

JOHNSTON COUNTY  
NORTH CAROLINA

2012-2013  
Annual Report

## Dear Tourism Partners,

On behalf of the Johnston County Visitors Bureau, the Tourism Authority Board of Directors, and the Staff, I am pleased to present the 2012 JCVB Annual Report.

The last three years have been some of the most successful and challenging in the Visitors Bureau's history! As the economy ebbs and flows with great months then down months, we continue to try innovative programs with our visitor industry partners to make positive impacts. The following annual report gives a three year trend in revenues and expenses to show the fluctuations and the hold on operational expenses by the bureau to weather these uncertain times.



Donna Bailey-Taylor

The JoCo Visitors Bureau will celebrate 25 years in 2014, and we are dedicated to creating first class marketing materials and campaigns representing the county. The Marketing Committee in 2012 decided it was time to test our marketing strategies and methods, and hired a consultant to conduct a Marketing Audit. As a team committed to the county's success, we found out several positive attributes and we also developed some new ideas for the future. We have written a new Strategic Marketing Plan for 2013-14 and we developed several programs related to partnerships and ROI. (return on investment)

We are proud that tourism continues to play a vital role in our economy generating \$197.66 million in visitor spending in 2012, nearly \$5 million in local tax dollars and supporting 4,000 full and part-time jobs in the county.

One of my favorite quotes is from cultural anthropologist, Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

The visitor industry and citizens of Johnston County can be assured that we are working efficiently and with the betterment of the community in mind in all that we do to promote the county.

With warm regards,

*Donna*

## Visitor Impact & Economic Development

THE North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development announced that domestic visitors to and within Johnston County spent \$197.66 million in 2012, an increase of 3.4 percentage from 2011.

A sign of a healthy tourism economy in Johnston County is evident in the return of development projects in the county with hotels opening in 2012, capital improvements at area attractions, and the growing interest in attracting sports tournaments. We are also excited to see the expansion in meeting and special events venues with The Farm Banquet Hall opening this October.

## Tourism Impact Highlights for 2012:

- The travel and tourism industry directly employees more than 4,000 full and part-time in Johnston County.
- Total payroll generated by the tourism industry in Johnston was \$29 million.
- State tax revenue generated in Johnston County totaled \$10.78 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income.
- Approximately \$4.88 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Johnston County Convention & Visitors Bureau is marketing our destinations to visitors, thereby, encouraging utilization of accommodations, retail outlets, restaurants, heritage sites, museums, entertainment and recreation venues for the community's economic benefit.

# Staff and Board Changes

## New Board Members

IN 2012, the Johnston County Tourism Authority welcomed two new members and one staff person. One new member is actually a returning board member, Ernie Brame, representing the Kenly Chamber of Commerce. Brame previously served on the Tourism Authority and brings knowledge of the tourism industry as well as the operations of the Visitors Bureau. Brame is the General Manager at the Kenly 95 Petro Truck-stop which includes three restaurants, gift shop and coffee shop.



Ernie Brame

Brame was elected as the new Chairman of the Tourism Authority to lead the Visitors Bureau through several new initiatives and challenges such as a Marketing Audit, new Visitor Center programs and legislative issues such the threat of a Toll Road on I-95. Brame replaced outgoing board member, Ted Godwin, who resigned to take on the duties of County Commissioner.

The second addition to the Tourism Authority is Scotty Henley, the new Director of The Clayton Center, who is representing the Clayton Chamber of Commerce. Henley became The Clayton Center's third full-time Executive Director in March 2013 after an interim period of four months. Henley is an East Carolina University graduate with degrees in both Communications and Theatrical Design & Production, and he has vast visual and performing arts experience. Henley replaced former director, Heidi Stump on the board.



Scotty Henley

The Tourism Authority is made up of 10 members plus the County Finance Officer as Ex-Officio. Members are appointed by County Commissioners and Chambers to serve 3-year terms.

## Erin Bailey Joins Visitors Bureau Staff

THE Johnston County Visitors Bureau hired Erin Bailey in July 2012 to fill the role of Communications Assistant. Within this new position, Bailey will assist with advertising and publicity of the county, as well as, work on websites, social media and email marketing campaigns for the Visitors Bureau.



Erin Bailey

Bailey, an Appalachian State University graduate, grew up in Clayton and is familiar with the attractions in Johnston County. Bailey earned a degree in Public Relations and has a background in web design.

# Highlights of 2012-2013

## Johnston County Visitors Bureau Wins Four Awards

THE Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina (DMANC) is the trade association for over 40 Convention & Visitors Bureau from across the state. The Annual Meeting was held in Raleigh with over 120 travel professionals learning from various speakers, networking and exchanging ideas on how best to promote our destinations in North Carolina.

One of the annual highlights is the Destination Marketing Awards banquet and the Johnston County Visitors Bureau has fortunate to receive over 40 awards in the past ten years. This year the Johnston County Visitors Bureau received four awards: two platinum and two gold. Receiving recognition this year with Platinum Awards was the JCVB Visitors Guide and the Ava and Frank Leisure Advertising Campaign for the Ava Gardner Festival in 2011.

Receiving Gold Awards were the Muscadine Heritage Wine Trail Brochure and the Girlfriend's Getaway Promotion featuring deals and coupons from local businesses and area hotels.



## New Videos

THE Johnston County Visitors Bureau has completed a year-long project producing five uniquely themed promotional videos for tourism. The five videos may be found on the bureau's new YouTube Channel.



TLC television host Patrick Brown becomes the "Johnston County Traveler" for new video project.

The niche markets first targeted for Johnston County included History & Heritage, Arts & Entertainment, Agri-tourism and Food Products, Shopping New and Old, and Outdoor Recreation. The creative platform included a "Johnston County Traveler" that narrates the videos as he travels around the county discovering all there is to see and do.

## JCVB Joins No Tolls Coalition

IN an effort to be actively involved in the discussion and the study conducted by NCDOT on tolling I-95, the JCVB joined the newly formed No Tolls I-95 Coalition.

This grass roots organization is an alliance of residents, businesses and local governments lobbying to bring the needed repairs and improvements to I-95 without the proposed tolls NCDOT desires. Activities of the group included attending several public forums and focus groups, lobbying state and federal groups, and educating the general public on this issue.

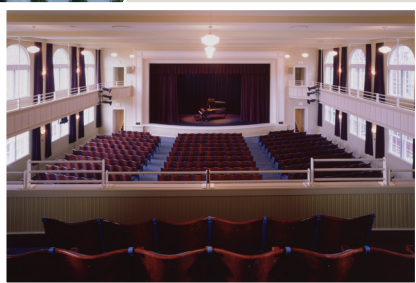


## Three Capital Grants Awarded

THE JCVB Capital Grants Program awarded three grants totalling \$25,000 in 2012-13 to assist in tourism development projects around the county.

The Benson Singing Grove received \$14,500 for roof replacement, sound system and rest room renovations. The Clayton Center received \$5,250 for improvement to

the light and sound systems, and the Historic Hastings House received \$5,250 for continued restoration on the house and new exhibits.



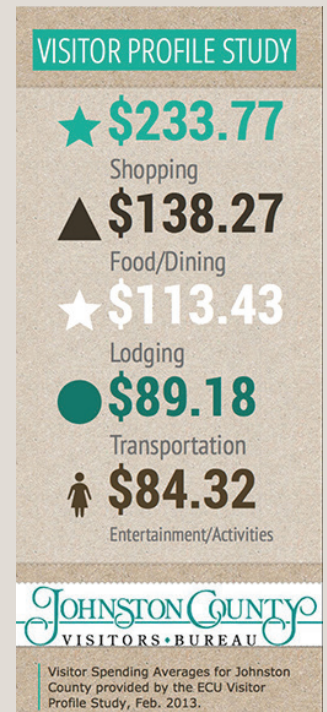
## ECU Visitor Profile Study

THE JCVB was part of a pilot program in partnership with the ECU Center for Sustainable Tourism to conduct visitor research in rural counties. Over a year long process, emails for an online survey were collected from accommodations, attractions, retail stores, and special events to gain a cross-section of visitors.

The Cumulative Technical Report, finalized in February 2013, validated many of the bureau's previous studies such as; NC is the top feeder state for travel to Johnston County (65.4%) and Virginia is the top overnight state for travelers to the area (6.41%).

Knowing who is traveling to the county and why are important aspects of how to conduct marketing:

35% of visitors to Johnston County were on vacation, a getaway or for leisure purposes, 15% visiting friends/family, 15% on a business trip, and 11% attending a festival/special event, with 24% on personal business or other reasons.



## Sales and Marketing Highlights

- Upgraded Destination 3000 Software and converted all data for industry partners, meetings, groups and sports contacts.
- Conducted a Marketing Audit with outside consultant, Magellan Strategy Group from Asheville, NC on the efficiency of the bureau's marketing campaigns, JCVB image in the community, and developed new strategies.
- Upgraded six Joomla websites to new version 2.0 with redesigned graphics and functions.
- Designed new JCVB Blog and engaged in new Social Media campaign strategies for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest.
- Created new YouTube Channel to promote the "Come Journey with Us" Videos for the County.

<b>Leads for Hotels:</b>	(4) Group Tour Leads, (8) Meeting/Conf. Leads, (9) Sport Events Leads, (13) Film Location Leads
<b>Group/Sports Services:</b>	(53) Event/Meeting/Group Services
<b>Visitor Inquiries:</b>	28,713
<b>Unique Web Visits:</b>	158,639 (combined totals, seven sites)
<b>New Tourism Businesses:</b>	32
<b>Hospitality Hero Grads:</b>	46
<b>New Releases Distributed:</b>	55

## 301 Endless Yard Sale

IN 2012, the Town of Selma's Mayor approached JCVB to coordinate a county-wide event patterned after the HGTV show Flea Market Flip and the 127 Longest Yard Sale. The visitors bureau proceeded to pull the towns along US Hwy 301 together to determine if everyone was on board for such a project. The answer said "yes" and a planning committee was formed to work out the details of something this large and unprecedented in the county.

The Visitors Bureau designed all the marketing materials, built a website and Facebook Page, and handled the publicity for the event which was held June 14-15, 2013. Issues concerning permitting, food vendors, and parking were handled with each town planner. The event drew thousands of bargain and antique shoppers, and there were over 150 vendors along US 301 from Kenly to Benson. Besides wall-to-wall traffic along US 301, the event was a success and dates have been set in 2014 for June 20-21.



## Social Tidbits

- One of the JCVB Facebook campaign went viral with a strawberry pie recipe. Over 74,000 shares and 2.6 million views over the summer.
- JCVB developed a new Pinterest page with 32 boards and over 300 followers.
- Facebook fans increase by 100 percent up to 3,000 in 2013
- New JCVB Blog design is used to post up news as a vehicle to drive traffic to our websites.
- JCVB maintains four FB pages, six Twitter accounts, Pinterest, BLOG, YouTube Channel, Google + Page, and Flickr pages.
- JCVB's main Twitter account has more than 1,900 followers.
- New Youtube channel has had over 760 views, with History and Heritage the most popular video so far.
- JCVB staff posts up calendar of events information for partners on our websites, Visitnc.com, NC Coast Host and triangle area media outlets.

## New Ad-Supported Smithfield Selma

### Visitor Map



The next generation of marketing materials will have in mind the visitor seeking a deal, whether for retail, dining, or attractions. With this in mind, the Visitors Bureau designed the new Smithfield/Selma Visitor Map to include paid advertising from area visitor industry businesses. The cost was kept affordable and just enough to cover the expense of printing. Sales generated around \$4,000 to print 40,000 Visitor Maps.

These maps are distributed to all NC Welcome Centers, I-95 CVB Visitor Centers and to more than 125 locations around the county in hotels, attractions, town halls and chambers of commerce.

	<b>FY 10-11</b>	<b>FY 11-12</b>	<b>FY 12-13</b>
County 3% TAX	545,104.09	595,173.64	575,135.81
Misc. Revenue	1,628.31	-0-	46.74
Reimbursements	23,872.09	8,855.00	12,794.73
Investment Income	3,303.96	2,040.71	1,236.62
Town of Selma	81,749.79	81,119.46	71,065.82
Town of Smithfield	102,472.40	130,776.67	132,305.07
Selma 15% Fee	13,015.30	14,315.19	12,541.02
Smithfield 15% Fee	18,083.36	23,205.32	23,347.96
Web Ad. Sales	200.00	-0-	-0-
Town of Benson	9,467.16	7,960.60	7,133.49
Town of Kenly	18,452.53	22,037.96	20,628.97
Benson 15% Fee	1,514.86	1,404.80	1,258.86
Kenly 15% Fee	2,988.89	3,889.04	3,640.40
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>821,852.74</b>	<b>890,778.39</b>	<b>861,135.49</b>
Salaries - Full Time	179,900.04	175,875.20	220,674.48
Longevity Pay	450.00	600.00	600.00
Travel Per-Diem	5,100.00	5,100.00	5,100.00
FICA	12,888.48	12,159.79	15,473.72
Health Insurance	25,200.00	25,200.00	30,975.00
Life Insurance	380.28	387.23	461.85
125 Admin. Fee	132.00	132.00	187.00
Retirement	11,596.46	12,265.03	14,914.00
401K	5,319.07	4,817.72	4,440.58
<b>TOTAL HR EXP.</b>	<b>240,966.33</b>	<b>236,536.97</b>	<b>292,826.63</b>
Contract Labor	-0-	2,653.00	3,900.00
Legal Fees	-0-	-0-	1,500.00
Telephone	5,306.51	3,749.14	3,389.62
Postage	17,024.56	18,091.32	9,073.51
Utilities	-0-	-0-	3,076.35
Maintenance	1,584.22	1,614.55	3,452.40
Building Lease	38,658.81	37,504.19	32,971.72
Office Supplies	2,440.68	1,926.63	1,789.14
Depart. Supplies	-0-	6,699.10	344.15
Software Purchases	-0-	573.22	6,618.24
Contract Services	12,600.00	12,600.00	10,815.00
Insurance & Bonds	200.00	175.00	200.00
Johnston Cty Fees	27,059.22	27,130.28	28,769.60
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONS</b>	<b>104,874.00</b>	<b>112,716.43</b>	<b>105,899.73</b>
Event Grants	9,250.00	14,150.00	9,250.00
Capital Grants	5,000.00	-0-	25,000.00
<b>TOTAL GRANTS</b>	<b>14,250.0</b>	<b>14,150.00</b>	<b>34,250.00</b>
Printing	41,160.22	30,293.37	39,706.80
Travel	16,295.04	16,776.99	17,790.48
Advertising	118,418.78	127,148.84	120,759.42
Research	-0-	-0-	8,000.00
Co-op Mkting	11,471.47	5,977.52	5,630.85
Prospect Dev.	3,485.45	3,165.19	3,561.94
Benson	10,486.65	8,037.10	4,608.19
Kenly	12,263.17	23,314.19	21,114.45
Selma	83,003.10	81,432.04	66,764.36
Smithfield	92,409.05	102,334.09	120,882.80
Dues	4,996.00	4,938.00	5,070.00
Miscellaneous	5,186.71	4,638.50	5,367.03
<b>TOTAL MKT. EXP.</b>	<b>399,175.64</b>	<b>408,055.83</b>	<b>419,256.32</b>
<b>TOTAL OPER. EXP.</b>	<b>759,265.97</b>	<b>771,459.23</b>	<b>852,232.68</b>
<b>NET +/-</b>	<b>62,586.77</b>	<b>119,319.13</b>	<b>8,902.81</b>

Revenues down in 2013 by 3.5% due to affects of Hurricane Sandy on travel from the NY/NJ region and increased competition along I-95.

Source: Hotel owners in Smithfield/Selma

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