



NORTH CAROLINA TRAVEL AND TOURISM BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

May 10, 2016

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Rolf Blizzard, Donna Carpenter, Christopher Chung, Richard Geiger, Marshall Hilliard, Senator Ralph Hise, Caleb Miles, Lynn Minges, Tammy O'Kelley, Vinay Patel, Jessica Roberts, Secretary John Skvarla, Kathy Sparrow, Chris Valauri, Paula Wilber, Lynn Wingate

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Kevin Baker, Sabrina Bengel, Randy Cobb, Randy Danos, Lew Ebert, Joel Griffin, Katherine Hopkins, Kim Hufham, Chris Humphrey, Representative Charles Jeter, Representative Pat McElraft, Senator Norman Sanderson, Art Schools

LIAISONS, STAFF AND GUESTS PRESENT: Robert Cox, Jane Duncan, Steve Dunkley, Denny Edwards, Susan Fleetwood, Guy Gaster, Scott Gilmore, Dana Grimstead, Bryan Gupton, Jim Hobbs, Catherine Locke, Brooks Luquire, Andre Nabors, Nick Parker, Marlise Taylor, Cyndi Tomblin, Wit Tuttell, Heidi Walters, Kara Weishaar, T. Jerry Williams

CALL TO ORDER

Tammy O'Kelley, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

WELCOME

O'Kelley welcomed Board members and guests to the Museum of History in Raleigh. She also read aloud the Ethics Statement in accordance with Executive Order No. 35.

MINUTES APPROVED

Donna Carpenter made a motion to approve the February meeting minutes. Second by Rich Geiger. Unanimously approved.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

O'Kelley reported the passing of Betsy Rosemann, Tourism Director for Goldsboro. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, memorial donations be made to the Humane Society of Wayne County at PO Box 821, Goldsboro, NC 26533.

The executive committee met, but at this time has no additional updates for the board.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARY

Secretary Skvarla commented on House Bill 2, summarizing the developments with the Department of Justice and the violations of Title 9 and Title 7. The North Carolina lawsuit asked the federal government to settle and set a standard ruling. Secretary Skvarla notes that commerce in North Carolina is robust. House Bill 2 will get top priority as a declaratory judgement action in courts.

COMMENTS FROM SENATOR HISE

Senator Hise thanked Secretary Skvarla for attending the T&T meeting and addressed the timeline of HB2, having to go through several courts of appeals. It is important to continue marketing North Carolina to counteract the negative press of HB2.

VISIT NC UPDATE

Wit Tuttell, Executive Director of Visit North Carolina, introduced Marlise Taylor to present the 2015 tourism numbers released during Travel and Tourism week.

Research: Once again, it was a record year for visitor spending in North Carolina, with increases in almost every sector, state and local tax revenues, employment and tourism payroll. North Carolina has

only seen one decrease in visitor spending in the past 10 years. This occurred during the height of the recession.

North Carolina's tourism industry statewide generated:

- \$21.9 billion in direct visitor spending
- \$1.1 billion in state taxes to the General Fund
- More than 211,000 jobs for North Carolinians
- \$60 million in visitor spending per day in North Carolina
- Nearly 45,000 businesses in North Carolina that directly serve travelers
- \$475 in savings for each North Carolina household in state and local taxes
- \$660 million in local taxes for communities across North Carolina
- \$4.9 million per day from visitors in state and local tax revenues

Visit NC uses the US Travel Association TEIM methodology to measure these numbers for year-over-year comparisons.

Room demand was up statewide in 2015 and is showing positive numbers for 2016, outpacing national numbers and down slightly in the South-Atlantic states. Research can be found on partners.visitnc.com. Board packets included research numbers, should you need additional copies please contact Dana Grimstead.

2016-17 Partner Co-Op Programs: The new 2016-17 fiscal partners programs were introduced at the 2016 Visit NC 365 Conference. As of the board meeting, 35 partners have committed to the program for a total of \$825,235 reinvested back into the program. The program covers print, digital, social, digital influencer, videos, and VisitNC.com

North Carolina Craft Beer Month:

Annually, Visit North Carolina engages with the North Carolina Brewers Guild to promote and market April as NC Craft Beer Month. Craft Beer supports 150 breweries across the state, with a high engagement of 80 breweries participating in beer month. Promotional support included: a sweepstakes package from Visit Asheville for a "New Belgium Celeberration Weekend"; partnership with UnTappd, a mobile web app that allows you to socially share the brew you're currently enjoying; and Twitter and social promotion. Visit NC continues to see a high level of consumer engagement in this program.

Public Relations:

VisitNC's public relations team partnered with Watauga and Beech Mountain TDAs to bring in 8 journalists to showcase North Carolina's outdoor experiences, skiing and craft breweries.

Project 543: In January, Visit NC refreshed and relaunched Project543.com to provide visitors to the site with an overall better user experience and have included a number of key features to help in planning your visit to any number of attractions listed, allowing the user multiple options based on how they want to interact with the site, scroll through information and engage geographically through a map feature. Project 543 has won an international CSS design award, based on its innovation, creativity and functionality in design. Project 543 Shop will be coming out soon. Travelers can purchase merchandise that features imagery and text show on Project 543.

Target Market 2016 Campaign: Building off of the success of 2015's Target Market campaign in Atlanta and D.C., the focus shifts to five new markets in 2016. The following markets were selected based on a number of factors/analytics, including partner interest/feedback from surveys, VisitNC.com site

visitation, Arrivalist and more: Cleveland, Columbia, SC, Jacksonville, FL, Nashville and Richmond. The scroll commercial will be used again, eliminating the need for new production expenses. The target market campaign shifts from women 35-54 to adults 25-54. A 15 second video will complement the scroll video on digital platforms

Leadership: Our Public Relations team is working with Cision to create the non-ad value equivalent comparison to find out the real value of an article. Last year, we conducted a case study on the shark encounters. We'll hold another communications forum on May 17 to talk about crisis PR.

Parks Centennial: Visit NC is partnering with National and State Parks to develop a special program to promote their attractions and resources around the Centennial Celebration in 2016. We're in the process of developing a campaign to be leveraged across a number of mediums based on a partnership campaign strategy, "Reclaim Your Weekend".

Film NC: All funds for FY 2015-16 in the NC Film and Entertainment Grant have been awarded. The NC Film Office attended and recruited at AFCI Locations Tradeshow, partnering with Wilmington Regional Film Commission, Piedmont Triad Film Commission, and Charlotte Regional Film Commission to host an event for filmmakers and other industry leaders.

International: Visit NC traveled to Paris, UK and Canada (Niagara, Montreal, Toronto) to educate agents and operators on opportunities in the state. Visit NC also hosted an Irish Tour Operator Fam. The direct seasonal flight into CLT has provided a double digit increase in Irish visitors to the state. The new Paris flight into RDU starts this Thursday, May 13. Visit NC will host a tour operator and a media flight familiarization tour from Paris in late May to support this new direct flight. Staff attended the largest international tradeshow in the world this year, ITB International Berlin, partnering with Travel South to engage a larger footprint during the tradeshow.

Domestic: Travel South Domestic Showcase was hosted in Winston-Salem March 6-9. Heidi Walters commended Rich Geiger and Winston-Salem for the wonderful job they did on the showcase. Visit NC co-sponsored the AAA Blue Ridge Parkway Fam with Virginia and Tennessee.

Retire NC: North Carolina now has 15 certified retirement communities, with the most recent addition of Jamestown-High Point in April. Visit NC has attended the Ideal Living Tradeshow, meeting with 15,000 potential retirees.

Community Relations: In partnership with Banner Elk, Visit NC staff spoke with a variety of tourism-related entities in Greenville earlier this month during the latest TRAC (Tourism Resource Assistance Center) session. The next TRAC will be held June 9 in Henderson.

Demographics: Visit NC is looking into psychographic research to speak with travelers on a more personal level.

Visit NC 365: Visit NC 365 Conference is March 19-21, 2017 in Greenville.

House Bill 2: Visit NC has received 1116 total calls and 999 emails on House Bill 2. Visit NC looked at early indicators to show searches for North Carolina over the past several weeks. Searches to NC have proven stable, while impacts to sports, conventions, meetings are more noticeable. Visit NC focuses marketing on neutralizing and adjusting to the media issues.

LEGISLATIVE AND INDUSTRY REPORTS

Senator Ralph Hise reported on Senate Bill 826, which addresses business needs in North Carolina, new market tax credits, allocating small business and industry funds, and provides \$12 Million in Tourism dollars with another \$1.5 in international operations.

Board Member Richard Geiger of the Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina reported that the collaboration between DMANC and NCTIA is moving forward.

Board Member Caleb Miles of the NC Travel Industry Association noted that the One Industry Voice dinner will be held on May 23 and the NCTIA's legislative reception is scheduled for May 24 at the Museum of Natural Sciences.

Lynn Minges of the NC Restaurant and Lodging Association is pursuing legislation to improve the franchise legislature in North Carolina. Two NCRLA members are running for the Senate Chuck Edwards and Kathy Dunn. NCRLA is providing fundraising opportunities for them. American Hotel and Lodging will be in DC lobbying congress next week, May 16 – 20.

Board member Rolf Blizzard of the NC T&T Coalition thanks Secretary Skvarla and Senator Hise for his support of the Travel and Tourism Industry. NC T&T Coalition is providing information on HB2 impacts.

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources was not present for an industry update.

Board member Christopher Chung of the Economic Development Partnership of NC reported on the newly launched and redesigned EDPNC.com business facing site. The EDPNC is required as a nonprofit to raise a certain amount of private funds per year. These funds are very important to supporting the new EDPNC and that future growth will depend on private funds.

Bryan Gupton with the North Carolina Department of Commerce reported that the welcome centers saw a 3.5% increase in year-to-date visitation. Repair and Renovation funding was denied, the centers will not be updated this year. It's noted that both South Carolina and Virginia are spending money updating their centers. Ipad registries have been installed in the centers and have received about 20,000 records from this registry. NC Travel and Tourism Day was last week, where they celebrated at each of the welcome centers.

CLOSING

O'Kelley thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Donna Carpenter made a motion to close the meeting. Second by Rich Geiger. Unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.

Next meeting will be August 9th, tentatively at the Museum of History again.