

visitnc newslink

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



Whirligigs by Vollis Simpson could soon to be the official folk art of N.C.

General Assembly honors Simpson, designates new state icons

The life, work and creativity of Vollis Simpson of Wilson County were [recognized by state leaders](#) last Wednesday with an N.C. House resolution and the Senate's approval of naming whirligigs as the [official folk art of North Carolina](#). The state symbols bill was approved by the Senate and will make whirligigs the official folk art in North Carolina following the signature of the governor. [House Bill 830](#) was previously approved by the House in May and presented in an effort to recognize Simpson's work and contributions to the state as well as the art world, said Rep. Susan Martin, who co-sponsored the bill.

Other state icons designated were Fossil: Megadolon Shark, Frog: Pine Barrens Tree Frog, Salamander: Marbled Salamander, Marsupial: Virginia Opossum, and Art Medium:

U.S. expects continued tourism growth from international markets through 2018

The U.S. Dept. of Commerce projects international travel to the United States will continue experiencing strong growth through 2018, based on the Office of Travel & Tourism Industries' [2013 Spring Travel Forecast](#).

Building on a record-breaking 2012, visitor volume is expected to rise 4.0 percent in 2013, reaching 69.6 million visitors who stay one or more nights in the United States.

According to the current forecast, the United States would see 3.7 percent to 4.2 percent annual growth rates in visitor volume over the 2013-2018 timeframe. By 2018 this growth would produce 84.6 million visitors, a 26 percent increase and 17.6 million additional visitors compared to 2012. The latest forecast reduces the compound annual growth rate over the forecast period from 4.2 percent to 4.0 percent.

For more information on the OTTI Travel Forecast, including data tables for the world regions, data tables for the top 40 visitor origin countries, and justification for each country forecast, including positive and negative factors that might influence travel from each country to the United States, click [here](#).

Travel and tourism is the largest services export industry for the United States and has produced a trade surplus since 1989. For official information on international travel to the United States, click [here](#).

Clay.



(l-r) Don Kimery, Nancy Nix, Carin Faulkner, Craig Stinson, Andre Nabors, and Linda Kimery

Topsail Chamber members learn about cultural heritage tourism, RetireNC

Tourism Development Manager André Nabors met with Topsail Chamber members to discuss Cultural Heritage Tourism development for the area. Chamber members discussed themes, strategies and the impact of cultural heritage tourism using the "Five Principals and Four Steps" approach to further development in the Topsail Region. Nabors also discussed the [Certified Retirement Community Program](#) guidelines and benefits. N.C. currently has six certified communities: Asheboro, Lumberton, Marion, Mount Airy, Pittsboro, and Sanford.



U.K. promotion results in increased bookings

U.K. tour operator Travelbag has just completed a campaign with North and South Carolina that substantially increased bookings to both states. Catering to affluent professionals ages 25 to 65 years old, Travelbag has been providing tailor-made



U.S. Travel Outlook offers encouraging news

U.S. economic activity increased modestly in the last few months, fueled primarily by home construction, consumer spending and steady hiring, according to the most recent issue of [U.S. Travel Outlook](#). Real GDP for the first quarter of 2013 grew by 2.4 percent, much more positive than the 0.4 percent growth seen in Q4 2012. While the economic outlook for the year-end is somewhat uninspiring (expectation of a 2.1 percent growth), the growth is certainly an improvement from 2012.

Home sales grew by 2.3 percent nationwide in April, above expectations. The pace of the increase is now the highest since April of 2006. According to a May 31 article in *USA Today*, rising house prices are also thought to increase consumer spending by making homeowners feel wealthier and likely to shop more. Some economists, said the article, estimate that for every dollar increase in home values, consumer spending can rise as much as 10 cents. According to Gallup, Americans' self-reported daily spending rose to an average of \$90 in May, which was the highest since October 2008.

While the latest overall employment reports are somewhat lackluster, strong employment growth in the travel industry continues, averaging 13,000 per month year to date. With gains in nearly all major travel segment categories, including foodservices and drinking places, lodging, retail trade, and airlines, direct travel employment now stands at 7.7 million. In total, one in eight U.S. jobs depend on travel and tourism, an industry ranked among the top 10 in 48 states and the District of Columbia. N.C. tourism employment data can be found [here](#), both in the Fast Facts section for direct employment numbers and in the Tourism Satellite Account for more detailed

holidays for more than 30 years. The combined campaign featured a dedicated newsletter to the Travelbag database of 600,000 promoting the two-state itinerary, as well as campaign banners throughout the site and a consumer competition for a trip to North and South Carolina. The newsletter had an open rate of 31 percent, banners generated 400 clicks and the competition boasted 4,000 entries. For more information about any of the Division's international programs, contact [Heidi Walters](#) at (919) 715-6702.



The Daily Meal interviews Asheville's Button

In *The Daily Meal's* "[Around the Kitchen in 3 Questions](#)" segment, travel editor Lauren Wilson interviewed Asheville chef Katie Button, who discussed the influence of her travels on her creative process. The article was a direct result of the Division public relations team's recent New York City media tour. Button is the chef/owner of Curaté in Asheville and was a semi-finalist for this year's Rising Star Chef of the Year award from the James Beard Foundation. The piece reached 313,783 food enthusiasts. To find out more about the Division's media missions, contact Public Relations Manager [Margo Metzger](#) at (919) 733-7420.



AAA: Fewer people likely to pay more for July 4 travel

Tens of millions of Americans plan to travel this Fourth of July, but it [may cost them a bit more than last year](#) to get where they're going. AAA predicted last Thursday that 40.8 million

comparisons.

Leisure travel is eliciting optimism from most travel industry executives. According to reports from the May Leisure Travel Summit in New York, the U.S. travel industry will see one of its strongest summers on record in 2013. MMGY's latest Travel Sentiment Index showed April TSI 4.1 points higher than April 2012. As well, the same survey found that Americans' leisure travel intentions for the May-October time period at a record high 70 percent, up nine points over April 2012 and 14 points higher than April 2010. This translates into an estimated 166.4 million leisure travelers. About a fifth of respondents to the MMGY survey say they plan to travel more often and almost a quarter of respondents plan to spend more.

According to a recent American Express survey, more and more travelers are focusing on the experience, including immersing themselves into the local culture (36 percent), planning local shopping trips (30 percent), learning about the local food and cuisine (26 percent), and partaking in learning and educational activities (24 percent).

For all of the positive news on leisure travel intentions, there are some downsides to keep in mind. Visitors will feel the effect of the spending cuts at national parks and historic sites this summer. The sequestration cut about \$150 million from the National Park Service and there are grave concerns for next year as well, with cuts in maintenance and visitor services.

Business travel may finally be seeing positive signs. A recent TravelHorizons study notes that 23 percent of U.S. adults expect to take at least one business trip during the next six months, up slightly from the same time last year and up from 16 percent in April 2011. The new Travel Effect report from the U.S. Travel Association makes a clear point that business travel plays a crucial role in the bottom line. The report notes that companies that invested the most in travel during the Great Recession grew faster than those that cut their travel

Americans will travel at least 50 miles from home over July 4, traditionally the most traveled holiday of the summer. That's a 0.8 percent dip from last year but still higher than the 13-year average of 38.9 million Americans who celebrate Independence Day by getting out of town. Since the holiday falls on a Thursday, travel is likely to be down slightly compared with 2012 because of a shorter travel window, AAA says. The continuing fallout from budget cuts by the federal government may also keep more Americans at home.

Tammy finishes N.C. filming

This week marked the end of a [two-month-long road trip in Southeastern North Carolina](#) for *Tammy* and stars Susan Sarandon and Melissa McCarthy. The Warner Bros. film, which was written by McCarthy and her husband Ben Falcone - who is directing - follows its title character (McCarthy) and her sassy, boozing grandmother (Sarandon) as they set off from Murphysboro, Ill., on a trip across the Midwest. Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Burgaw, Boiling Spring Lakes and Whiteville stood in for locations in Missouri, Pennsylvania and other states in the film, which wrapped production this week in Niagara Falls.



Holly Springs to host Coastal Plain League baseball team

Holly Springs leaders announced Tuesday (yesterday) that they have [landed a Coastal Plain League baseball team](#) and will build an all-sports stadium to host it. The Coastal Plain League, made up of college-level talent playing a summer schedule in the Carolinas and Virginia, is headquartered in Holly Springs, and the new team will be added to the current 14-team roster. A name and mascot have yet to be

budgets.

According to the U.S. Dept. of Commerce (DOC), 67 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in 2012, a 7 percent increase over 2011. In 2012, the top inbound markets continued to be Canada (+6 percent) and Mexico (+8 percent). In 2012, 11 of the top 15 countries posted increases in visitation to the U.S. The United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain posted the only declines. International visitors spent a [record-breaking \\$168.1 billion](#) on U.S. travel and tourism-related goods and services in 2012, an increase of more than 10 percent when compared to 2011. North Carolina 2012 data will be available in early July at

www.nccommerce.com/tourism/research. In other positive news, the DOC will redraw its organization chart to elevate the role of travel and tourism in early October. There are plans for a new National Travel and Tourism Office, for which the executive director would report directly to the new assistant secretary of industry and analysis within the International Trade Administration.



Travel and tourism spending outpaced growth in the national economy in the first quarter

Real spending on travel and tourism accelerated in the first quarter of 2013, increasing at an annual rate of 6.8 percent after increasing 2.1 percent (revised) in the fourth quarter of 2012. By comparison, growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) increased 2.4 percent (second estimate) in the first quarter after increasing 0.4 percent in the fourth quarter. The [leading contributors to the acceleration](#) in the first quarter were "passenger air transportation," and "all other transportation-related commodities," such as

determined. The CPL expects to begin play in Holly Springs in 2015. Mayor Dick Sears says he expects the stadium development to create jobs and bring \$5 to 6 million per year. Justin Sellers, commissioner of the CPL, said the proximity will help develop local college teams and players. "This has been a project we have been trying to do for two years," Sellers said. "The Holly Springs market will fit perfectly into our geographic footprint." He predicted summer camps and youth leagues would use the fields throughout the year.



Charlotte to look spectacular from Knights stadium

The Charlotte Knights plan to give their fans a view of the uptown Charlotte skyline that will be hard to beat next spring. "You don't get a better view anywhere in the country," Knights Chief Operating Officer Dan Rajkowski said Monday at a stadium tour for season ticket holders, sponsors and prospective ticket buyers. Located just a few blocks from the Carolina Panthers' Bank of America Stadium, the Knights' new BB&T Ballpark [looks toward the skyline](#). Construction on the \$54 million stadium began last October and is on schedule to be completed by the end of this year, in time for the Knights' 2014 season. The ballpark will be able to accommodate more than 10,000 fans, including 175 in its open-air upper deck club, 4,000 season-ticket seats in the lower deck along the first- and third-base lines and 350 general-admission seats in left field. Lower-level seats will extend no more than 21 rows back, creating an intimate feel for the crowd, Rajkowski said. The Knights also expect the new stadium to increase fan interest next season. Rajkowski said he hopes to see more than 600,000 fans a year at BB&T. He predicted the stadium will make a \$66 million economic development impact on the community in its first year.

automotive rentals. Partially offsetting these upturns was slower growth in "food services and drinking places" and "traveler accommodations." Overall growth in prices for travel and tourism goods and services slowed in the first quarter of 2013, increasing 0.3 percent following a 2.4 percent (revised) increase in the fourth quarter. The first quarter deceleration was more than accounted for by a downturn in prices for "all other transportation-related commodities," primarily reflecting a downturn in gasoline prices.



Destination: Capitol Hill set for Feb. 26-27

[Destination: Capitol Hill](#), the travel industry's premier legislative fly-in, is scheduled for Feb. 26-27, 2014. Travel professionals from across all segments of the industry converge on Washington, D.C. to speak directly to lawmakers about issues that impact the travel industry. Don't miss the chance to learn about upcoming legislation that impacts travel, mingle with key influentials and travel industry professionals, and meet with members of Congress to stress the importance of travel as an economic driver. Destination: Capitol Hill is your chance to make sure that Washington supports travel.

The inaugural Destination: Capitol Hill fly-in this past April was an undisputed success. More than 300 travel leaders representing 46 states participated in nearly 300 meetings with policymakers. Those meetings resulted in new co-sponsorships of critical travel-friendly legislation, new additions to the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus, and new relationships that will prove fruitful in the years



College world series generates tourism revenue

The 2013 NCAA Baseball Division II World Series was a resounding success by any measure. Not only was it marked with splendid weather and exciting action on the field, highlighted by Tampa's national championship victory over Minnesota State, but it also had a major economic impact on Wake County. The 2013 World Series generated 2,150 hotel room-nights, according to information gathered by Greater Raleigh Sports Authority. Total attendance for the eight-day, 14-game event was 8,824, and visiting fans spent \$872,000 in hotels, restaurants and retail stores. This marked the fifth consecutive year that the NCAA Baseball Division II World Series was held at the USA Baseball National Training Complex in Cary. Mount Olive College and Town of Cary were the official hosts, with support from USA Baseball and GRSA. The NCAA Baseball Division II World Series is set to return to Cary again in 2014 and 2015, and local partners are already bidding to add additional years to the agreement with the intent of making Cary "the Omaha" of Division II baseball.



to come. View photos from the week on the Power of Travel's Facebook page [here](#). Mark your calendar now for February 26-27. Don't miss a chance to meet with your elected officials in Washington and make a lasting impact for travel.



Carolina SciQuarium opens Saturday in Greensboro

The Carolina SciQuarium, part of the Greensboro Science Center in Greensboro, opens this Saturday. The state's first inland aquarium and the first AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) accredited aquarium in the United States to be LEED-certified, the 22,000-sq.-ft. aquarium makes the Greensboro Science Center the [state's only aquarium, museum and zoo in one attraction](#). The \$11.5 million project was paid for with bond money and private fundraising, and is just the first project in a \$32 million master plan that includes an update of the older facility, a treetop adventure course, and an endangered-species village. The SciQuarium contains six major exhibits and four SciPod learning areas. Each exhibit will have a pylon with an iPad station where visitors can learn more about the fish and animals displayed. But what you see on opening day is just a beginning. Fish and animals will be added to almost all of the exhibits in the coming months.

Workers installing the pedestrian bridge last week

DuPont State Recreational Forest opens new welcome center and pedestrian bridge on Monday

This Monday, the Dupont State Recreational Forest in Henderson and Transylvania counties officially opens the [Hooker Falls pedestrian bridge and the Aleen Steinberg Welcome Center](#). N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler, N.C. Dept. of Transportation Secretary Tony Tata, N.C. Forest Service staff, local conservationists, and others will be on hand for the grand opening ceremony, scheduled for 11 a.m. at the bridge, which also has a new parking lot for visitors, and noon at the welcome center, which is located at the High Falls Access. The public is invited to tour the center after the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The visitor center will serve as a central location for educating the public about the forest's history while stressing the need for safety around the four major waterfalls in the forest. Steinberg is a local conservationist who was instrumental in the state obtaining the forest.

Fort Fisher taking Civil War history to new heights with tour

[Fort Fisher State Historic Site](#) in Kure Beach is taking Civil War history to new heights. Beginning July 2, the site will offer "Above the Scenes," a special 45-minute walking tour from the floor of the fort to the top of the traverses, along an area normally closed to pedestrians. "This new tour will afford the visitor a different perspective from a unique vantage point," said tour guide and Curator of History Ray Flowers. "We're very excited about providing this unique opportunity to our visitors." Fort Fisher, the largest earthen fortification in the Confederacy, once protected the port of Wilmington and the vital blockade running trade on the Cape Fear River.



*Where the Sun Rises
on the Smokies*

New map promotes six great Haywood bike rides

Bicycle advocates and tourism promoters have teamed up to print a [guide to six of Haywood County's best rides](#). For each route, the guide includes a map with an elevation profile, turn-by-turn directions, and a brief description on what riders should expect and the scenery they'll encounter. The maps are a product of Bicycle Haywood NC working alongside the Haywood County TDA and the Haywood County Chamber of Commerce. Following the popularity of the Blue Ridge Breakaway, a local bicycle event held each August, the biking and tourism communities began to take notice of the untapped potential in cyclo-tourism.

With the promise of attracting more cyclists, the Haywood County TDA footed the bill for the first printing of the maps. The maps highlight why Haywood County - with its mountains, rural scenery and the Blue Ridge Parkway passing through it - is a good place to go on a bicycle ride. This month, 5,000 copies were printed and placed at visitors centers, gas stations, retail businesses, and other places around the county. Lynn Collins, executive director of the TDA, said the bike maps are one more addition to several trail maps the authority prints, from quilting to motor touring. She has high hopes that visitors will begin picking up the free brochures and the word about cycling in Haywood County will get out. "We just have a lot of our visitors who are interested in bicycling," said Collins. "We



Queen Anne's Revenge yields cannons

Blackbeard's ship has surrendered more of its historical treasures, and Division photographer Bill Russ captured the moment on film. [Two cannons have been raised](#) from the wreck of the *Queen Anne's Revenge* off the North Carolina coast last Thursday. A dive expedition at the site this month had hoped to bring up eight cannons but efforts were hampered by bad weather until Thursday. There's a \$450,000 effort underway to remove all the artifacts from the ship by the end of next year. An extended dive expedition is planned this fall. Blackbeard captured a French slave ship and renamed it *Queen Anne's Revenge* in 1717. Volunteers with the Royal Navy killed Blackbeard in Ocracoke Inlet the following year, five months after the ship sank.



Tabletop display in Division lobby highlights Camden and Pasquotank counties

Division lobby promotes Camden and

are getting more and more requests and see it as a segment of the industry that will be growing."



Asheville on 'enduro' map

Asheville is now officially on the map of enduro racing. The newest, gnarliest craze in the mountain biking world, enduro racing is a form of mountain biking that involves multistage racing with timing only on the downhill. The special components needed to make downhill and enduro bikes will be on display at the three-day SRAM Mountain Bike Ride Experience on June 28-30 in Asheville. Representatives and product designers from SRAM, a top component manufacturer in the cycling industry, are hosting the event with Asheville-based Suspension Experts and Liberty Bikes. A kickoff party will be followed by two days of "on-the-bike product engagement" in the Rice Pinnacle area of Bent Creek Experimental Forest, where riders can test a range of products, including the just released RockShox Pike. "They're [using Asheville as the East Coast launch](#)," said Kevin Booth of Suspension Experts "The cool thing is, the product manager who actually developed this is coming to talk to us. We've known Asheville is on the map for mountain biking, and this shows that leading manufacturers are also well aware that our region is emerging as an ideal testing ground for innovative products in the industry."



Pasquotank counties

Camden County, Dismal Swamp State Park, Dismal Swamp Welcome Center, and Elizabeth City Area CVB are using the lobby of the Division's Raleigh offices to showcase their areas' attractions through the end of August. The display features several items and "Did you know...?" signs regarding nature relating to the Dismal Swamp State Park, Dismal Swamp Canal and the Canal Trail. The Museum of the Albemarle, N.C. Potato Festival and Port Discover are highlighted in Elizabeth City.

To promote your county through the Division's lobby, contact [Cynthia Ferguson](#) at (919) 733-7479.



NC GreenTravel: A different shade of green for weddings

With emerald being the 2013 Pantone Color of the Year, many wedding destinations and venues are likely seeing green popping up in some unusual places this wedding season. But while not every bride will be sporting a green wedding dress, a growing number of brides and grooms are looking at how to have a different kind of green wedding, one that integrates green practices. And while going green for weddings is not a new trend, [serving sustainable local foods](#), more [environmentally friendly flowers arrangements](#) and [green weddings](#) in general continues to grow. To help meet the growing demand for green weddings, venues such as the [N.C. Arboretum](#) and the [N.C. Botanical Garden](#) are tailoring their sites to meet the standards of a green wedding. And many wedding/event vendors, like [Green Planet Catering](#) and [Shade of Green Events](#) offer services to help make weddings greener. CVBs, such as the [Asheville CVB](#), are also pitching their destination as a great place for a green wedding by providing additional information on local green wedding services. Wedding professionals, through programs like the [GreenBrideGuide.com Green Wedding Professional Certification Course](#) are now also becoming more sophisticated on how to green weddings, raising the bar on what makes a wedding green. For more information on how you can make your wedding venue greener or to have your wedding venue recognized by the NC GreenTravel program, contact [NC GreenTravel](#) program manager [Tom Rhodes](#), or

Thomas and Tennille at Jockey's Ridge (photo courtesy N.C. Division of Parks & Recreation)

Blind hiker draws attention to Mountains-to-Sea Trail

Led by his guide dog, Tennille, and cheered by well-wishers, Trevor Thomas of Charlotte finished his extraordinary cross-state trek on the Mountains-to-Sea Trail last Saturday at Jockey's Ridge, becoming the [first blind person to hike the 950-mile trail](#). Hundreds followed his trek via Thomas' Facebook page and several media outlets reported his latest accomplishment. Thomas hiked the 2,175-mile Appalachian Trail in 2008 by himself and the 2,654-mile Pacific Crest Trail with friends in 2010. Unlike the Appalachian Trail, a well-defined corridor, the Mountains-to-Sea Trail traverses 500 miles on footpaths and 400 miles along rural highways. He said the North Carolina trail, a unit of state parks, was more challenging because of its patchwork character. Thomas found that over the course of the hike, he ended up carrying much more on his shoulders. He had corporate sponsors, of course, but he also for a time became a de facto spokesman for the blind and by extension, disabled people tackling challenges in the outdoors. Thomas gave more than a dozen TV and print media interviews and became an [outstanding ambassador for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail](#), an authorized unit of the state parks system.



USA Today: GSMNP among '10 great places for family vacations in national parks'

contact [Alex Naar](#) with the [Center for Sustainable Tourism](#) at ECU at (252) 737-1346.



CNN: '8 fabulous hotels still fresh at 100' includes Grove Park Inn

CNN spotlights "[8 Fabulous Hotels Still Fresh at 100](#)" and includes the Grove Park Inn in Asheville. Of the venerable hotel, CNN says, easily distinguishable by its granite exterior and red clay-tile roof, the Grove Park Inn has long been a favorite mountain retreat, hallowed for its sweeping views, Southern hospitality and rustic yet refined Arts and Crafts design. A recent \$25 million renovation, timed to coincide with its anniversary celebrations, ensures this grande dame is back to form; even the giant fireplace in the lobby is working again.

Surveys, Industry, Marketing & Travel Trends

Americans recognize importance of vacations, but fewer will travel - Vacationing at least once a year remains important to most Americans, but fewer are sure they will be [able to take a vacation this year](#), according to a survey from travel insurance provider Allianz Global Assistance USA. The number of respondents who recognize the importance of an annual vacation but fear they will be unable to take one (which Allianz labels as a "vacation deficit") grew to 24 percent of those polled, up from 18 percent in 2012. Overall, 48 percent of respondents said they will take a vacation in 2013, down four points from 2012. Only eight percent of respondents said they have already taken a vacation in 2013, down three points from 2012. The survey defines a vacation as a trip of at least one week to a location more than 100 miles from home.

Holiday Inn Express, Marriott eye the younger traveler - Major hotel chains known for being reliable and consistent and anything but edgy are now trying to appeal to the younger

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is among USA Today's "[10 Great Places for Family Vacations in National Parks](#)." National parks not only preserve nature, they also nurture families, says Jonathan Dorn, editorial director of *Backpacker* magazine and Nationalparktrips.com, a planning site. "These are places where families can unplug from their normal chaos and reconnect. They can have meaningful experiences in natural surroundings that are among the most beautiful in the world." Of the GSMNP, Dorn notes the most-visited national park offers easy access to wilderness and solitude if one heads to more remote campgrounds, such as Cosby, Balsam Mountain or Deep Creek. Dorn has seen black bears and, on a hazy summer night, an unforgettable firefly display in the Cades Cove area. Hiking opportunities abound. "I don't think any visit to the Smokies is complete if you don't spend a few hours walking on the Appalachian Trail."

The New York Times

NYT ponders Mount Airy as Mayberry

The New York Times offers a look at Mount Airy for "[Inspiring Mayberry, and Then Becoming It](#)." Marketing a small Southern town that has been repeatedly gut-punched by the economy requires the kind of drive and creativity that come only from desperation. Mount Airy, a town of about 9,340, has a history of economic agility. When the railroad came, it advertised itself as a healthy mountain retreat. When the tobacco barons put local growers out of business, the town started spinning cotton into clothes and socks. When

traveler, spending millions of dollars on elaborate marketing campaigns that [draw heavily on pop culture and social media](#). Holiday Inn Express has launched the "Smart Thinking" campaign, which will invite travelers to show how smart they are by offering humorous advice on any topic through Vine and YouTube videos, Instagram photos and Tweets. The chain has enlisted *Daily Show* comedian Jason Jones as a spokesman and is collaborating with websites such as CollegeHumor and BuzzFeed to spread the content. Marriott Hotels and Resorts has started the "Travel Brilliantly" campaign, which will include new commercials that will appear on mobile devices, on Web sites such as Hulu and Mashable and during shows such as *Jimmy Kimmel Live*. The brands are trying to appeal to the next generation of travelers who stay constantly connected through social media, have an interest in design, and favor coffee-house like public spaces where they can both work and play.

Vacation travel picking up; for business, not so much -

With the economy on the rebound, Americans once again are cracking open their pocketbooks to take family vacations and other leisure trips. But [corporate managers in charge of spending for business conferences and conventions](#) remain tightfisted with their money. That is one conclusion from a study of bookings at nearly 4,000 hotels by TravelClick, a New York company that provides booking software and business data for major hotel chains. Hotel bookings for leisure travelers in North America for the next 12 months are up 4.6 percent, while bookings for individual business travelers are up 7 percent compared with the previous period, according to TravelClick. But bookings for groups are up only 1.7 percent, according to the report.

the textile plants shut down, it turned to Andy Griffith. But Mount Airy isn't limiting its appeal to solely being Mayberry. One thought is to continue to capitalize on vineyards in the Yadkin Valley springing up on old tobacco fields. Nearby wineries have increased to 35 from only 5 in 2002. That led to a new, somewhat debated, slogan: From Mayberry to Merlot. At the Chamber of Commerce, they hand out promotional corkscrews.



Overnight visitors to North Carolina spent an average of 3 nights in the state in 2012. The average travel party size for all overnight North Carolina visitor parties was 1.9 people. Twenty-four percent of overnight travel parties to the state included children in the party. For the most recent N.C. visitor profile information, click [here](#). For more information, contact Tourism Research Manager [Marlise Taylor](#) at (919) 733-7278.



North Carolina Weekend

For the week of June 27 on UNC-TV's [North Carolina Weekend](#), be amazed at the "Dinosaurs in Motion" exhibit at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh. Lose yourself in one of the dramas presented by the Snow Camp Outdoor Theatre in Snow Camp. Step back in time at Historic Rosedale Plantation in Charlotte. Enjoy a tour of Sunset Beach. And relax at the Bed & Breakfast on



Schroth named director of Nasher Museum of Art

Sarah Schroth has been named director of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University in Durham. She may be contacted at (919) 684-5135 x 4 or via sarah.schroft@duke.edu.

Media lead

Seeking Family-Friendly Summer Travel Packages: As part of the Travel Effect campaign outreach, Violet Communications is seeking summer travel packages for families that would complement a national media pitch in one of the following four areas:

Destinations with kid-friendly/family activities and also outdoor activities for first timers such as sports-related lessons and family bike tours; full-service resorts offering activities for the entire family; mid-week travel deals with significant travel savings and family friendly activities; and vacation rentals in a resort or historic town. Package should offer or have access to local activities and schedule of local events. Must include online link for more information to book. Do not send with suggested package, but only submit if both high-resolution images and video b-roll are available upon request. If you've got an offer that fits the bill, email [April Nichols](mailto:April.Nichols) by June 28.

Tiffany Hill in Mills River. (Please note: listings are subject to change.) North Carolina Weekend is 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

June 27-29 - [AFCI Locations](#) Tradeshow, Los Angeles, Calif.

July 15-17 - DMAI [Annual Convention](#), Orlando, Fla.

July 18 - N.C. Coast Host Meeting, Wallace

July 18-19 - MPC-CC Meeting, Charlotte

July 20-23 - MPI [World Education Conference](#), Las Vegas, Nev.

Aug. 4-9 - STS [Marketing College](#), Dahlonega, Ga.

Aug. 6 - N.C. Travel & Tourism Board Meeting, Raleigh

Aug. 18-20 - [ESTO](#), Richmond, Va.

Aug. 22-24 - [Connect Marketplace](#), Milwaukee, Wis.



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