



# NORTH CAROLINA TRAVEL AND TOURISM BOARD

## MEETING MINUTES

May 16, 2012

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rolf Blizzard, Kim Hufham, Lynn Minges, Robert O'Halloran, Davin Olsen, Steve Thanhauser, Mitzi York

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sabrina Bengel, Donna Carpenter, Dale Carroll, Chris Cavanaugh, Randy Cobb, Sec. Keith Crisco, Teresa Damiano, S. Lewis Ebert, Denny Edwards, Rep. Phillip Haire, Rep. Susi Hamilton, Sen. Ralph Hise, Chris Humphrey, Vimal Kolappa, Randy Kolls, Lynn Lewis, Sen. Jean Preston, Joan H. Pulley, Jamie Reibel, Leonard Rigsbee, Tom Ruff, Susan Spangler

**LIAISONS, STAFF AND GUESTS PRESENT:** Alyssa Barkley, Sec. Linda Carlisle, Juli Cooney, Whitney Christensen, Scott Gilmore, Bryan Gupton, Brooks Luquire, Dickens Sanchez, Eleanor Talley, Wit Tuttell, Kara Weishaar, T. Jerry Williams, Jennifer Woodward

## CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rolf Blizzard called the meeting to order at 11:10a.m.

## COMMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Rolf Blizzard welcomed everyone for Travel and Tourism Day and reminded board members to visit with their legislators to show support for travel and tourism within North Carolina. Blizzard read the statement of duty aloud (Ethics policies EO 34 and EO 35).

## MINUTES APPROVED

Steve Thanhauser motioned to approve the February 21, 2012 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Bob O'Halloran and unanimously approved.

## COMMENTS BY LEGISLATORS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Rolf Blizzard representing the Travel and Tourism Coalition discussed efforts in speaking with the House and Senate to push for marketing initiatives, an investment of over \$5million in the next 3 years to support television ads. The possible reform to the school calendar is being monitored, as well as an economic assessment and impact study by the DOT concerning tolling on I-95.

Whitney Christenson said the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association was also monitoring the school calendar legislation. Also NCRLA is monitoring a pool fence study regarding erection of barriers around hotel and motel pools and remains concerned about the industry's ability to comply in a timely manner with the June 2012 deadline.

Kim Hufham, representing North Carolina Travel Industry Association (NCTIA) shared the hiring of T. Jerry Williams, as the new lobbyist. NCTIA is monitoring the school start date and rent by owner tax collection and proper reporting issues. NCTIA is working to protect and expand the tourism marketing budget for the upcoming session.

Mitzi York representing the North Carolina Destination Marketing Association (DMANC) said it has launched a new website and is putting forth special efforts to bring young tourism professionals together and help them get involved in important industry events and issues.

## DIVISION UPDATE BY LYNN MINGES

Lynn Minges shared strong numbers by the tourism industry in 2011. Domestic travelers spent \$18.4 billion across all 100 North Carolina counties, an 8% increase from 2010 and a record high for North Carolina. Visitors spent over \$50 million dollars per day in North Carolina. State tax receipts as a result of visitor spending increased nearly 7% in 2011 and for the first time topped \$1 billion. Visitor spending generated over \$4.3 million per day resulting in each North Carolina household saving over \$430 in state and local taxes. Tourism directly generated over 187,000 jobs to North

Carolínians, and when including all of the indirectly related jobs, the total comes to nearly 400,000 jobs, representing 9% of all payroll employment in the state. NC remains the 6th most visited state in the U.S. for overnight visitors, and the total volume for NC visitors was 37.2 million, an increase of about 1% from 2010.

The Division proactively pitched "The Hunger Games" film travel angle to print, broadcast and online outlets for several months, and it paid off in a big way. Editorial placements reached a worldwide audience of 157 million and earned more than \$2.5 million in advertising value equivalency (AVE). Some highlights include "The Today Show" featured N.C. as the place to visit sites used in "The Hunger Games". The Associated Press placed a story on the wire March 22 about N.C. getting ready for fans of the movie to visit. Internationally The Globe and Mail, Canada's largest circulation national newspaper featured 'Hunger Games' story on the front page of travel section. Coming off a record year in 2011 NC saw over \$228 million dollars in spending generated by films with current productions including Iron Man 3, the new pilot for NBC-Revolution- from JJ Abrams, Homeland Season 2 filming in Charlotte and a new action series, Banshee.

The Obama Administration gave a tremendous boost to the tourism industry on Thursday, May 10 by making tourism interests a national priority in the first-ever National Travel and Tourism Strategy. This strategy includes expanding the government's promotional efforts to market the United States as a destination and enabling and enhancing greater facilitation of travel to and within the U.S. The efforts will make it easier for people to attend business meetings, tradeshow and conventions boosting the economy by \$263 billion annually and supporting 1.7 million American jobs. The travel industry provides jobs for 14.4 million Americans and generates \$124 billion in tax revenues nationally and for states and local communities. US Travel also launched the Vote Travel bus which is crossing from coast-to-coast, touring destinations across America to shine a spotlight on travel during the 2012 election season, including Charlotte on May 17.

#### **ADVERTISING AND MARKETING UPDATE FROM WIT TUTTELL**

Wit Tuttell explained the Spring Digital Campaign by showing the banner ads on Trip Advisor that have been so successful. Over 15,000 people downloaded the North Carolina station on Pandora which is a huge success by all standards. The Division will continue to market in-state via the partnerships with the North Carolina Press Foundation, North Carolina Broadcasters Association and UNC TV however, in March, the Division announced a new partnership with Time Warner Cable's Travel On-Demand channels.

There were a number of marketing successes throughout the year including the International Pow-Wow in Los Angeles, CA April 21-25 where 1,200 international and domestic buyers were represented from more than 70 countries. The Washington D.C. media mission on April 17 with the Division's PR team, along with 15 partners from across the state, hosted a dinner for 17 journalists which was a great turnout and will generate tremendous value for the state. Merlefest had its 25th Anniversary in Wilkesboro April 26-29. The Division partnered with organizers to promote travel to the state for the 3 day festival. Travel South Showcase was March 4-7 in Louisville, KY, where 600 tourism professionals attended- including tour operators and journalists interested in group travel to the South, with 17 partners participating and making this event a success.

Internationally, the Division hosted a German FAM Tour with four key tour operators and trade media from German speaking Europe spending five days touring the state in late April. These representatives now have first-hand knowledge of destinations they currently feature in their catalogs, itineraries and other publications. Canadian Visitation Numbers for the first half of 2011 showed more than half a million Canadian visitors traveled to NC with more than 250,000 of them staying overnight. These visitors spent over \$74 million in the state during this time period, according to recent data received from Statistics Canada, up 23 percent from the first half of 2010. N.C. ranked 10th in total visitation and 12th in overnight visitation by Canadian visitors to a U.S. state.

The AAA Blue Ridge Parkway Familiarization Tour took place April 15-22 joining partners in TN, VA and the Blue Ridge Parkway Association to host 23 counselors from AAA & CAA to familiarize them with the areas along the Parkway. Group Travel Manager Kristi Driver led the group in NC's mountain region during the tour, which started in Tennessee and ended in Virginia.

The American Bus Association's (ABA) Marketplace 2013 will be held in Charlotte Jan. 5-9, 2013. Registration opened at a record-setting pace. In gearing up to host the annual event next year, the Division, Visit Charlotte and other North Carolina partners hosted the final evening's event and dinner at ABA Marketplace 2012 in Grapevine, Texas, this past January.

TEAMS, the sports marketing conference, will be held in Detroit, MI October 1-4, 2012. The Division and many partners will attend and showcase North Carolina as a top destination to host sports events of all types and sizes.

Asheboro recently joined Lumberton as a Certified Retirement Community, with other cities to soon follow. RetireNC.com features retirement areas across the state and provides information for helping retirees learn more about what the state and various communities have to offer.

#### **UPDATE FROM DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Secretary Linda Carlisle discussed the importance of President Obama's recognition of tourism on a national stage, bringing important industry issues to the this platform. This also highlights tourism as an economic engine for the nation. The Secretary is concerned for cultural and heritage sites including tourism related entities. She will concentrate her efforts as a member of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board on emphasizing the importance of cultural and heritage tourism. The Department will enter its third year of second Saturdays this summer with excellent participation by the heritage sites and the communities across the state. Cultural Resources also restructured its website into two separate websites, one for consumers and one for industry at [ncculture.com](http://ncculture.com) and [ncdcr.gov](http://ncdcr.gov).

Meeting adjourned at 12:46 pm.