers to work in restaurants, hotels, landscaping and other industries. New visa controls are cutting the number of temporary foreign workers eligible to return to the country, so employers are scouring job fairs for replacements, lobbying Congress for help and bracing for staff shortages they say will make business tough. Tourism and hospitality officials envision various problems if the jobs go unfilled. Restaurants may have fewer tables and longer wait-times. Hotel check-in times could be delayed as fewer housekeepers hustle to clean rooms. Resorts may offer fewer meals to guests. The shortage hit winter ski resorts from Colorado to Vermont and is expected to affect some summer hot spots, where businesses count on foreign workers to meet the tourist demand. Many seasonal workers have held the same job for years, and employers say they value their returning workers' experience and count on them to fill the critical, if unheralded, jobs that high school and college students typically aren't interested in. Foreign workers issued the visas, known as H-2B visas, are generally offered the same pay as an American worker would get for the same job, though the actual salary varies depending on the position and the location. To find out more, visit <http://www.thestate.com/350/story/388268.html>.

7. REMINDERS OF THE BENEFITS OF TRAVEL

In advance of National Tourism Week (May 10-18), the federal tax rebates and the summer travel season, TIA is introducing information you can use to remind consumers of the personal benefits gained through travel. The data contains survey results and facts that demonstrate how travel benefits everyone personally in the areas of health and wellness, relationship-building, career success and productivity, and creativity. In addition, there is an interesting "By the Numbers" section, along with a few quotes from others on the benefits of traveling. TIA offers this information for use in promotions, marketing efforts and when talking to the media and other audiences. All of this information is available at www.tia.org/Benefits.

8. SURVEY FINDS MORE THAN HALF OF AMERICANS HAVE LESS MONEY TO SPEND THIS YEAR ON SUMMER VACATIONS THAN IN 2007

According to a survey from AOL Travel and Zogby International, 57 percent of Americans feel they have less money to spend this year on summer vacations than they did in 2007 and are looking at ways to save on their travel costs. To save money, 33 percent of Americans are planning to stay with friends/family for lodging while 37 percent plan to drive rather than fly. Twenty percent of those surveyed are planning a vacation rental instead of a hotel this summer. These are just some of the many findings from a new interactive survey of Americans ages 18 and older that uncovers how Americans are planning to travel this summer. To find out more, visit <http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=1492>.

9. DRIVING TO COST 63 CENTS A MILE IN 2008, AAA CAROLINAS SAYS

Driving in North Carolina will cost an average of 63 cents a mile in 2008, according to an estimate from AAA Carolinas. That's an increase of 14 cents over 2007, the largest one-year increase ever, the automotive agency says. Gas prices are to blame, as are increases in car prices and insurance. The numbers factor out to an annual cost of \$9,415 for driving the average vehicle 15,000 miles in the state. AAA says its calculations are based on the costs of both owning and operating a vehicle. Those costs include insurance, maintenance, gas, tires, taxes, registration, loan charges and depreciation. To find out more, visit http://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/stories/2008/04/28/daily18.html?f=et85&ana=du_B.

10. GROUP TRAVEL TO ENGLAND, IRELAND TO PROMOTE WESTERN N.C.

Western North Carolina could see more tourists soon from England and Ireland after AdvantageWest Economic Development board members traveled to Europe as part of a special North Carolina group to promote the state as a travel destination. The group was part of a North Carolina team called MountainSouth USA, led by the N.C. Division of Tourism's Executive Director Lynn Minges and Director of International Marketing Heidi Walters, said Betty Huskins, senior vice president of external relations for AdvantageWest (AW). AW board member Randy Banks, Asheville Director of Tourism Dianna Pierce Smoky Mountain Golf Association and Smoky Mountain host Marilyn Ball, of Kelso Advertising and Design, Smoky Mountain host Robin Jenkins, Director of Communications and Marketing Nancy Thompson, director of sales and marketing for the Thoms Estate and a former AW board member also went on the promotion trip. Money, primarily the current strength of the English Pound and the Euro, the currency used in Ireland, was the reason for the April 5-12 trip, Huskins said. To find out more, visit <http://www.blueridgenow.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080429/news/804290313&te>.

11. N.C. IN D.C. MEDIA MISSION WRAPS UP

The N.C. in D.C. Media Mission was held at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington, D.C., April 28-30. Partners working with the Division included Bald Head Island Limited, the Greater Raleigh CVB, the Halifax County CVB, the Hickory Furniture Mart, the N.C. Wine & Grape Council, the N.C. Arts Council, the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, the Umstead Hotel and Spa, and the Wilmington/Cape Fear Coast CVB. Special guest Kevin Duffus was there to talk with journalists about his findings and research and to unveil his new book, "The Last Days of Black Beard." Partners met with several media outlets, including National Geographic Traveler, USA Today, The Washingtonian and the Washington Post. Attendees were treated to North Carolina wine as they learned about what's new in North Carolina.

12. MINGES APPOINTED TO N.C. ZOO PARK FUNDING & ORGANIZATION STUDY COMMITTEE

The Division's Lynn Minges has been appointed to the N.C. Zoological Park Funding & Organization Study Committee. Minges was appointed by Sen. Marc Basnight, who also appointed N.C. Dept. of Commerce Sec. Jim Fain. The committee will study and report on funding issues associated with the Zoo, the current organizational structure of the Zoo and other potential organizational structures, and any other issues the Committee deems relevant to the Zoo. Other members of the committee, appointed by Basnight or House Speaker Joe Hackney, include Co-Chairs Rep. Harold J. Brubaker, Sen. Pete Brunstetter,

and Rep. Edith D. Warren, Sen. Katie Dorsett, Rep. Pricey Harrison, Rep. Pat B. Hurley, Sen. Edd Jones, Rep. Cullie M. Tarleton, Sen. Jerry Tillman, Sen. David Weinstein, N.C. Dept of Environment and Natural Resources Sec. Bill Ross, Cooper Brantley, Mary F. Flanagan, Dr. David E. Harting, Dr. David Jones, Walker B. Moffitt, Scott E. Reed, David K. Robb, Russ Williams, and Melanie Wilson.

13. N.C. WELCOME CENTER REPRESENTATIVES ATTEND SOUTHEAST TRAVEL COUNSELORS ALLIANCE IN FREDERICKSBURG

The Southeast Travel Counselors Alliance, a group of Welcome Center directors and managers from the Southeastern states, met in Fredericksburg, Va. on Tuesday to discuss common issues. Bryan Gupton, director of visitor services, Edith Jenkins, manager of the I-95 North Welcome Center, and Mary Perkinson, manager of the I-85 North Welcome Center, represented North Carolina. Other states attending included Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. The group discussed plans for National Tourism Week celebrations and saw presentations on software packages available to assist Welcome Center staff.

14. N.C. WINE & GRAPE COUNCIL MEETS IN RALEIGH - MAY 1

The N.C. Wine & Grape Council's quarterly meeting will take place on May 1 at the N.C. Dept. of Commerce in Raleigh, from 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

15. N.C. FILM OFFICE MEETS IN DURHAM - MAY 1

The N.C. Film Office will meet at Staybridge Suites in Durham on May 1, from 9:00 a.m. - noon.

16. WACHOVIA CHAMPIONSHIP RETURNS TO CHARLOTTE - THROUGH MAY 4

The Wachovia Championship returns to Charlotte through May 4. The PGA Tour tournament, with a \$6.4 million-purse, is being played at the Quail Hollow Club. Tickets for the tournament are sold-out. The television schedule starts with the Golf Channel on Thursday and Friday, 3:00 - 8:30 p.m. and on CBS Saturday and Sunday, starting at 3:00 p.m. For more information on the Wachovia Championship, visit <http://www.wachoviachampionship.com/>.

17. NCAA, ACC BRING \$28M TO CHARLOTTE'S ECONOMY

The Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) says the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournaments in March boosted the local economy by more than \$28 million. According to the CRVA, the ACC tournament brought 20,000 visitors. The NCAA tournament attracted 12,734. On average, each visitor stayed four days and spent \$144 per day, the CRVA says. To find out more, visit <http://charlotte.bizjournals.com/charlotte/stories/2008/04/21/daily28.html>.

18. ROCKINGHAM GETS A RACE AND MORE

To most people, auto racing is simply a sport. But in Richmond County, home of the Rockingham Dragway and the one-mile oval formerly known as the North Carolina Speedway, racing has been part of the economic lifeblood of the community for the better part of four decades. So, understandably, the county and the region took quite a hit in 2004 when NASCAR and Speedway Motorsports Inc.'s (SMI) moved Rockingham's races to points west. SMI sold the track at auction in October to former driver Andy Hillenburg for

\$4.4 million. On the day of the auction, Hillenburg promised to return racing to the track. Shortly after closing on the transaction to buy the track, Hillenburg announced that he had entered into an agreement for the track to host an ARCA/REMAX Series race in 2008. That race is scheduled for May 4. To find out more, visit http://www.thatsracin.com/other_series/story/13252.html.

19. GREENSBORO TO HOST SPORTS EVENT SYMPOSIUM

Greensboro has been selected to host the 2011 NASC Sports Event Symposium, April 11-14. Produced annually by the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC), the NASC Sports Event Symposium is the sports event industry's leading education and networking gathering. The four-day event will bring 600+ sports industry leaders, including 100+ event organizers, to Greensboro and produce an estimated economic impact of \$912,000. The successful bid is in large part due to support from the N.C. Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development and the N.C. Sports Association.

20. SURRY COUNTY FORMS TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

Challenging economic times have led Surry County's four municipalities to partner to market a new industry instead of waiting for new manufacturing firms for economic profit. The Tourism Partnership of Surry County, which includes Dobson, Elkin, Mount Airy and Pilot Mountain, is an effort to create a joint tourism and marketing campaign to promote travel, expand tourism, and provide other tourism-related expenditures. The organization plans to begin its operations on July 1. Valerie Oberle, the chair of the Tourism Partnership and Pilot Mountain TD A, said last week that manufacturing is no longer sustaining the community and new industries must be created. "Tourism is a piece of the economic development pie," said Jessica Icenhour, the director of tourism at the Greater Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce, who also serves as a member on the board of directors for the Tourism Partnership and the Mount Airy TDA. The Tourism Partnership is one of several initiatives, including N.C. Step and the Small Towns Initiative, that will work independently and collaborate to push tourism efforts and bring profit to small town areas with economic challenges. To find out more, visit http://www.mtairynews.com/articles/2008/04/26/news/local_news/local03.prt.

21. "MADE IN AMERICA" FEATURES CAPE HATTERAS & GRAVEYARD OF THE ATLANTIC MUSEUM TONIGHT

The Travel Channel's "Made in America," hosted by John Ratzenberger, will feature the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse on tonight's (Wednesday) program. The new episode, scheduled to air at 9:00 p.m., will include segments on Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, scenes of U.S. Coast Guardsmen changing the lens for aid to navigation, and the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, which displays the remaining original pieces of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse lens. Season five of Ratzenberger's "Made in America" series continues its tradition of celebrating the people, places and products that are uniquely American. This season, there's a new twist on the series' familiar theme. In addition to profiling the sought-after products of American manufacturers, there are segments featuring some of the country's most fascinating American-made wonders, such as the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Ratzenberger takes viewers along for rare, behind-the-scenes tours of these iconic American-made structures and reveals the fascinating stories behind how they were built and how they continue to operate today.

22. CAPE HATTERAS & GREAT SMOKIES AMONG USA TODAY'S 10 GREAT

Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Great Smoky Mountains National Park are among USA Today's "10 Great National Parks That Will Engage Your Kids." The newspaper consulted Trefoni Rizzi, author of "Teddy's Travels: America's National Parks." Regarding Cape Hatteras, Rizzi says, "This park is filled with the history of pirates, shipwrecks and lighthouses. Check out the many Especially for Kids programs at the visitor centers to learn more. Kids will love taking the ferry from Hatteras Island to Ocracoke Island, and, best of all, it's free." Also suggested is a side trip to the Wright Brothers National as a great way to learn about the history of flight. As for the Great Smoky Mountains, "This is the Salamander Capital of the World: at least 30 species of salamanders are found here. Go on a hike and see the wildlife, including bears. Bring your camera and capture one of the many waterfalls. Great programs for kids include the Ranger-led interpretive talks, historical buildings, museums and two working gristmills." In addition, it's suggested to drive along the Blue Ridge Parkway for a wide-angle view. To find out more, visit http://www.usatoday.com/travel/destinations/10great/2008-04-24-10-great_N.htm.

23. NATIONAL PARKS MORE POPULAR THAN BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, SOCCER AND NASCAR

If tourism and pro sports had a Las Vegas prize fight, you'd have national parks in one corner and the major sports franchises in the other. At the end of 10 rounds, the national parks would eke out a victory because America's national parks tallied 275 million visits in 2007 – more than the total attendance of MLB, the NFL, the NBA, soccer and NASCAR combined. The gain over 2006 was modest (just 3 million), but that came in the face of higher gas prices. For instance, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the most visited site in the National Park System, in 2007 hosted 13,104,344 travelers on the N.C. portion of the scenic drive. The Great Smoky Mountains, which was the most visited National Park in 2007, saw 4,151,321 visitors on the North Carolina side. And the Cape Hatteras National Seashore had 2,237,378 visitors. North Carolina's nine National Park System entities – Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Moores Creek National Battlefield, Cape Lookout National Seashore, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, and Wright Brothers National Memorial – hosted almost 21.7 million recreational visitors at their North Carolina sites. To find out more, visit http://southeasttourism.org/newsletters/tto/2008/march/national_parks.html and <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/>.

24. CARY SOCCER FIELD RANKED AMONG NATION'S BEST

Goal.com USA, the United States branch of the international Goal.com soccer Web site, announced its Best Places in America to Watch Soccer, which included WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary. Calling the facility an "immaculate complex," the site says, "Officially, it only seats 7,000 people. But if you've ever been there for a U.S. National Team match or an NCAA Final Four doubleheader, you know that standing room-only is the only term to be applied." The complex serves as the home field for the Carolina Railhawks, a professional USL Division 1 soccer team. To find out more, visit <http://www.goal.com/en-US/Articolo.aspx?Contenutold=670579> and http://www.wral.com/news/news_briefs/story/2805787/.

25. GREENBERG BROADCASTS FROM BALLANTYNE

Travel expert Peter Greenberg broadcast his radio show this past weekend from Ballantyne Resort Hotel & Spa in Charlotte. His guests included Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory and NASCAR Hall of Fame Executive Director Winston Kelly. Greenberg's radio show airs live on 160+ stations and XM Satellite Radio on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon.ET. To find out more, visit <http://www.petergreenberg.com/2008/04/24/this-week-april-26-2008/>.

26. N.C. AIRPORT & AIRLINE NEWS

Flying Out of RDU? It'll Cost You \$304 – Fares on domestic flights at Raleigh-Durham International Airport rose 3.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007. The federal Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) says the average domestic flight out of RDU cost passengers \$304.29, up from \$293.03 a year earlier. The 3.84 percent increase was just less than the national average of 3.97 percent. The average fare for a domestic flight in the U.S. during the fourth quarter was \$331, BTS says. Prices at Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro actually dropped over the year. They fell 2.2 percent thanks to the now-defunct discount airliner Skybus and another low-cost carrier, Allegiant Air. But the average fare of \$377.99 was well above fares at RDU. Fares at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport (CLT) rose 10.8 percent, to \$359.35. The rate of increase was the sixth highest in the country among the nation's top 100 airports. To find out more, visit http://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/stories/2008/04/21/daily32.html?f=et85&ana=du_A.

American to Charge \$25 for Second Checked Bag – American Airlines, the nation's biggest airline, said this week it would join other major carriers and begin charging passengers \$25 for checking a second bag to help offset rising fuel costs. The fee starts May 15 and will also affect passengers on the American Eagle commuter line. American's move comes after recent similar fees at United Airlines, the nation's No. 2 carrier, Continental Airlines, Northwest Airlines and Alaska Airlines. American didn't say how much it expects to raise with the fee, but a much smaller carrier, JetBlue Airways, recently said it expects to generate more than \$20 million this year by imposing a \$20 second-bag fee. AirTran announced earlier this month it will begin charging \$10 for a second checked bag, starting May 15. To find out more, visit http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2008-04-28-aa-bag-fee_N.htm and http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/business_tourism_aviation/2008/04/airtran-adds-10.html.

United's Fee to Change Tickets Rises 50 Percent, Will Require Some Saturday-Night Stayovers – United Airlines said this week that it was raising the fee it charges passengers to change tickets to \$150 from \$100 in an effort to combat high fuel costs. It also added a Saturday-night-stay requirement on all tickets on which it competes head to head with the other older traditional carriers, which will affect 65 percent of the markets it serves. That will have the most impact on business travelers, who typically don't want to spend a Saturday night in their destination. To find out more, visit http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120874782746230581.html?mod=2_1367_middlebox.

Strapped Airlines Seen Pushing Fares Higher – Airfares are on the rise as airlines keep a tighter rein on flights and seats – and that rise could accelerate if industry merger efforts bear fruit. The average cost of airline tickets in the U.S. was up 10.2 percent last month compared with a year ago, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as airlines struggle with surging fuel prices and a softening U.S. economy. Over the same period, overall inflation rose 4 percent. Already this year, most of the more than a dozen price-increase

attempts have been matched by rivals. To find out more, visit http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120942804717051261.html?mod=2_1367_middlebox.

27. MARKETING & TRAVEL TRENDS

The Subprime Summer Vacation – As families across the country plan their vacations, many are downsizing out of concern over the economy, spooked by talk of a recession, the weak value of the dollar overseas and home foreclosures. Add to that air-travel delays and the rising cost of gas, and some travelers are holding off planning, in hopes of nabbing cheap deals at the last minute. Some resorts and tour operators are responding with discounts and other incentives to try to fill rooms. Close-to-home destinations like suburban water parks and regional resort towns say they're bracing for a spike in business as Americans look for fun things to do that don't require much travel. To find out more, visit <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120916193704745877-search.html?KEYWORDS=Travelocity&COLLECTION=wsjie/6month>.

Soft-Price Pampering: Spas Reflect the Economy – Spas have been working hard over the past few years to market themselves as a necessary part of a healthy lifestyle, not an indulgence. But now that consumers are feeling anxious about paying for even more basic needs – like gas, house payments and butter – some spas are responding with a different strategy to appeal to stressed-out, maxed-out customers: discounts. A growing number of spas are offering deals to attract customers during tighter times, a trend that may have as much to do with technology as with the economy. To find out more, visit <http://travel.nytimes.com/2008/04/25/travel/escapes/25spa.html?ref=travel>.

Meeting on the Right Side of the Brain – “Right-brain meetings” – conferences that use comfortable, colorful furnishings and accessories ranging from Slinkys to the video game Guitar Hero to help drum up better brainstorming – may be a trend, but several professionals say that such environments have not been readily available in most places. Now, vanguard hotels seem to have heard complaints and are offering meeting spaces that look more like lounges than boardrooms, with high-tech replacements for flip charts and yoga and wheat-grass shots on breaks. Such surroundings are meant to stimulate the right half of the brain, which has been linked to creativity, versus the left brain, said to be responsible for logic and other thinking. Rather than dictate through PowerPoints, right-brain meetings are geared toward playfulness and hands-on learning to inspire employees and help them solve problems. The new method owes some debt to the books “A Whole New Mind,” by Daniel H. Pink (a speaker at the 2008 N.C. Governor’s Conference on Tourism), and “The Rise of the Creative Class,” by Richard Florida. Both books expound on the need for creative thinking in the marketplace. To find out more, visit <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/30/business/businessspecial/30right.html?ref=businessspecial>.

28. MEDIA LEADS

Surf Fishing in Coastal States – Boyd Pfeiffer is under contract with Globe Pequot Press to revise his book, “The Compleat Surfcaster.” He is seeking assistance from the fishing and/or tourism departments in all the coastal states. For past projects, this has included everything from basic information/photos up to state-organized travel, lodging, meals, guides, etc., to provide accurate information on state surf fishing opportunities and

possibilities. For details, contact him at cbpfeiffer@msn.com or call (410) 527-0717 or (410) 527-0718. Deadline: **ASAP**.

Holiday Travel Experiences – Brian Jewell, editor of Going On Faith, a national travel publication for church groups, is planning a holiday travel section for the June issue and is seeking leads for two types of holiday travel experiences: "Christmas by Candlelight" – seeking historic sites or attractions with special holiday decor, tours, events or activities; and "Holiday Flavors" – seeking attractions or destinations that feature special food for the holidays. This can include also special events, Christmas markets, etc. Send leads to him at brian@grouptourleader.com. Deadline: **May 6**.

29. "NORTH CAROLINA WEEKEND"

For the week of May 1 on UNC-TV's "North Carolina Weekend," enjoy the great outdoors at Paddle for the Border, a boating excursion along the Dismal Swamp Canal. Experience a "Daniel Boone Weekend" featuring places and activities that honor Daniel Boone in the Boone area. Learn more about our world, both around us and in the past, at the Schiele Museum of Natural History in Gastonia. Appreciate the serenity of the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo. "After Dark" samples the fare at Canyons in Blowing Rock. And the "Marker Minute" steps back in time at Historic Bethabara Park in Winston-Salem. (*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>.

30. UPCOMING INDUSTRY MEETINGS

May 1 – N.C. Wine & Grape Council, Raleigh

May 1 – N.C. Film Council, Durham

May 7-8 – Blue Ridge Parkway Association Annual Meeting, Charlottesville, Va.

May 8 – N.C. Business Travel Association Bi-Monthly Meeting, Winston-Salem

May 10-18 – National Tourism Week

May 13 – N.C. Tourism Day

May 13 – N.C. Travel & Tourism Board Meeting, Raleigh

May 28-29 – TIA's International Pow Wow 2008, Las Vegas, Nev.

May 30 – Piedmont Triad Host Meeting, Greensboro

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Want to share the "NewsLink" with a friend or colleague? Sign them up now at <http://www.nccommerce.com/en/TourismServices/PromoteTravelAndTourismIndustry/Newslink/>. Should you have difficulty signing up for the "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.