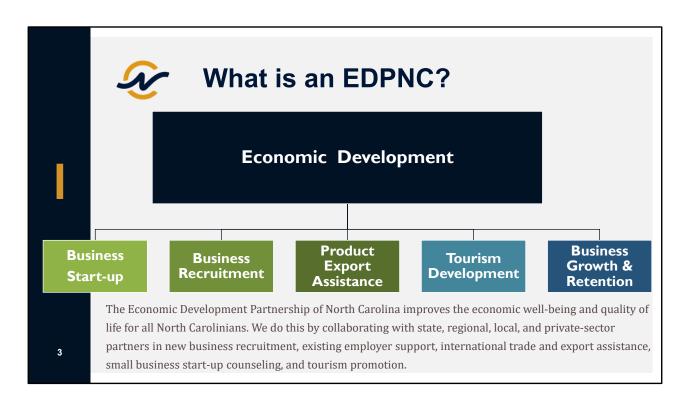


**Introductory Remarks** 



**Introductory Remarks** 



Whether you're a visitor to our state, or if you're looking for information about starting, growing, or relocating your business to North Carolina—we're here to help. We're proud to serve as the statewide economic development organization and are here to show you around, connect you to the right resources, and help you feel right at home in North Carolina.

The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina advances the economic interests of North Carolina's 100 counties and more than 10 million residents, through its collaboration with state, regional, local, and private-sector partners in new business recruitment, existing employer support, international trade and export assistance, small business start-up counseling, and tourism promotion.

# Visit North Carolina Program Goals

The mission of Visit North Carolina is:

To unify and lead the state in positioning North Carolina as a preferred destination for travelers and film production and in maximizing economic vitality statewide.



Our mission is to unify and lead the state's tourism efforts.

# 2022: Back to Records for NC Tourism

## **\$4.6 Billion** in Commercial Lodging Revenues

• 23% increase from 2021

#### Vacation Rental Record Revenues

• 27% increase from 2021

#### Commercial Lodging Demand Rebounds from Pandemic

• 9% increase from 2021



- The North Carolina tourism industry generated \$28.9 billion in 2021, just 1 percent below the record set in 2019.
- Visitor spending increased 45 percent from 2020.
- After losing more than 26 percent in employment in 2020, the tourism-supported workforce increased 10.5 percent to 197,500 jobs. While this is good news, the figure remains more than 18 percent below the 2019 record of 242,600.
- Tourism payroll increased 19 percent to \$7.7 billion.
- State and local governments saw rebounds in tax revenues to \$2.3 billion.
- For the second year in a row, North Carolina ranks fifth among states for domestic U.S. visitation.
- On average, each North Carolina household saved \$580 in state and local taxes as a direct result of visitor spending in the state.



## 2022 Year End Lodging Data

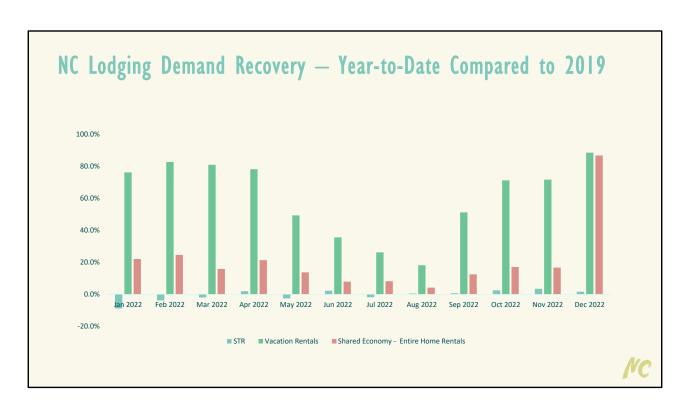
	NC Commercial Lodging	Airbnb/HomeAway entire home rentals (AirDNA)	Vacation Rentals (KeyData)
Occupancy	Up 8%	Down 7%	Down 14%
Room Rates	Up 14%	Up 5%	Up 15%
RevPAR	Up 22%	Down 2%	Down 1%
Revenues	Up 23%	Up 27%	Up 7%
Demand	Up 9%	Up 21%	Down 7%
Supply	Up 1%	Up 30%	Up 7%

Sources: STR, AirDNA, KeyData 2023



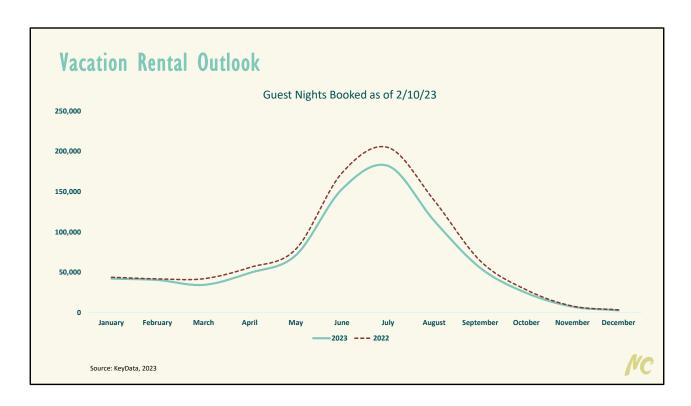
#### **Lodging Analysis – Year end 2022**

Commercial lodging continued to improve in 2022, while rentals, both shared and traditional, .continue to be affected by increased supply or room nights available.



#### Lodging Recovery - vs. 2019

Whenreviewing lodging data as compared to pre-pandemic, commercial lodging demand growth is still slower than other lodging. Statewide in 2022, 7 months, particularly towards the end of the year, had demand numbers higher than seen in 2019, but three-year growth for commercial lodging still lags behind that of home rentals.



In terms of vacation rentals, we are able to look at current bookings through KeyData. As of early February, guest nights booked at vacation rentals are down about 12% from the same time last year. Of course, there is still plenty of time to market and get these bookings, but one thing to note is that the average booking window is currently the same as last year – about 211 days. As well, the length of stay booked is about the same as last year – 6.8 nights this year as compared to 6.9 nights last year.

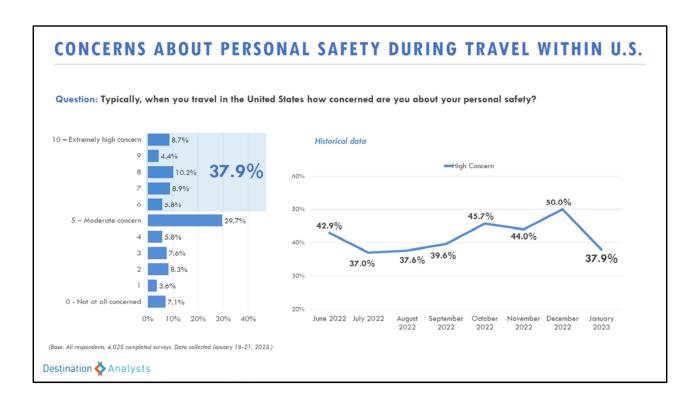


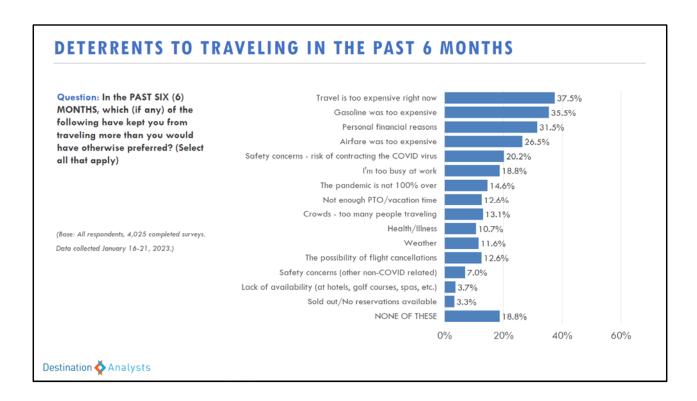


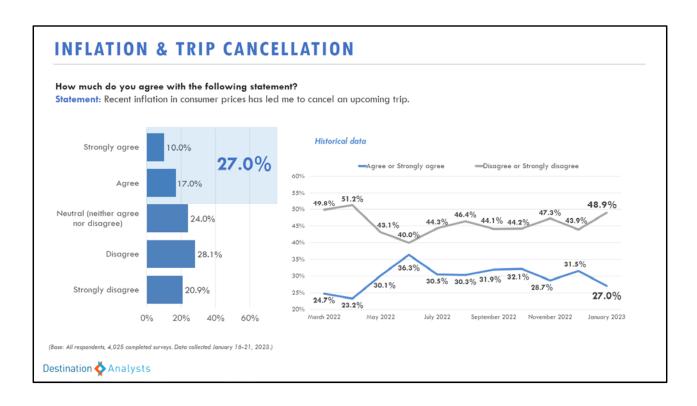
#### **Shifts in Messaging & Audience Targeting**

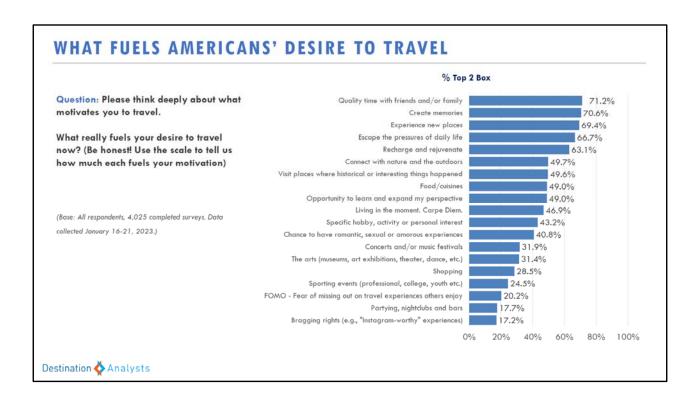
As a state, we typically would only change our messaging strategy every two or three years based on consumer sentiment. However, the pandemic forced us to go through several specific campaigns ranging from public safety to getting people back into a traveling mindset.

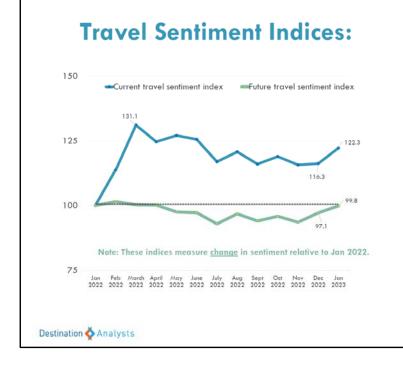
We are currently back to our Firsts That Last campaign, but we will launch a new one in 2023 based on the latest research into consumer sentiment and behavior.











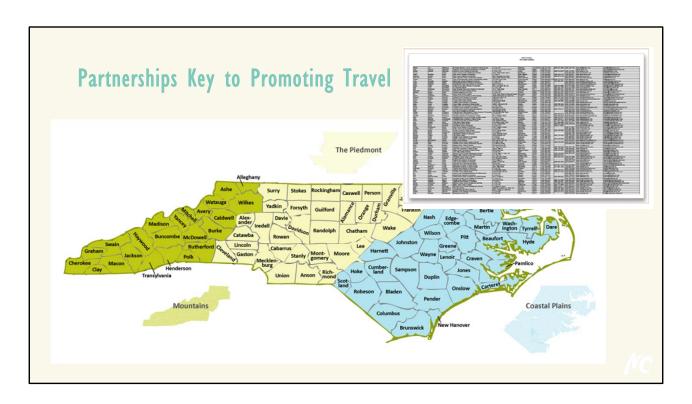
- Current travel sentiment grew sharply early in 2022, but retracted as inflationary pressures grew. This month the index again grew sharply.
- Future travel sentiment had remained relatively stable throughout 2022, but has moved forward in the past two months.

# CURRENT TRAVEL SENTIMENT INDEX Current financial situation

Now as a good time to spend on travel
Travel prices restricting travel now
Overnight and day trips taken in past month

# FUTURE TRAVEL SENTIMENT INDEX Personal financial outlook (next 12 months) Travel spending as a future budget priority Excitement to travel (next 12 months) Expected leisure trips (next 12 months)





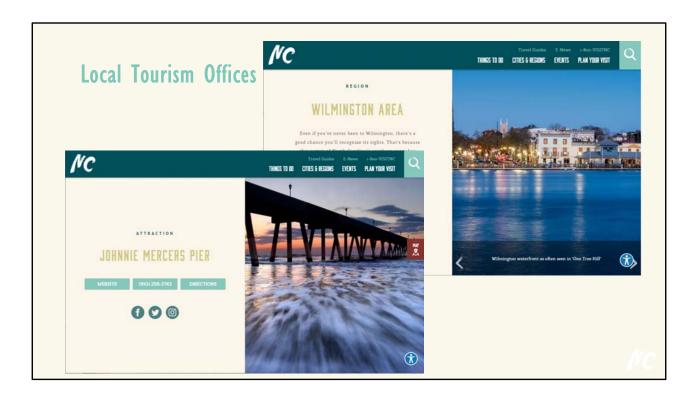
Partnerships: Key to being able to compete more effectively; making the most of every dollar invested.

We work continually with all 100 counties from mountains to the sea.

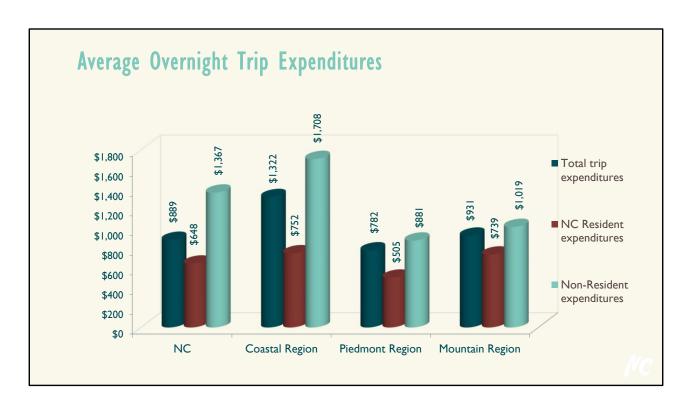
We have 200 plus industry partner contacts across the state, at least one in every county, have access to Visit North Carolina's Extranet to help ensure data is current and accurate for their own communities. Partners include other state departments including **State Park and Agriculture for agritourism**. These partners include regional economic development organizations as well as host groups.

Currently **15,522 property listings and 9,747 events** within and benefiting from being a part of Visit NC's extranet database which share their information (for free) on our website and in our Travel Guide.

We have as many as 50 partners join us for media missions in places such as New York; for trade events in Toronto and at the American Bus Association annual meeting as well as at TEAMS, the largest meeting of sports events planners.



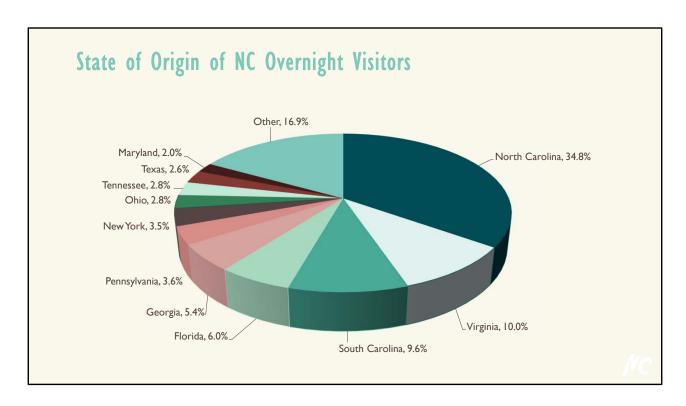
Local tourism offices have access through our 'extranet' to make sure their information is up-to-date and accurate on our website (VisitNC.com). Industry partner contacts across the state, at least one in every county, have access and are tasked with ensuring data is current and accurate for their own communities. This makes VisitNC.com the most comprehensive site for visitor information in the state. We also partner with departments of state government including **State Parks and Agriculture for agritourism**. Additional partners include regional economic development organizations as well as regional 'host' groups.



#### **Average Trip Spending**

Out-of-state visitors to North Carolina spend seventy-one percent more on average per trip than resident visitors, particularly in the categories of lodging, gasoline/transportation and food/beverage.

Therefore, the out-of-state visitor also has the highest economic impact to the state.



While in-state visitors are the largest percentage, out-of-state visitors make up nearly two-thirds of all overnight travel to North Carolina.

Most local tourism offices across the state (our partners), focus on bringing more in-state visitors to their area. It is the largest slice of the pie and the easiest to target. But that strategy leaves out the majority of visitors to the state.



#### **Paid Media Partners**

Our core paid media budget is invested in digital and print advertising. We have a heavy focus on digital while still offering print co-ops which are very popular with local tourism offices. We emphasize cost-effective reach and frequency strengthens awareness and preference for North Carolina.

#### Print

We maintain top performers and co-op packages frequently focusing on priority markets of Atlanta, D.C., and others.

#### **Digital Media Partners**

Mix of networks, sites and tactics to balance branding and awareness with driving traffic to VisitNC.com and converting that traffic to downstream referrals to our partners' websites.

#### **Branding & Awareness**

We employ high-impact tactics to increase exposure of the overall VisitNC identity and to our current campaign (e.g., rich media, pre-roll video)

#### **Site-Traffic Drivers**

We tap vehicles that drive cost-efficient traffic to VisitNC.com in order to enhance overall visitation (e.g., CPC-based media)

#### **Conversion Drivers**

And we incorporate strategies that generate qualified traffic to VisitNC.com *and* convert users based on desired actions such as downstream referrals to our partners' websites.



All our efforts are collaborative. This also relates to our decision-making process.

#### Official North Carolina Travel Guide

Destinations, attractions (840) and accommodations (3,945) listed for free. 174-page guide, 500K copies distributed annually. NC travel industry advertisers investing more than \$700,000. As a result, the Guide is published at no expense to the state.

#### **Instate Media Partnerships**

Partnerships with in-state media associations and organizations allow us to promote North Carolina and VisitNC.com to residents without competing with local tourism office advertising efforts.

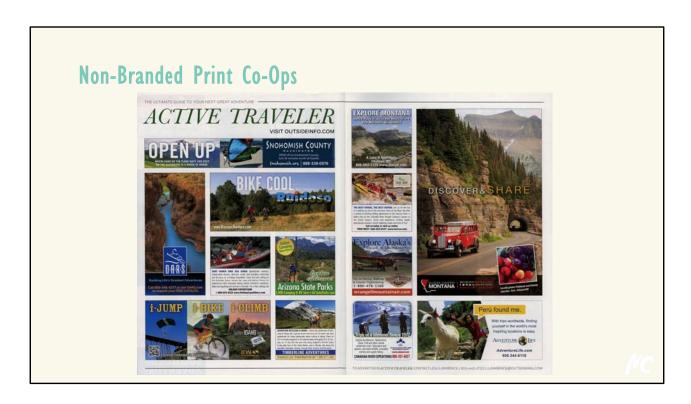
We're continuing to market in-state via our partnerships with the North Carolina Press Foundation, North Carolina Broadcasters Association, PBSNC's NC Weekend and the NC Outdoor Advertising Association.

They are essentially PSA campaigns, or non commercial sponsor agreement with Visit NC investing approximately \$300,000 annually and receiving in return an estimated \$3-4 million dollars in exposure annually.



#### **Print Co-Op Example**

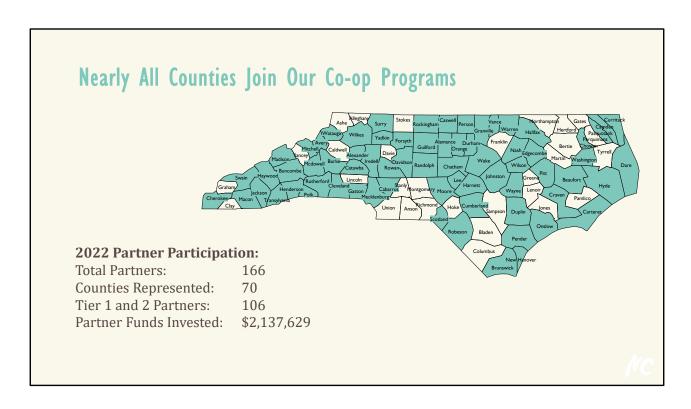
Here's an example of a directory spread for Garden & Gun which featured a number of our mountain partners.



#### **Advertising Co-ops | Non-Branded Print**

Sample spread from Outside magazine demonstrating the ease at which a small advertiser and their investment can get lost among various size ads from different destinations and attractions from other states or countries.

Compared to a unified, branded look showcasing only North Carolina partners.



More than 150 organizations across the state spend their funds as part of our marketing coop programs either in joint advertising, sales and media missions, our state travel guide or in RetireNC marketing efforts.

### Brand Campaign Components — Firsts That Last Films

- People's Choice contest March-April
- Brand campaign
   August November
- Film Series Competition September







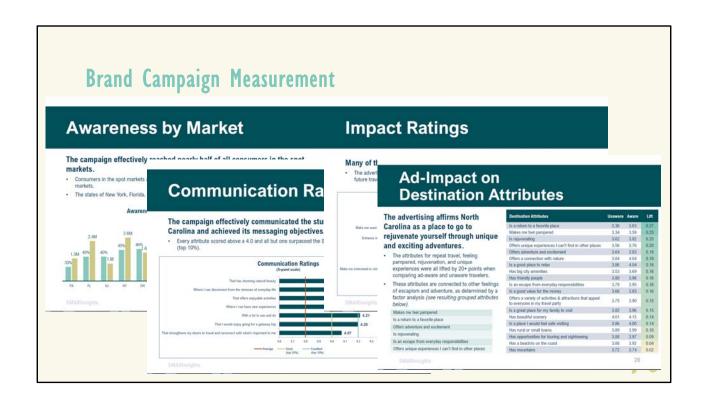




#### Firsts That Last 2.0 | Campaign Components

The campaign had three major components, all of which centered around a collection of commissioned documentary films depicting a diverse array of North Carolina "Firsts." The campaign did ultimately shift due to the timing of receiving Recovery funds from when the campaign was initially planned for.

- The People's Choice contest, which wrapped in mid-April and generated initial buzz for the Film Series across our owned and organic channels.
- The Core, ongoing brand campaign with heavy support in paid media and intended to inspire travel. This began running in August upon receipt of Recovery funds and will wrap in November.
- And then finally the Film Series Competition which wrapped in September, where an overall winner was selected by way of popular vote. The winning film was Jacob's First Mandolin

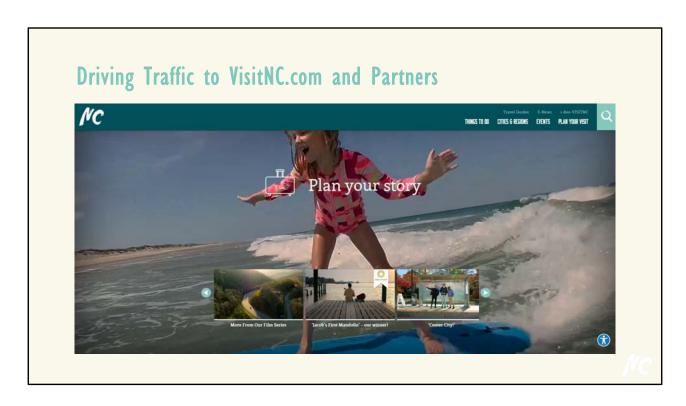


## Campaign Performance

- 1. Increased travel to NC:
- Campaign returned **\$217** in visitor spending per dollar of media investment
- The ROI in state and local taxes was \$20:1
- 2. New emails:
- Grew database by 20%
- nearly 20,000 new subscribers



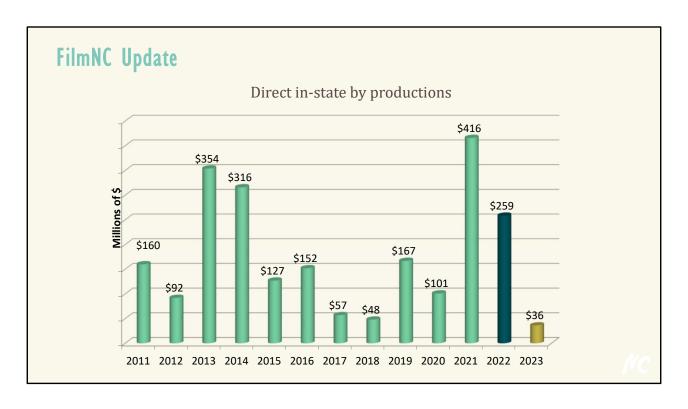
NC



#### **VisitNC.com | Performance Highlights**

Another critical performance measure for our marketing efforts is the traffic we drive to VisitNC.com, and in turn the referrals we provide to our North Carolina travel industry partners' own websites.

• VisitNC.com attracted nearly 5 million visits.

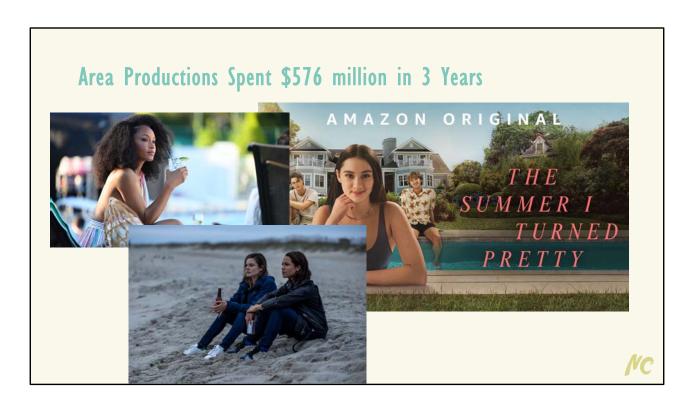


#### **NC Film Update**

- 2022 ended up falling short of our expectations to hit \$300M, and a few projects had their audits completed earlier than usual and their spending was less than expected (to which they credited to the efficiencies of our state)
  - None-the-less, it is still the 6<sup>th</sup> highest total since the state first started offering any sort of incentive to attract the industry
  - (see notes on next page for list of key productions that filmed in the state in 2022)
- Already have production underway in 2023
  - Electric Love made for tv/streaming movie for Paramount +
  - A Biltmore Christmas made for tv/streaming movie for Hallmark Channel (Christmas 2023)
  - Tough Love with Hilary Farr
  - Blue Ridge modern-day western/law enforcement show for the INSP Network
  - Summer Camp independent feature about a Summer Camp Reunion (like recently released "80 for Brady")
- Continuing to work with/assist the Film Partnership of North Carolina as they expand

their workforce development program (will start having participants in the Winston-Salem area, in addition to Wilmington, in 2023)

- Expect to be joining a partner for desk visits before the end of Q1 of 2023
- Will be in Los Angeles area for AFCI Week (a recruitment and professional development conference for film commissions worldwide) March 27-30
- Will be part of ceremonial groundbreaking for new purpose-build sound stage addition to Dark Horse Studios in Wilmington (March 2023)
- Recent & Upcoming releases:
  - Welcome to Flatch--- available on Hulu
  - Heaven Sent (filmed as Second Time Around) --- debuted on Pure Flix in January
  - Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret -- coming to theaters 4/28/23
  - The Summer I Turned Pretty Season 2 Amazon Prime Video Summer '23
  - To-Be-Named Please Don't Destroy Feature coming to theaters 8/18/23
  - A Biltmore Christmas Hallmark's Countdown to Christmas (Nov-Dec '23)



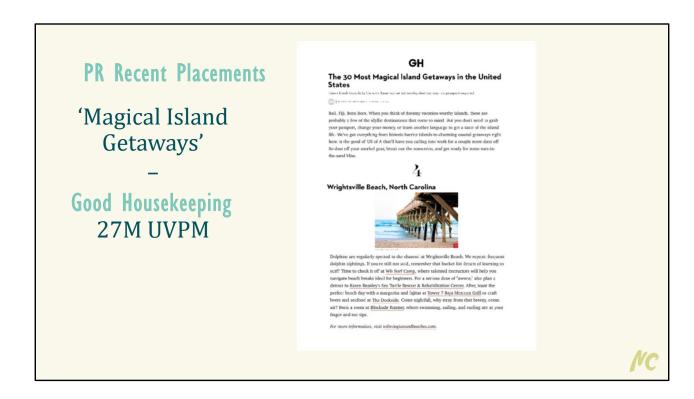
In all, the greater Wilmington area has seen production spending eclipse \$576 million over the past three years. The Summer I Turned Pretty (Amazon Prime)
Our Kind of People (FOX)
Hightown (Starz)



-- Ana Shellem-NYT: 2.5 million print, 42 million digital

# NY Times feature on N.C. fisherwoman stems from Visit NC's New York Media Mission

As a result of her participation in Visit NC's media mission to New York City in October, commercial fisherwoman Ana Shellem is featured in the digital edition today (Wednesday) in the New York Times' "She Harvests Shellfish and Helps Protect Them." Representing Wilmington and Beaches CVB alongside the CVB's Hannah Almeter, Shellem was one of several culinary specialists who contributed to a seafood-focused lunch hosted by Visit NC in Manhattan. The event was attended by consumer and travel media as well as Visit NC's extended team at J Public Relations, which is based in NYC. Conversations at the event resulted in J/PR pitching Shellem to freelance writer Shivani Vora as part of the Times' International Women and Leadership section. The resulting piece highlights North Carolina oysters and shellfish harvested in Wrightsville Beach as well as several restaurants that serve Shell'em Seafood: Wilmington's Second Glass and Seabird, and Raleigh's Poole's and Death & Taxes. The New York Times digital edition reaches 42 million unique visitors per month; the article is expected to run in the print edition in the coming days, which reaches another 820,000 paid subscribers.



# Wrightsville Beach among 'Most Magical Island Getaways'

In its "The 30 Most Magical Island Getaways in the United States," Good Housekeeping included Wrightsville Beach, the Brunswick Islands and the Outer Banks. GoodHousekeeping.com sees 27 million unique monthly visitors.

Of Wrightsville Beach, at #4, the article noted, in part, "Dolphins are regularly spotted in the channel at Wrightsville Beach. We repeat: frequent dolphin sightings. If you're still not sold, remember that bucket

list dream of learning to surf? Time to check it off."



Visit North Carolina works to capitalize on growing international travel by focusing its resources on top performing inbound markets of origin. With several overseas and Canadian direct flights daily, North Carolina attracts both corporate and leisure travelers. Visit North Carolina has had in-country international representation since 1990, and collaborates with local marketing partners in Canada, the UK, German speaking Europe, France, Italy, Benelux countries, Nordic Countries and China.

International visitors on average stay longer and spend more on their holidays — providing new tax dollars to every community they visit. The approach in each market is to influence the potential visitor, both with direct-to-consumer campaigns and via tour operators, travel agents and media.

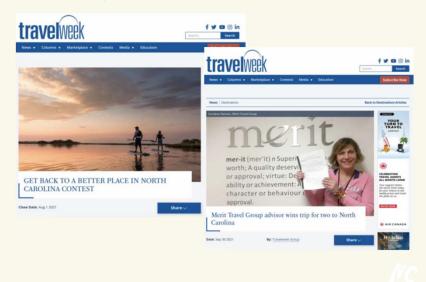
# International Tourism Marketing — Canada's Travel Week

Partnered with leading Canadian travel trade publication

Campaign themed "Get Back to a Better Place"

270 entries in prize giveaway with the winner being a member of Merit Travel Group

13,000 unique visitors to the contest article

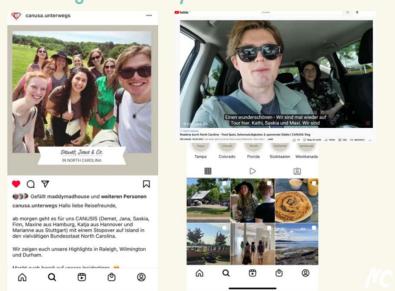


## International Tourism Marketing — Germany

Partnered with leading German tour operator and Icelandair for fam

Fam visited Raleigh, Wilmington and Durham.

CANUSA created a full week on Instagram with stories and posts about the fam and also produced a video that went viral on YouTube.





2,774,381 total impressions with Travel South ads, Expedia, Google and Postmedia

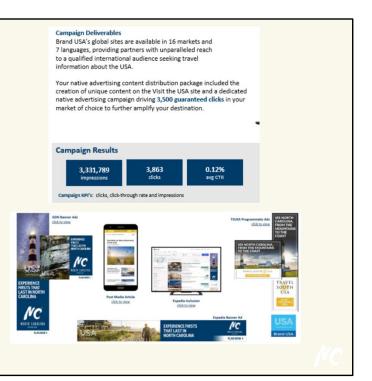
Postmedia delivered 1,030,773 impressions with a CTR of .13%

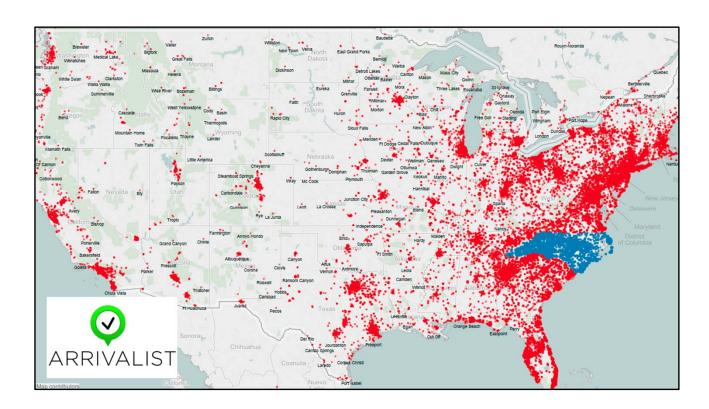
Google Display had 4,044 clicks with a CTR of .48%

Expedia hotel bookings: 7,336 room nights, \$1,046,090 in revenue

Expedia flights: 2794 flights,

\$1,038,725 revenue





#### **Arrivalist**

We are big believers in research. And there are seemingly new online tracking tools available every day.

We were one of the early adopters of Arrivalist.

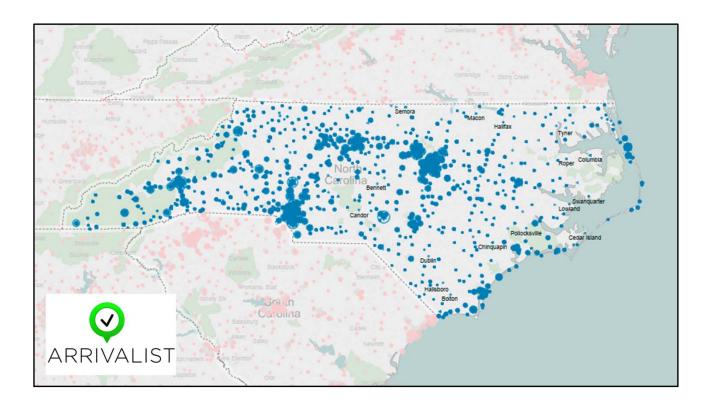
Arrivalist tracks arrivals in North Carolina coming from exposures to our owned and paid digital media – be it through the VisitNC.com family of sites (our owned media) or display advertising and native content as examples of paid media.

From Arrivalist, we glean critical information to help make better decisions and form media strategy, including identifying high-opportunity origin markets, measuring efficiency of digital media vendors in generating arrivals, and understanding more about the sequencing and timing from first exposure to visitation.

Arrivalist is an important complement to our Visitor Profile Data and will continue to drive strategy around digital media, content and geographic focus.

Since launching the Arrivalist partnership in January 2015, we've tracked arrivals from all 50 states and 94 countries, and we were also the first Arrivalist client to log 100,000 verified arrivals.

Note: Arrivalist sample is representative, but still a very small slice of total arrivals.



## Arrivalist

But the proudest point we've seen in Arrivalist: marketing efforts have driven verified arrivals in every one of our 100 counties.

## **Arrival Lift**

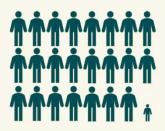
People who see Visit NC's marketing travel here at nearly 1.75 times the rate of those who don't

**Arrivalist Control Group** 



**15.3 visitor arrivals** per 1,000 panelists

**Visit NC Target Group** 



**23.3 visitor arrivals** per 1,000 panelists

1.5X

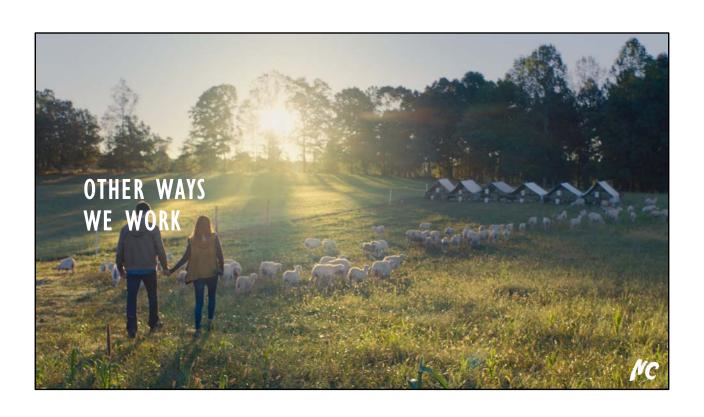


51.9%



 $\it US$  owned and paid digital media; arrivals tracked calendar year 2022





## Visit North Carolina Programs

#### **Visit NC**

- Advertising
- Public Relations
- Group Travel
- Sports Event Marketing
- Industry Leadership
- International Marketing
- VisitNC.com

## **Commerce Visitor Services**

- Welcome Centers
- Fulfillment

- Tourism Development
- Retire NC Program
- Research
- Community Outreach
- Social Media Outreach
- Film
- Publications



Warehouse



Our staff is designed to encourage visitation based on the way people travel.

Advertising (1) and social.

• Public Relations (2)

Group Travel Marketing (.5)

Sports Event Recruitment (.5) destinations join us.

Industry Leadership (1) industry.

 International Marketing (1) longer, spend more.

 Publications (1) for all 100 counties.

VisitNC.com (.5)
 VisitNC.com.

• Social Media outreach (.5) potential travelers.

Manage advertising agency contract including web

Generates earned media coverage worth millions.

Motorcoach and group travel is a \$3 billion impact.

Impact of \$2.1 billion in Charlotte alone. 40 partner

Promoting awareness of North Carolina's tourism

3 offices. 1 million international visitors. Stay

Manages travel guide content, images and listings

Manages 100 county contacts and listings on

Manages industry accounts reaching millions of

Tourism Development (.5) Helps rural communities find federal grants.
 Retire NC Program (.5) Manages CRC program and Retire NC marketing.
 Research (1) Manages \$200,000 program. Guides all marketing efforts.

- Community Outreach (1) Assists partners and marketing efforts, coordinates annual Visit NC 365 tourism conference.
- Film (1) Potential economic impact of \$376 million, 20,000 job opportunities.
- Welcome/Call Centers
   Fulfillment/Warehouse (4)
   Done in collaboration with the Department of Commerce.

Like all agencies, we're doing more with less. Visit NC has lost 20 positions since the beginning of 2008-09, including 8 in the tourism development program before it was moved to Cultural Resources and 4 during the move. Additionally, Visit NC lost an executive position, a custodian's position, and a program manager's position. Five more positions were lost in the move to the EDPNC.

