

# Wilmington and Beaches Convention & Visitors Bureau Program of Work July 2023 - June 2024



Wilmington.C. River District & Island Beaches

Carolina Beach • Kure Beach • Wrightsville Beach

The Official Tourism Development Authority for New Hanover County

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# FY23-24 Program of Work

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\*FY22-23 reports, research, destination product overview, lodging summaries and more data are available online at: <https://www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/POW2023/>

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Each year as the CVB compiles our Program of Work we look back over the past fiscal year's objectives, achievements, and bottom line. It's always a proud moment for me when I look back at the scope of work and all that the CVB staff accomplished over a 12-month period. Our 2022-2023 Program of Work was the most ambitious to date and I am grateful to the CVB staff for their hard work to develop and execute a robust strategic plan. I am also grateful to the TDA Board for their ongoing leadership and support.

### **A Look Back**

On the heels of record-breaking, double-digit Room Occupancy Tax increases in 2020-2021 (up 36.75%) and 2021-2022 (up 26.72%), ROT collections appear to be 'normalizing' in 2023-2024 with a more modest increase of 4.63%. Countywide ROT collections for calendar year 2022 totaled \$23.4 million dollars, outperforming the previous record room tax calendar year by 10.67%. While 2022 ended on a high note with a year-over-year increase, the first six months of 2023 are up slightly with an increase of 3.10%.

This leveling-off effect held true individually for Wilmington and each beach town. Each municipality reported modest fiscal year ROT increases for 2022-2023, setting a new fiscal year benchmark. The Convention District ROT ended the fiscal year with a 17.92% increase over prior fiscal year.

According to Visit North Carolina's most recent [economic impact study](#)\*, visitor spending during calendar year 2022 in New Hanover County was estimated at \$1.059 billion, representing a 13.9% increase in tourism expenditures over 2021. Tourism employment in New Hanover County increased to 6,676 in 2022, up from 6,142 in 2021. Total payroll generated by the tourism industry in New Hanover County was \$276.6 million. New Hanover ranks as number 7 among North Carolina's 100 counties in tourism expenditures. Travel-generated state and local tax revenues saved each New Hanover County resident an estimated \$317.76.

An increase in ROT collections during 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 allowed the CVB to implement special initiatives during 2022-2023, including: an Out-of-State media campaign; additional marketing efforts in areas of new air service; a Riverwalk Assessment Study and new destination brand and audience research. We also expanded our photo/video assets and developed new sales tools and customized visitor resources, including the recently launched Mobile Trip Guide and an online Tourism Ambassador training and certification program.

### **Moving Forward**

As we forge ahead, the CVB remains mindful of the current normalizing trend in tourism revenues. We are confident recent investments in research, out-of-state and in-state strategic marketing initiatives and creation of new sales tools and visitor resources will position New Hanover County to continue growth, albeit at a more 'normalized' pace.

The CVB will use the TDA's updated 3-year Strategic Vision Plan as a guide to address long-term goals set forth in 2019. In 2024, the CVB will take a significant step forward by working with the TDA Board to develop the destination's first-ever Tourism Master Plan that will serve as a 10-year road map for tourism development in New Hanover County. The Wilmington and Beaches Tourism Master Plan will consider our destination's unique assets, research, travel trends and systemic industry shifts as identified in the [DestinationNEXT Futures Study](#), a study conducted by

Destinations International that identifies significant trends affecting leisure and business tourism around the world.

According to DestinationNEXT, organizations need to prioritize supply-side initiatives to include: destination product and experience development; community and economic development; small business and workforce development; partner support and education; resident engagement and education; workforce housing, and advocacy to influence local and state issues affecting tourism. DestinationNEXT's top five strategies for destination organizations focus on community and destination development:

- Protect revenue sources to maintain current funding levels
- Focus on developing authentic experiences for the customer
- Better integrate tourism and economic development
- Build the destination brand
- Have a greater role in destination and product development

DestinationNEXT identifies transformational opportunities as four main areas of Supply and Demand:

- Visitor Engagement
- Community Alignment
- Partner Support
- Destination Development

Additionally, we must consider economic concerns, local industry challenges, technology and awareness issues:

- Economic concerns cited in Destination Analysts' [State of the American Traveler](#) (July 2023) include sticker shock and reduced in-destination spending. Nearly 4-in-10 Americans report experiencing sticker shock planning a recent trip, citing rising hotel rates and airfare. While visitor interest in travel remains high, travel budgets are declining and travelers report cutting back on food, dining and shopping purchases. Additionally, 38% of travelers surveyed would use budget-friendly hotel chains and 30.9% said they would stay with friends and family.
- Changes to school calendars across the state continue to present a threat to tourism. Currently 16 North Carolina counties, including several of our in-state visitor feeder markets, have adopted 23/24 school calendars that are not in compliance with school calendar legislation.
- In a continued effort to address the destination awareness issue among out-of-state travelers as identified in the New Audience Research Study, the CVB will implement phase 2 of the Out-of-State destination marketing and PR campaign in key out-of-state and western in-state markets.
- According to a [Global Business Travel Association business outlook report](#) (March 2023), meetings and conventions are on the rise, however, planners are citing inflation and rising prices as top concerns, followed by travel disruptions and a potential recession that could impact this travel sector. (source: [gbta.org](#))
- Evaluate benefits and risks of using Artificial intelligence (AI) to leverage the technology for trip planning and content creation, along with human oversight.

### **Refining our Strategy**

As a strategic, comprehensive, and impactful plan, the CVB's Program of Work sets the momentum for continued growth. As we observe and monitor the normalization of tourism revenues, the CVB

will refine its strategy by building upon the research and new Marketing, PR, and Sales initiatives and resources introduced last year. These newly developed programs, tools and assets will provide the foundation for the year ahead as we explore innovative ways to promote the destination and responsibly grow tourism.

Activity highlights for this year include: Entering phase two of the Out-of-State media campaign; Identifying long- and short-term tactics to enhance the visitor experience according to results of the Riverwalk Assessment Plan; Broaden the scope of potential groups to include corporate and smaller regional & national conventions; Monitoring usage and evaluating potential new developments of the mobile trip guide and tourism ambassador training course; and continuing the CVB partnership with ILM based on guidelines to be established by the TDA. Beginning in 2024 the CVB will work with the TDA to develop a 10-year Tourism Master Plan for New Hanover County that is estimated to be completed in fiscal year 24-25.

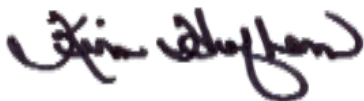
In addition to activities, the CVB will continue to monitor emerging research and travel trends and refine our marketing strategies within the confines of our budget and in accordance with the TDA/CVB's Strategic Plan initiatives. As always, the plan is adaptable as economic factors, crises, or other disruptions warrant a change in direction.

### **Commitment**

As always, our stakeholders can rest assured that the TDA/CVB will responsibly prepare and implement Programs of Work that are designed to strengthen our destination, our community, and our partnerships. We will also continue to play an active role in advocacy, industry leadership, community, and partner relations.

Compiled by the Wilmington and Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), the following 2023-2024 Program of Work is a working document that highlights the marketing, PR, sales and advocacy objectives, strategies and tactics for the coming fiscal year. The Wilmington and Beaches CVB vows to implement responsible tourism initiatives and make sound marketing decisions based on research and travel trends. It is our commitment to be good stewards of Wilmington and our Island Beaches. As always, we vow to act in the best interest of the many sectors of the economy and the thousands of tourism employees that depend on a strong tourism industry in New Hanover County.

Respectfully,



Kim Hufham, President/CEO, New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority

### *Sources:*

*\*[Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2022](#) study, prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics in collaboration with the U.S. Travel Association.*

*\*[The State of the American Traveler in July 2023 — What Trip Spending Will be Compromised to Keep Traveling](#), Destination Analysts*

*\*[DestinationNEXT 2023 Futures Study.pdf](#), Destinations International*

*\*[www.gbta.org/travel-managers-weigh-in-on-business-travels-outlook-for-2023](http://www.gbta.org/travel-managers-weigh-in-on-business-travels-outlook-for-2023), Global Business Travel Association*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority (TDA,) dba the Wilmington and Beaches Convention & Visitors Bureau, markets and develops the county and its communities' leisure and group travel experiences for sustainable economic growth and quality of place.

VISION 2030: Wilmington and Beaches Convention & Visitors Bureau (WBCVB) is the recognized and influential community tourism leader providing impactful destination results and promotable branded visitor experiences through productive partnerships.

Within the County and its four municipalities, the Bureau is the single entity bringing together the interests of government, trade, and civic associations, and individual "travel suppliers" --- hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, restaurants, travel agencies, attractions, local transportation --- in building outside visitor traffic to the area.

Urban tourism is an increasingly important source of income and employment in most metropolitan areas – therefore, it warrants a coordinated and concerted effort to make it grow. This growth is best nurtured by the role a Convention and Visitors Bureau can play in continually improving the scope and caliber of services that New Hanover County provides to corporate and association meeting planners, to individual travelers, and to leisure travelers.

The Bureau is the area's liaison between potential visitors to the area, and the businesses which will host them when they come. It acts as an information clearing house, convention management consultant, promotional agency for the City, County, and beach communities often as a catalyst for urban development and renewal.

**NEW HANOVER COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
JULY 2023**

<b>CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>VICE-CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>TREASURER</b>	<b>SECRETARY</b>
<b>JONES, Nicole</b> Hilton Garden Inn Wilmington Mayfaire Town Center 6745 Rock Spring Rd., Wilmington, NC 28405 Tele: (b)509-4046 ; (h) 313-0824; Cell: 910-262-6115 Hotel Manager/Wilmington (150-) <a href="mailto:Nicolejones3@hilton.com">Nicolejones3@hilton.com</a>	<b>ULLRING, Tom</b> Courtyard by Marriot Carolina Beach Oceanfront 100 Charlotte Ave. Carolina Beach, NC 28449 Telephone: Cell 336-402-6270, business 910-458-2030 Fax: 910-458-2614 Hotel Manager/ Carolina Beach <a href="mailto:Tom.ullring@crestlinehotels.com">Tom.ullring@crestlinehotels.com</a>	<b>CREDDLE, Eric</b> NHC Chief Financial Officer 230 Government Center Dr., Suite165 Wilmington, NC 28403 Tel: (b)910-798-7134  <a href="mailto:ecredle@nhcgov.com">ecredle@nhcgov.com</a>	<b>RHODES, Angela</b> Catch Restaurant/ Bar/Catch Food Truck 6623 Market Street, Wilmington, NC 28405/ Tele: (b) 799-3847; Cell 777-9551 Fax: 799-7774 NHC Restaurant <a href="mailto:angelalovescatch@gmail.com">angelalovescatch@gmail.com</a>

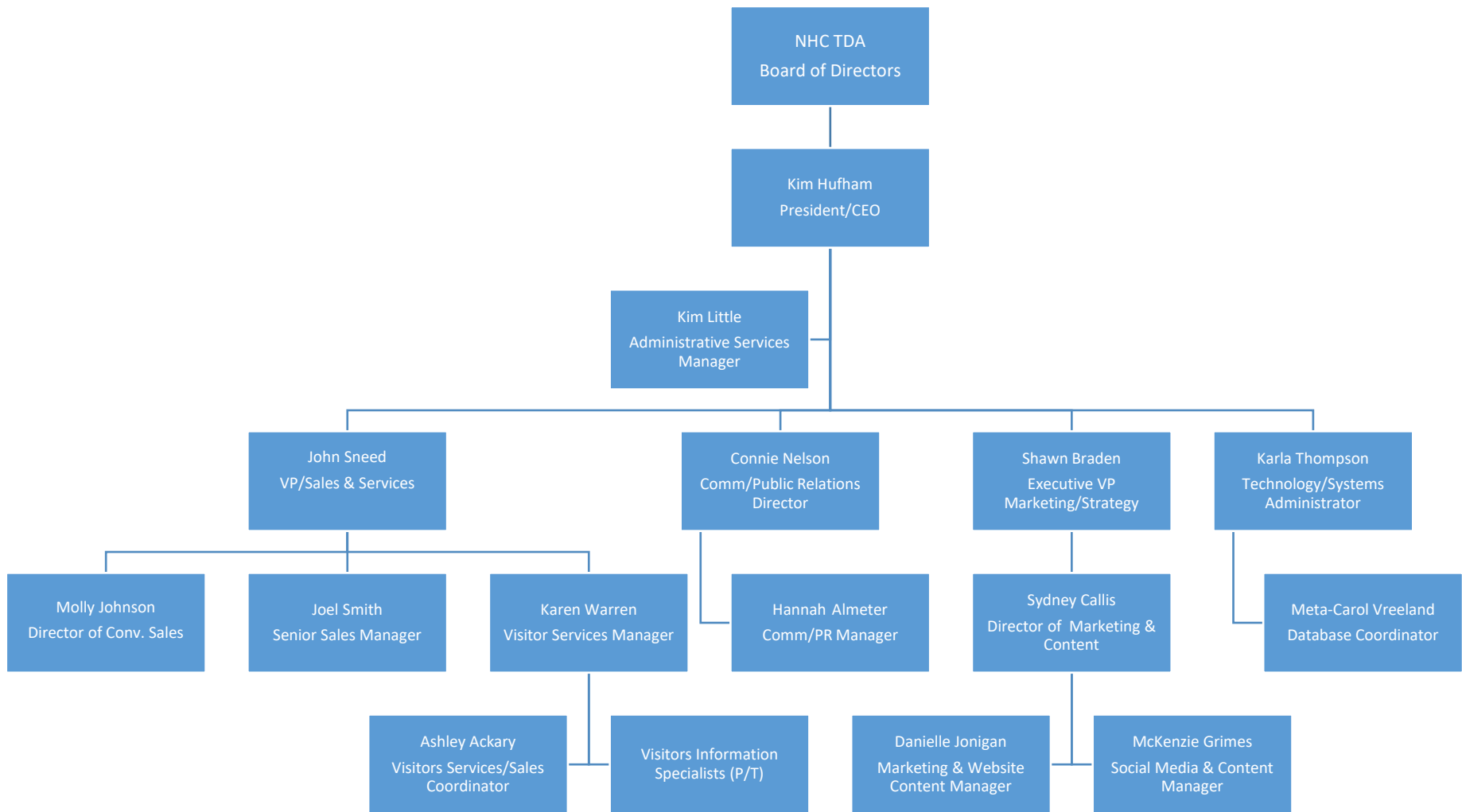
**KIM HUFHAM**

*President/CEO – Wilmington and Beaches CVB*

1 Estell Lee Place, Suite 201, Wilmington, NC 28401

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# WILMINGTON and BEACHES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

## 2023/2024 Budget

### REVENUES:

#### *Room Occupancy Tax Receipts*

1st 3%	\$4,258,854
2nd 3% (net)	\$6,882,337
Carolina Beach - \$2,861,873	
Wrightsville Beach - \$2,075,441	
Kure Beach - \$1,077,436	
District U - \$867,587	

Convention Center Marketing \$560,968

Administrative Revenue \$183,184

Appropriated Fund Balance (1st 3%) \$500,000

Appropriated Fund Balance (District U) \$540,350

### TOTAL REVENUES

**\$12,925,693**

### EXPENSES:

#### *Marketing/Promotions*

1st 3%	\$4,232,890
2nd 3%	\$3,494,174
Carolina Beach - \$1,387,356	
Wrightsville Beach - \$1,006,116	
Kure Beach - \$522,311	
District U - \$578,391	

Administrative \$453,700

Visitor-Inquiry Fulfillment \$255,448

Convention Center Marketing \$560,968

Activities \$3,928,513

    Carolina Beach - \$1,474,517

    Wrightsville Beach - \$1,069,325

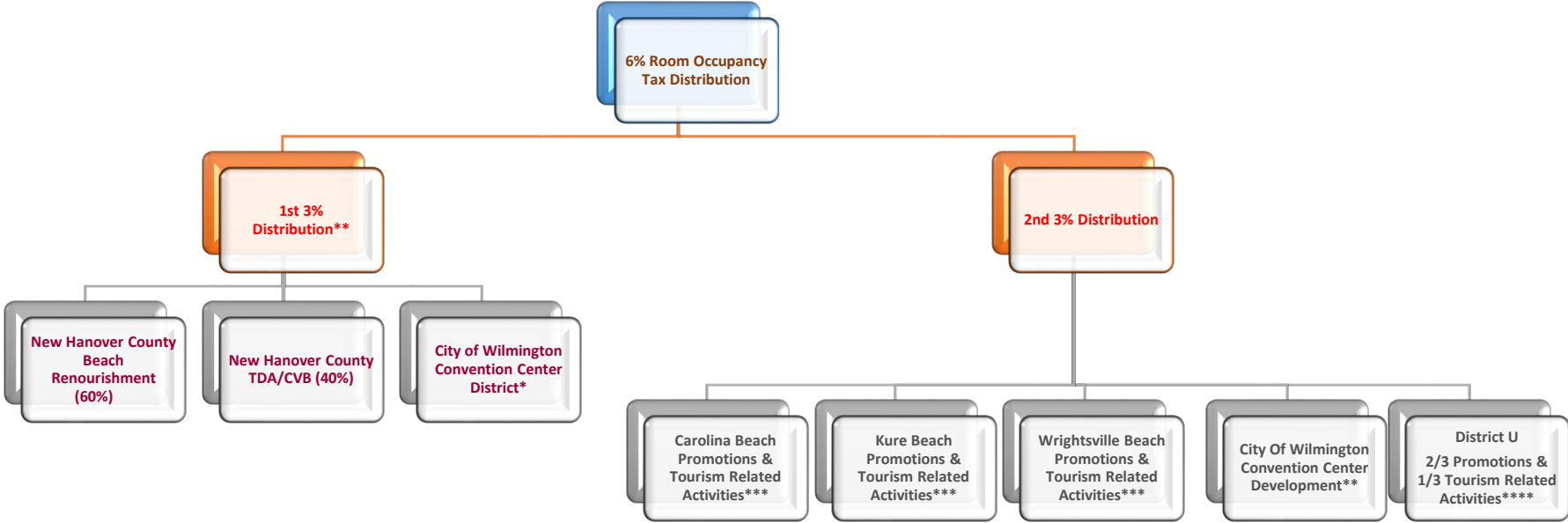
    Kure Beach - \$555,125

    District U - \$829,546

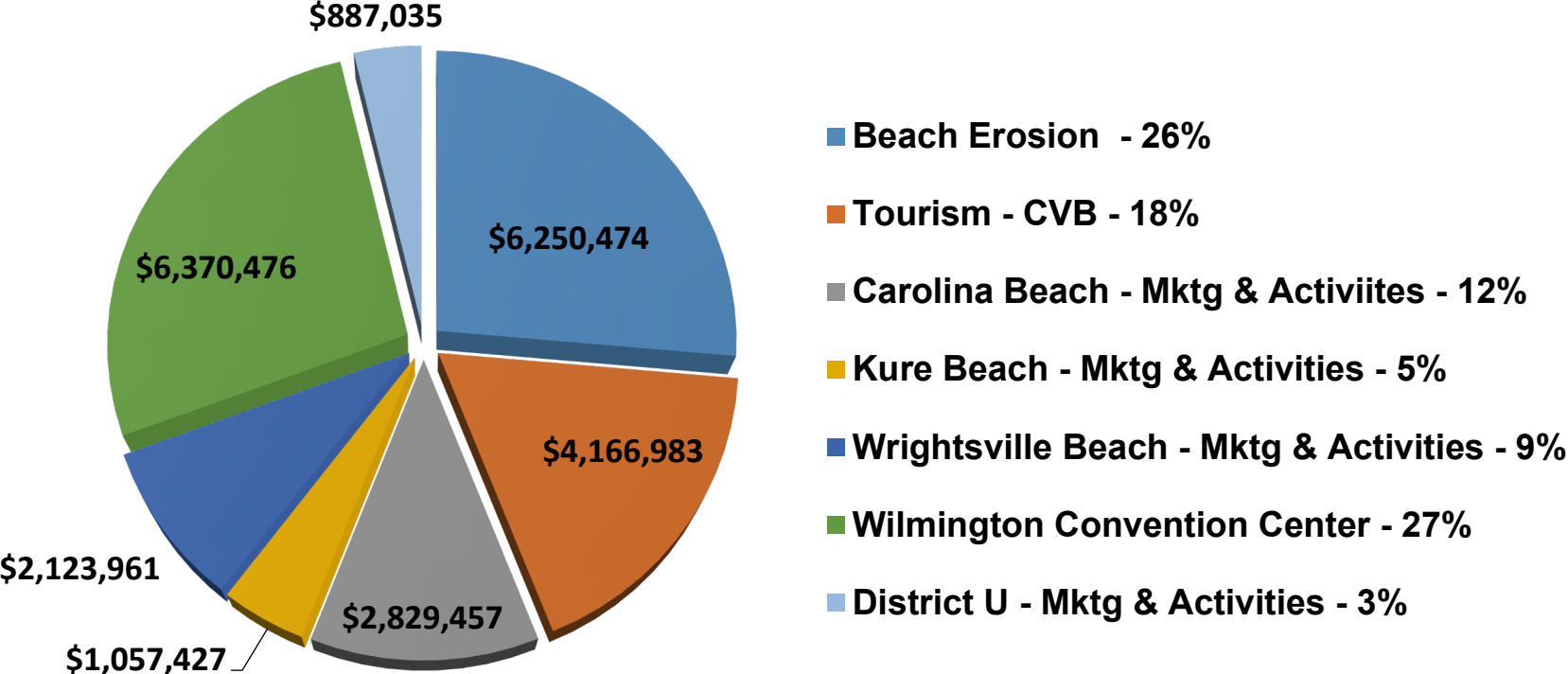
### TOTAL EXPENSES

**\$12,925,693**

# New Hanover County Room Occupancy Tax Distribution



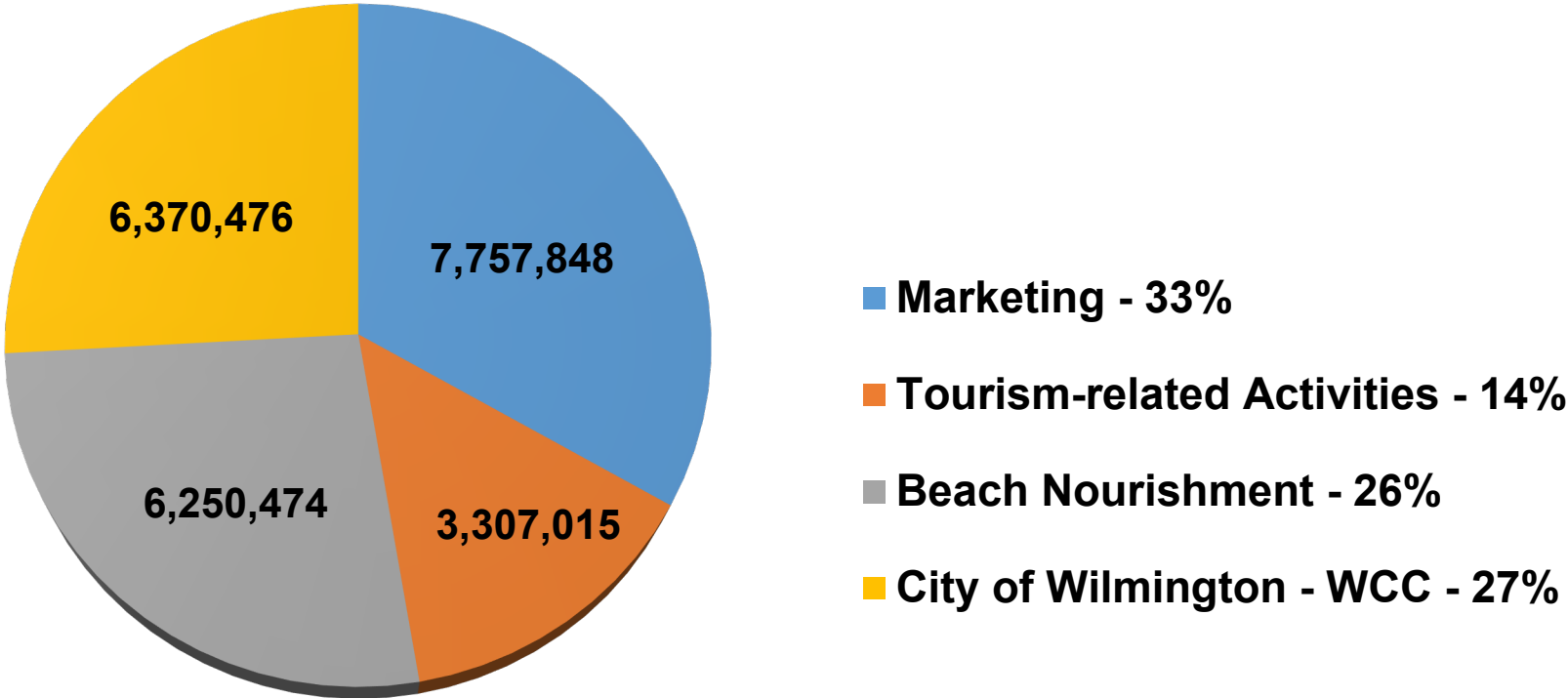
# 2022/2023 ROT Distribution



**Total 2022/2023 ROT Collections: \$23,685,813**

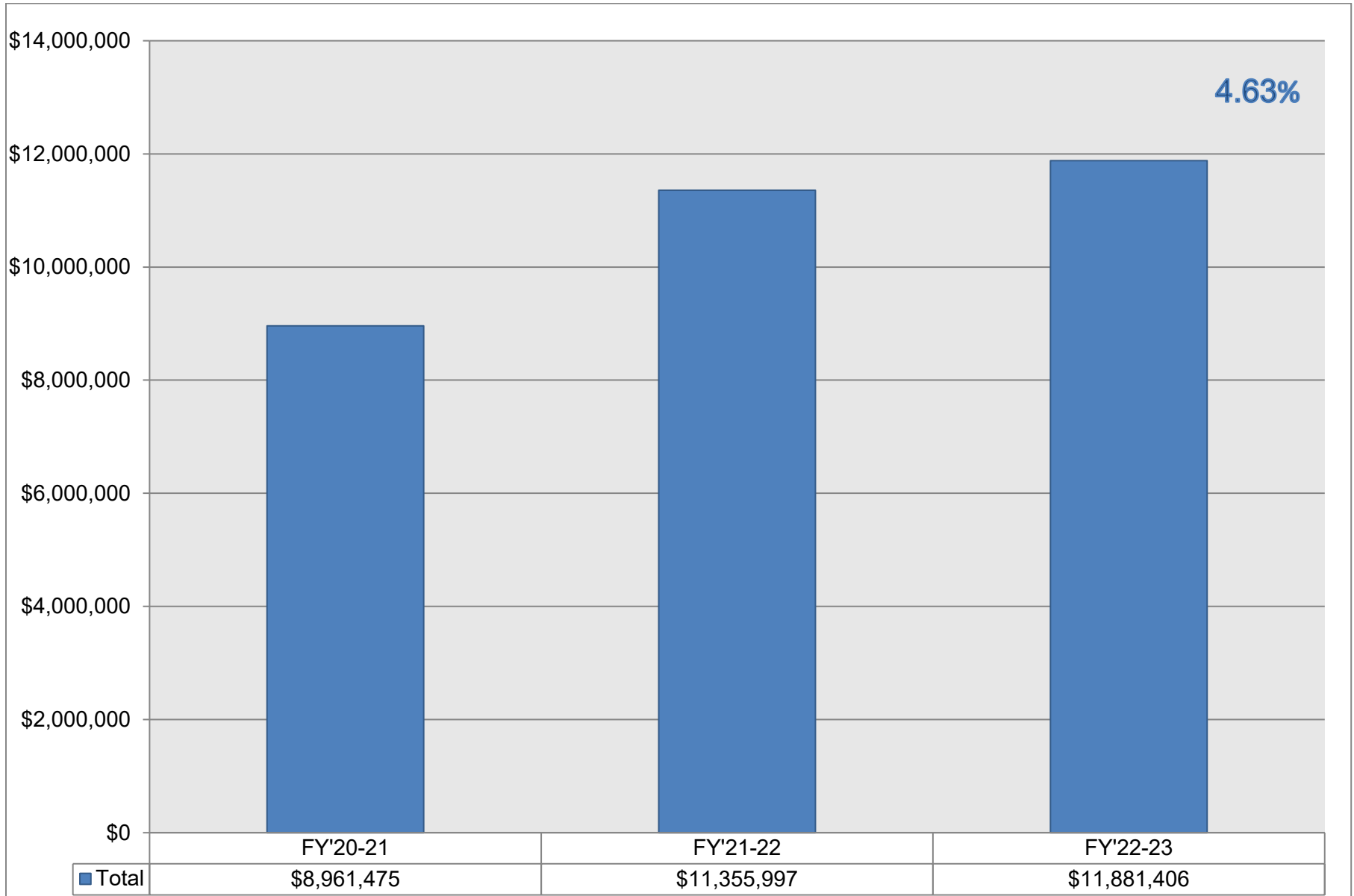
# 2022/2023 ROT Collections

Distribution by Category

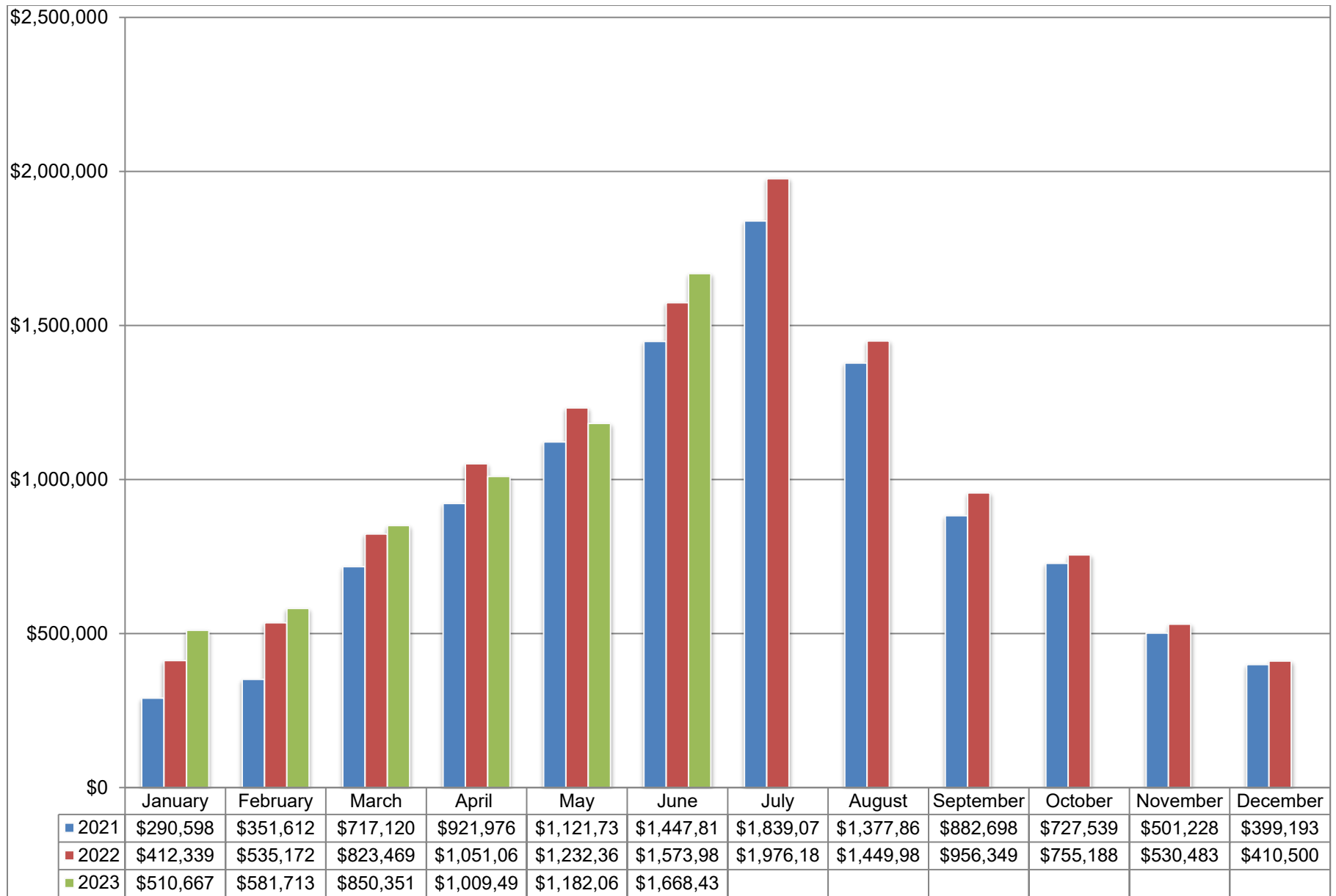


**Total 2022/2023 ROT Collections: \$ 23,685,813**

**New Hanover County  
Room Occupancy Tax  
1st 3%**

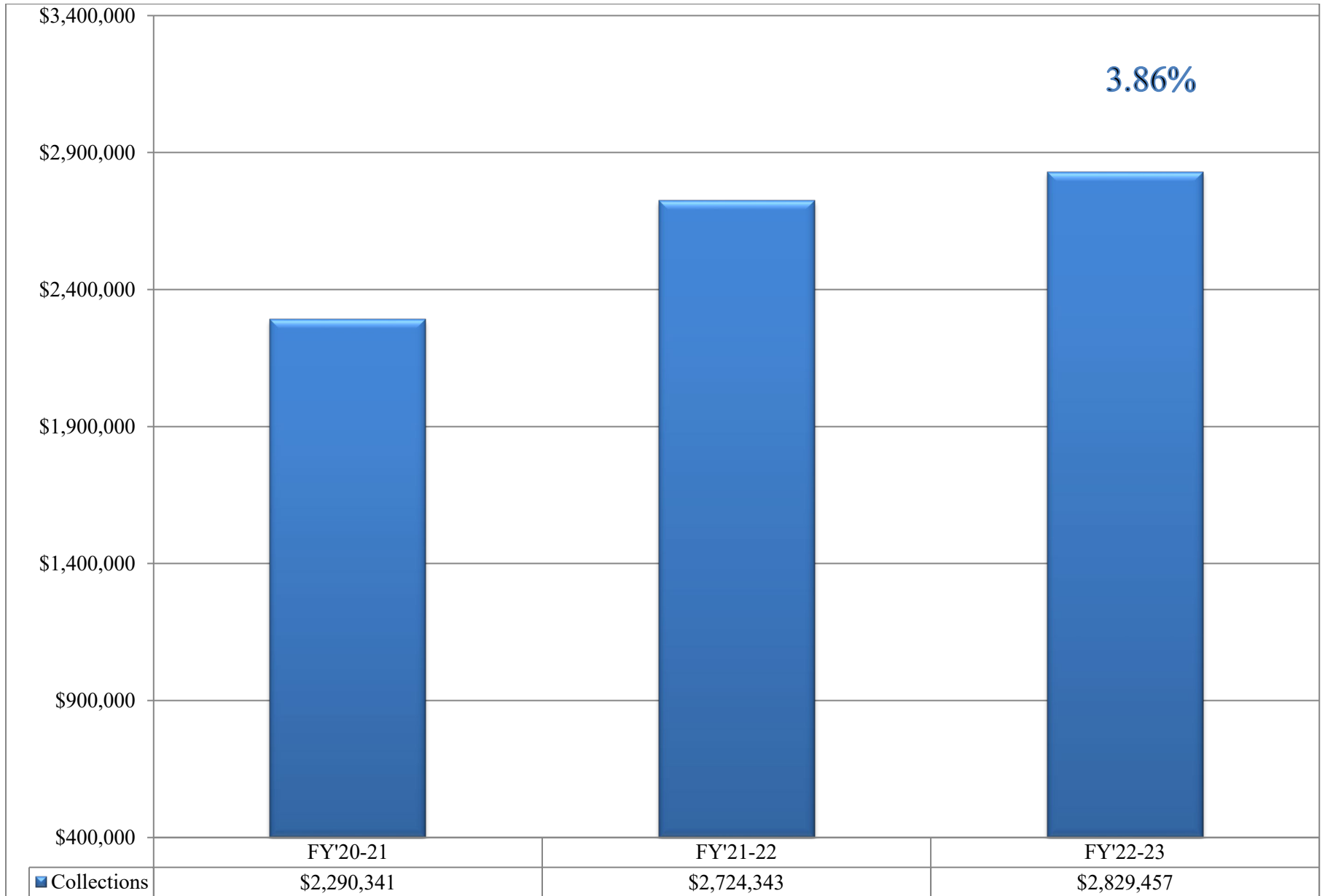


## Room Occupancy Tax Collections 1st 3%

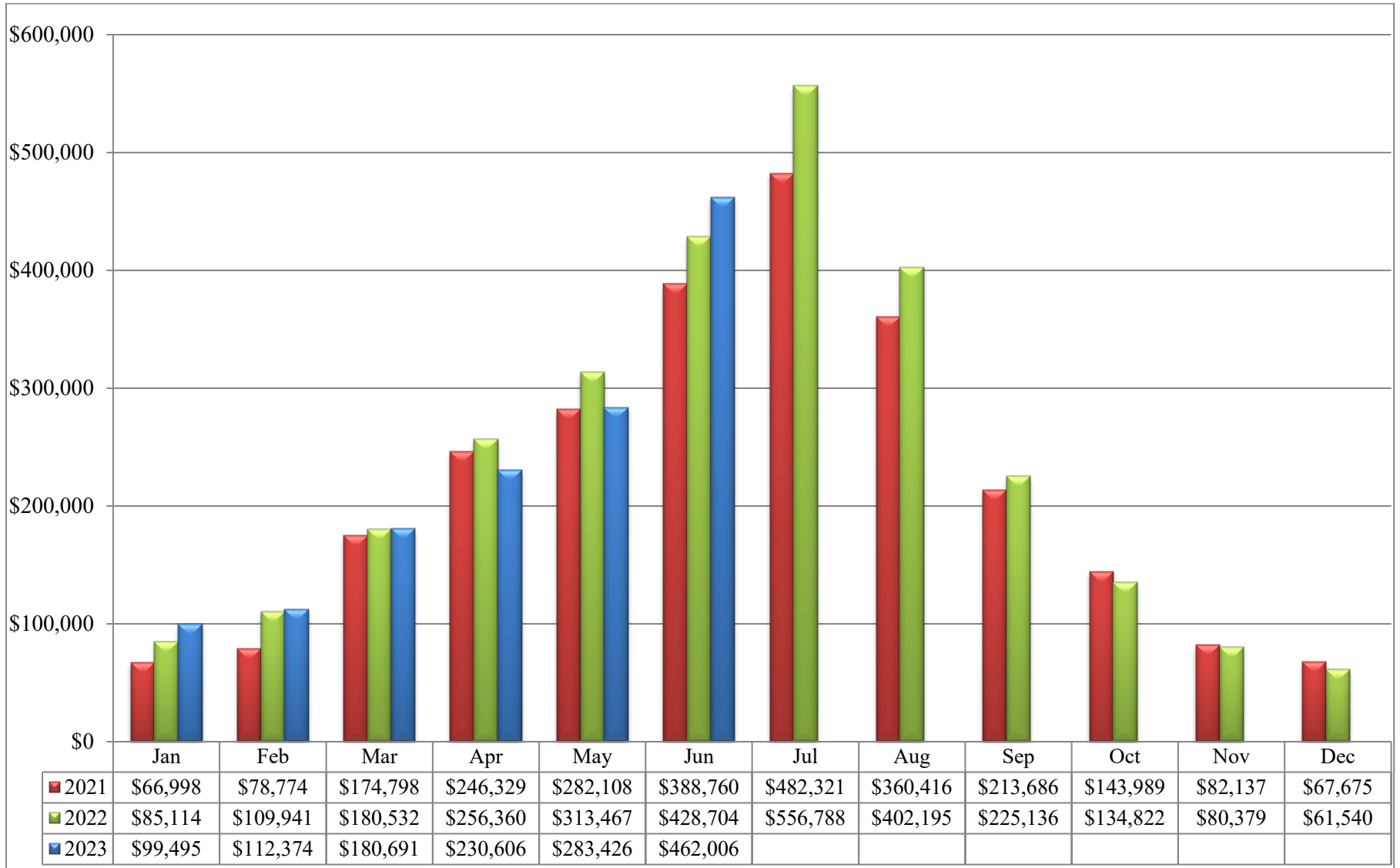


March & April 2023 - extremely wet months

**Carolina Beach  
Room Occupancy Tax  
2nd 3%**



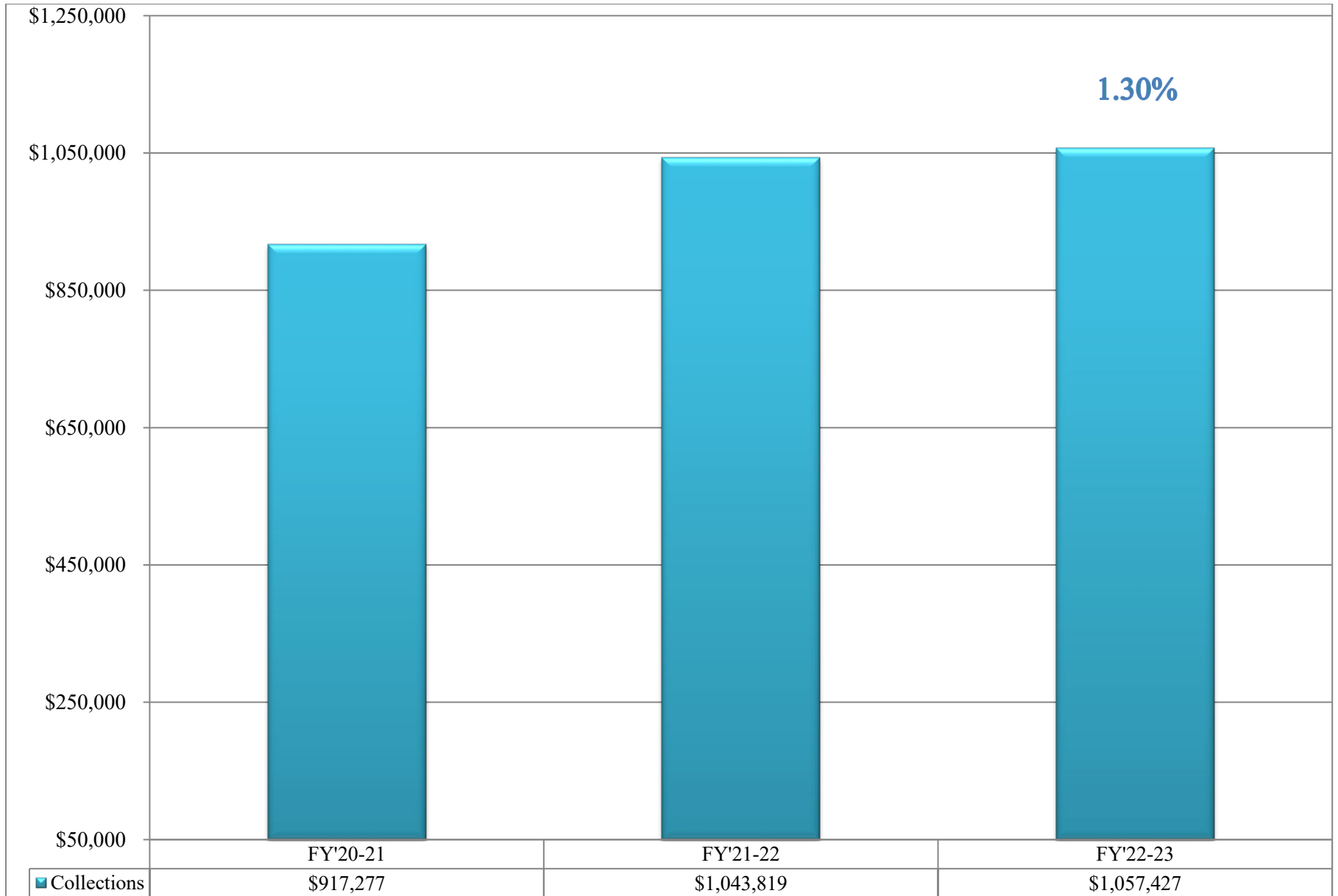
**Carolina Beach  
Room Occupancy Tax  
2nd 3%**



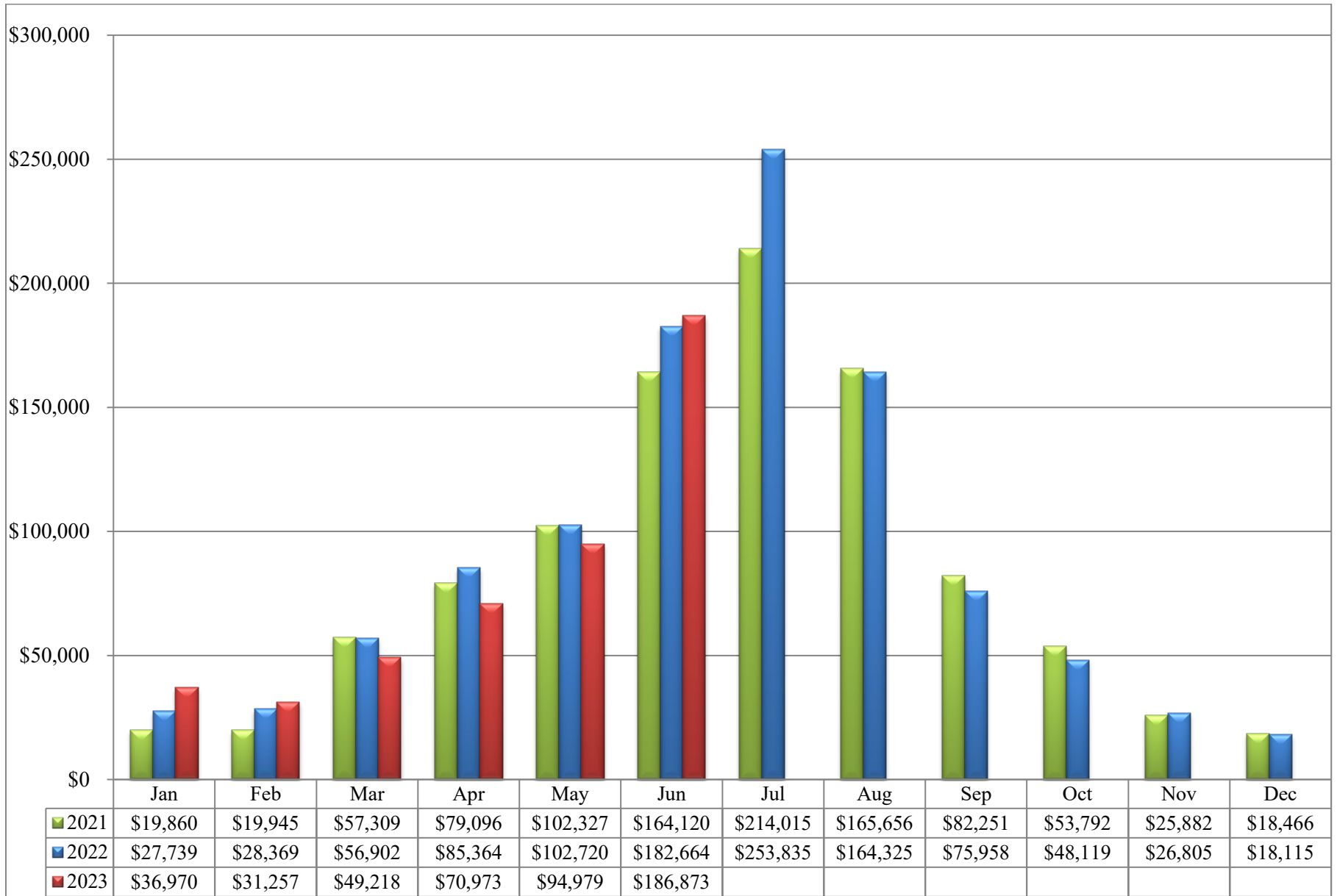
March & April 2023 - extremely wet months



**Kure Beach  
Room Occupancy Tax  
2nd 3%**

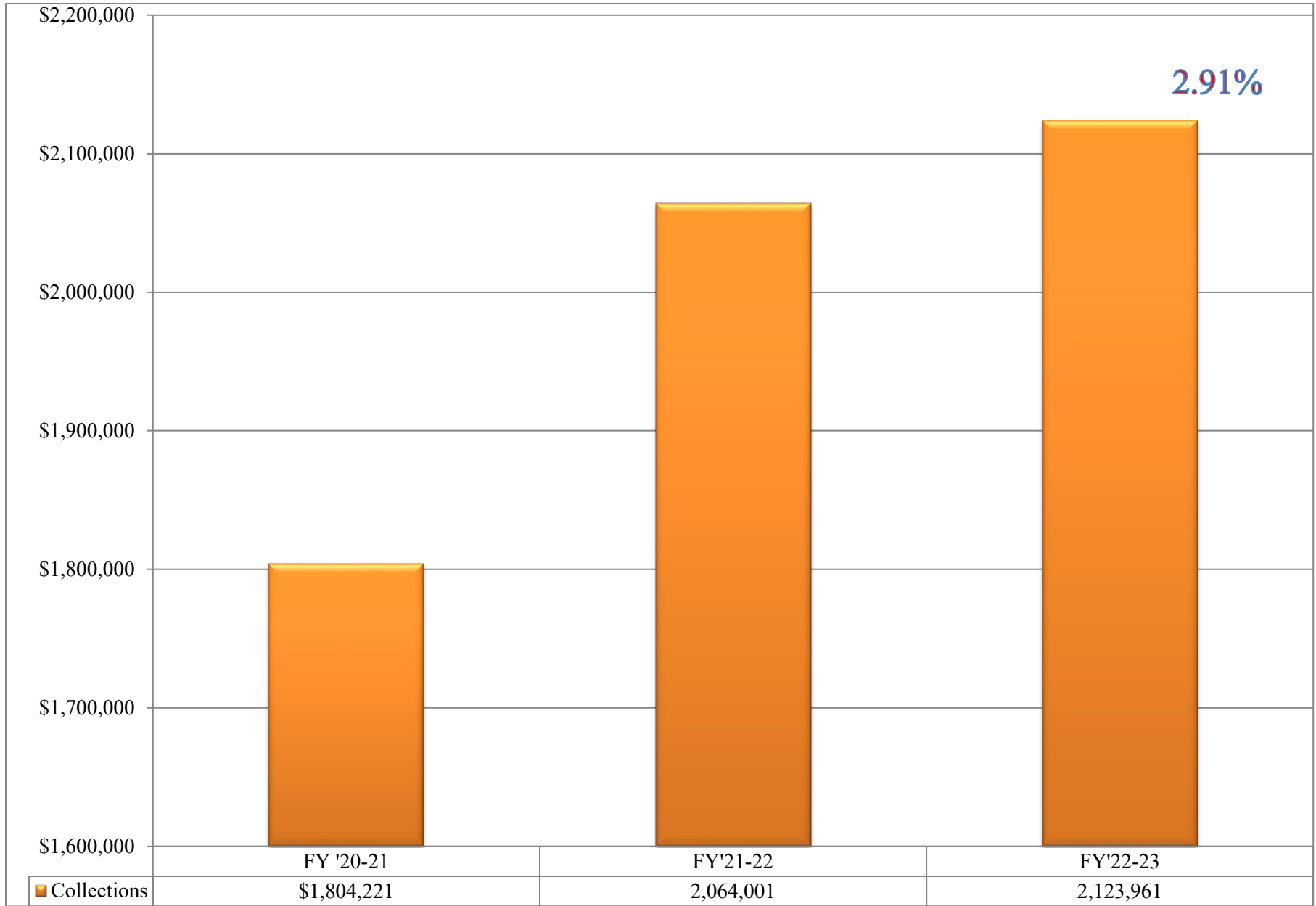


**Kure Beach  
Room Occupancy Tax  
2nd 3%**

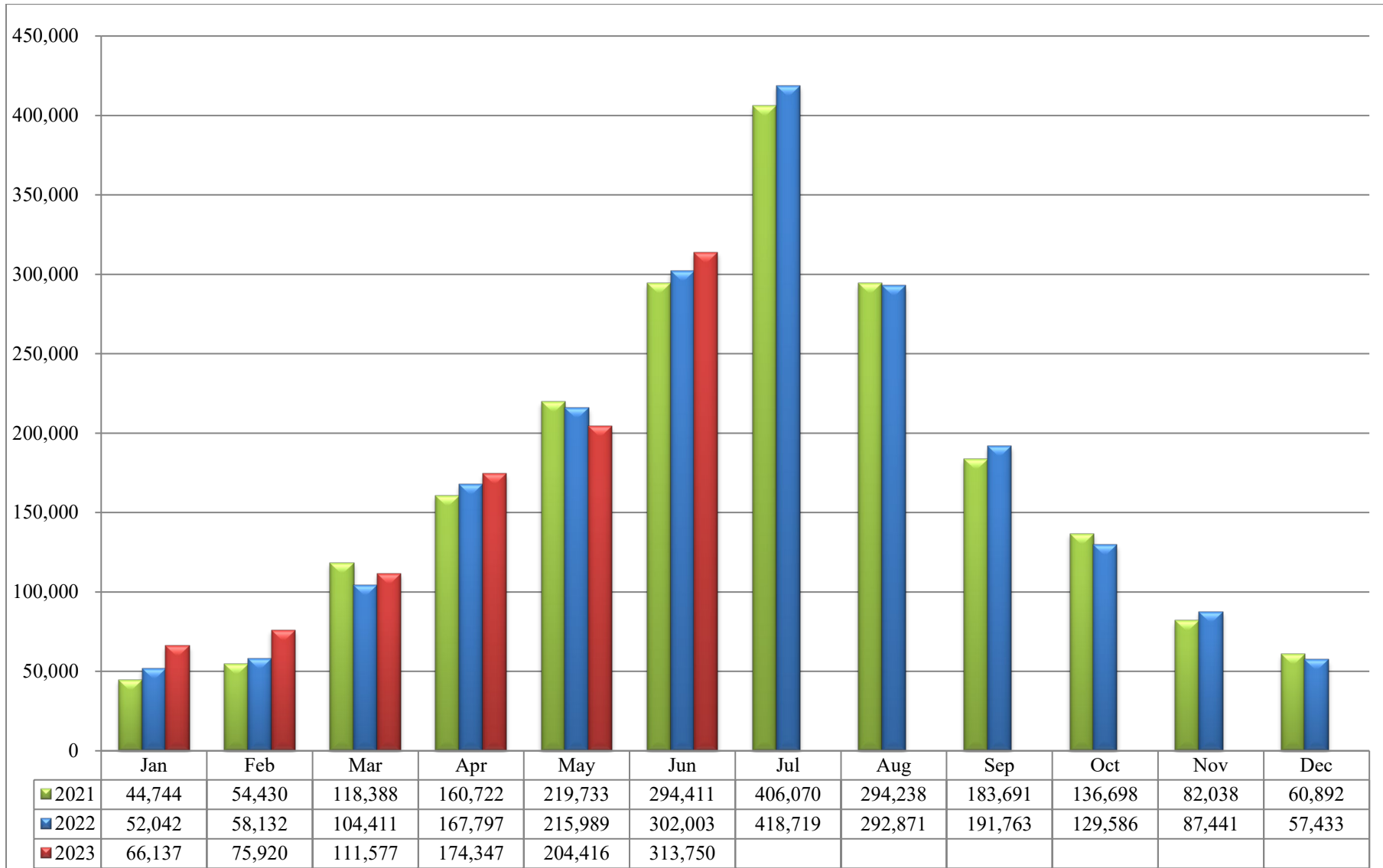


March & April 2023 - extremely wet months

**Wrightsville Beach  
Room Occupancy Tax Collections  
2nd 3%**



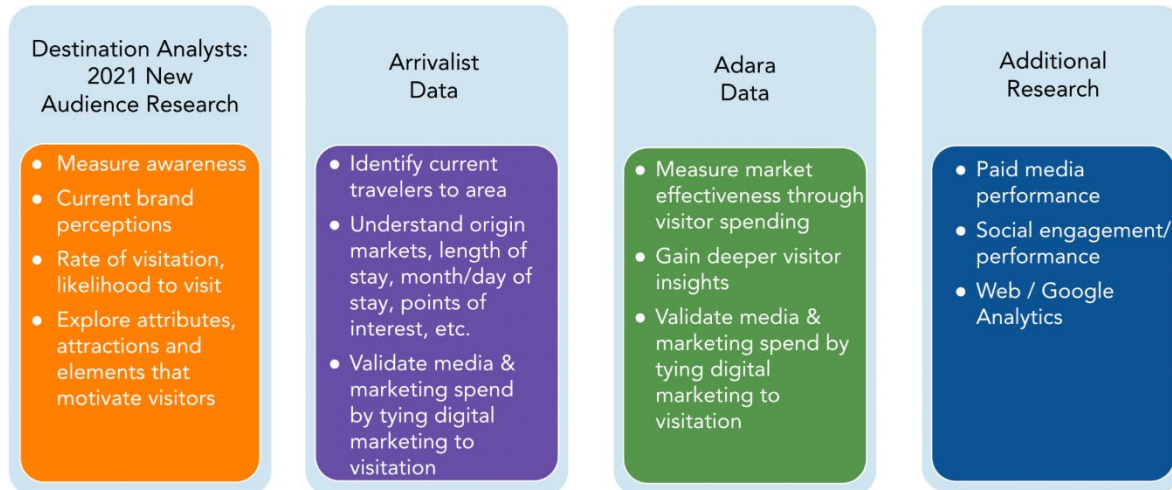
**Wrightsville Beach  
Room Occupancy Tax  
2nd 3%**



March & April 2023 - extremely wet months

# TOURISM MARKETING RESEARCH

The CVB utilizes data from multiple sources to inform our strategies, messaging, and communications tactics.



## Destination Analysts

Building on the learnings to date, the most recent research study in our multi-year plan is currently in the field and is designed to help us further understand high-potential visitors and their perceptions of, and interest in, the area as a destination. Our goal is to track improvement on the key benchmarks established in the previous study and to inform future strategies (targeting, messaging, media mix, etc.)

This study is being conducted among:

- adults 25 and older,
- with household income >\$100k,
- who took at least one leisure trip 100+ miles away from home in the past 2 years
- and plan to take a leisure trip in the next 12 months
- living within key markets

Specific areas of inquiry include:

- Aided and unaided awareness of Wilmington and Beaches as a travel destination
- Top-of-mind associations with Wilmington and Beaches
- Familiarity with and appeal of Wilmington and Beaches
- Recall seeing Wilmington and Beaches advertisements
- Rate of visitation to Wilmington and Beaches
- Likelihood/intention to visit Wilmington and Beaches
- Current brand associations and perceptions
- Evaluation of current brand attributes
- Motivations (emotional and functional) and decision factors for taking leisure trips to Wilmington and Beaches
- Analysis of how Wilmington and Beaches' perceived tourism assets align with what is important to travelers when choosing leisure destinations
- Anticipated spend when visiting Wilmington and Beaches

- Seasonal travel planning preferences and behaviors
- Deterrents to visiting Wilmington and Beaches
- Resources used for travel planning

We designed this study to allow us to look at perceptions both in aggregate and to compare base (control) markets with (variable) markets in which we have heavier media investment. This approach will begin to allow us to gauge the effectiveness of our messaging and media plans.

	Western NC	Virginia	Ohio	Pennsylvania	MD & DC	OH & GA
<b>Control Markets: Base Plan Only</b>	Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem	Roanoke, Lynchburg	Cincinnati	Pittsburgh	Baltimore	Cleveland
<b>Variable Markets Base + Heavy-up</b>	Charlotte	Richmond, Petersburg	Columbus	Philadelphia	Washington, D.C.	Atlanta

Initial Findings:

- **Top associations with Wilmington and Beaches are its namesake beaches, relaxing atmosphere, and battleship/military connections.** Lack of familiarity with the area, and thus having no associations with the destination and its offerings (35.5%+), remains a challenge and will require more time and paid media in markets to address.
- **Top-3 box appeal for the Wilmington and Beaches destination was up slightly to 40.4% from 37.2% in 2021 and top-3 box excitement was up slightly to 44.1% from 41.7% in 2021.** (Top 3 box means scoring an 8,9 or 10 on an 11-point scale, where 10 is extremely appealing/excited and 0 is extremely unappealing/unexcited.)
- Another positive indicator is that the likelihood to visit Wilmington and Beaches in the next three (3) years was up slightly to 33.0% from 32.2% in 2021.
- Among the total audience, **when asked how much they agree the 2023 ad campaign reviewed in the survey makes them more likely to visit Wilmington & Beaches in the next 12 months nearly three-quarters (64.4%) agreed.** Only 9.8% disagreed.
- When evaluating a competitive set of southern destinations, familiarity with Myrtle Beach, Virginia Beach, and Outer Banks was up significantly from 2021, while familiarity with Wilmington and Beaches remained statistically the same (22.2% in 2023 vs. 22.8% in 2021). For context:
  - With less than 12 months of the shifted strategies and 6 months of the new creative actually out in the field, we didn't anticipate moving the awareness needle in that short of a timeframe.
  - For example, Wilmington and Beaches' advertising budget is 14% of Myrtle Beaches' budget, yet our familiarity is close to 50% of theirs (22.2% vs 51.7%) and our aided awareness is 70% of theirs (64.4% vs. 92.7%).
- Interestingly, when evaluating the same competitive set of southern destinations, the **likelihood to visit Wilmington and Beaches in the next 5 years was up significantly to 27.4% from 20.6% in 2021.**

A full summary of findings will be shared online at the conclusion of the study results review (see table of contents for online information).

## Arrivalist Overview

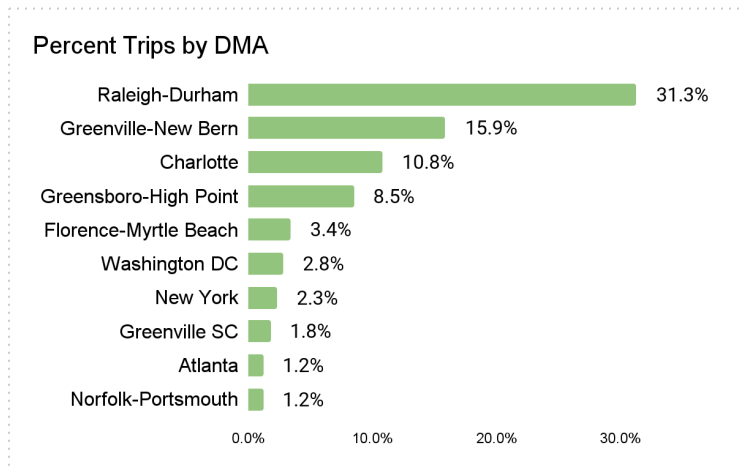
- Always-on visitation **measurement platform that offers insights and links behavior/visitation to paid digital marketing** efforts, excluding paid search, paid social & e-blasts
- **Tracks using GPS** within a visitor’s mobile device and is recorded upon entering the perimeter surrounding the destination
- **Measures both total arrivals/visitation, etc., and arrivals influenced by paid media**
- **Visitation dashboard** data measures one person’s trip to the county. The **Point of Interest (POI) dashboard** data measures one person’s trips into any / all POIs.

Arrivalist dashboards (Total Trips, Overnights and Points of Interest) will be shared online. See table of contents for online information.

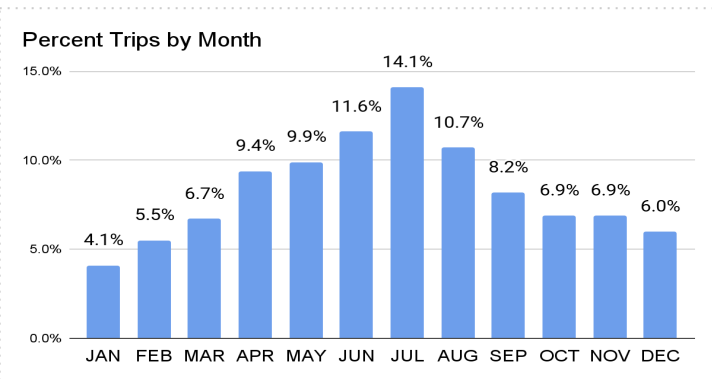
## Visitation Dashboard: Wilmington & Beaches (CY 2022) Total Trips

Average Miles Traveled	Share of Overnights	Average Nights in Destination
<b>257</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>1.5</b>

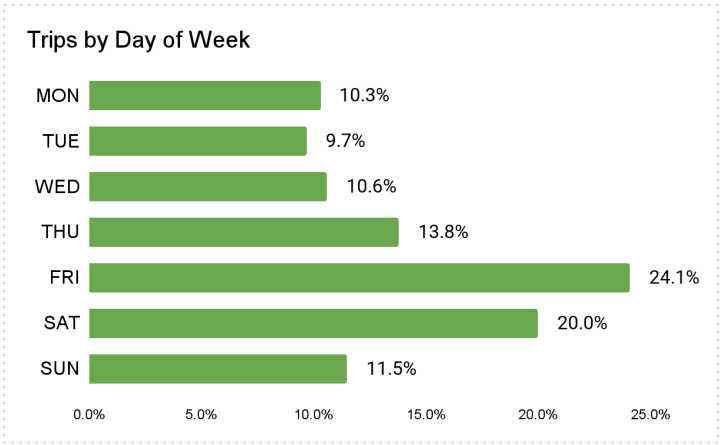
- 66.5% of trips originating from 4 NC DMAs. Up from 65.8% originating from 4 NC DMAs in 2021.



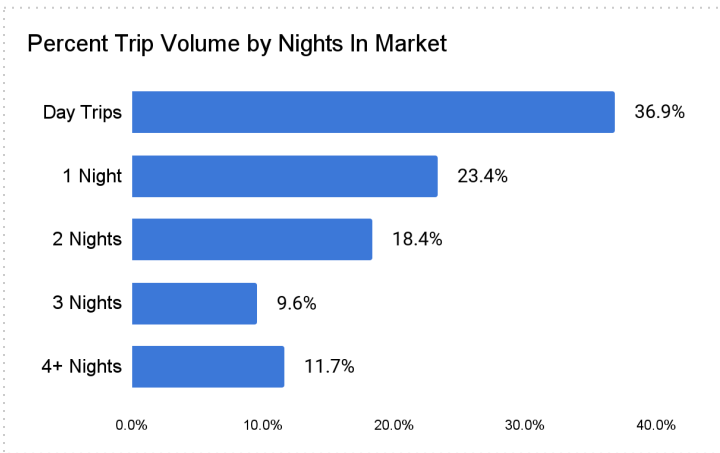
- 36.4% of trips in Summer (JUN-AUG). Down slightly from 2021 (36.8%). Conversely, 63.6% of trips came in the off season (JAN-MAY, SEP-DEC), up from 63.2% in 2021.



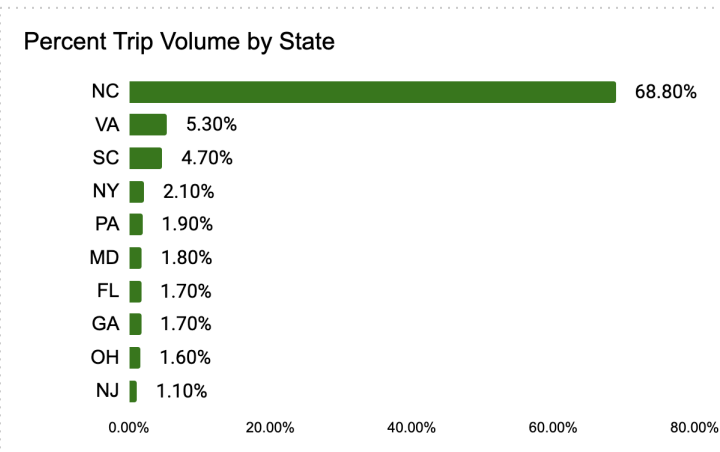
- 55.6% of arrivals came Fri-Sun versus 56.6% in 2021. 68.5% of trips came during the week (M-F), up from 67.6% in 2021.



- Share of day trips (36.9%) exactly the same in 2021. Share of overnights (63.2%) exactly the same in 2021.



- Vast majority of trips originated in NC. Similar to 2021 (68.0%). Out of state visitation dropped slightly between 2021 (32.0%) and 2022 (31.2%).

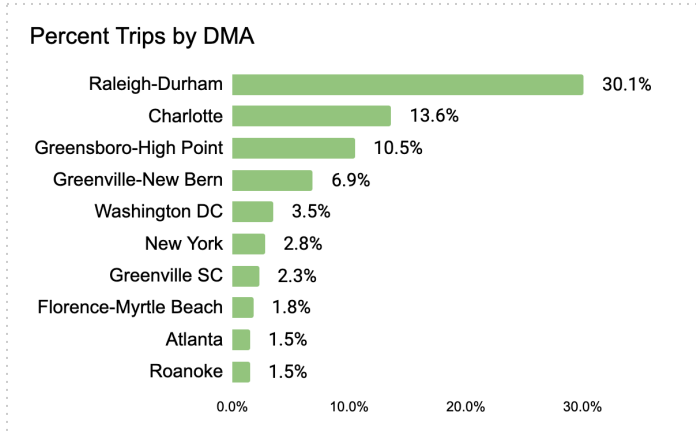




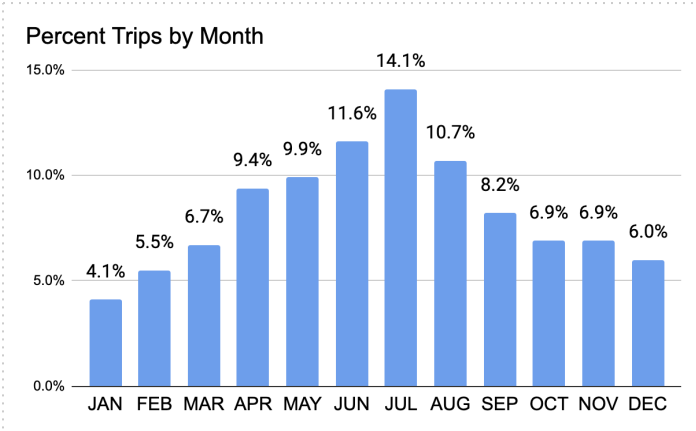
## Visitation Dashboard: Wilmington & Beaches (CY 2022) Overnights

Average Miles Traveled	Share of Overnights	Average Nights in Destination
<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2.4</b>

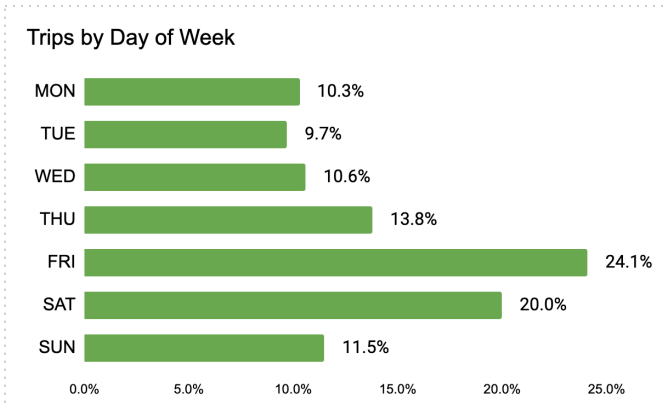
- Average miles traveled increased 20% over last year (292).
- 61.1% of overnight trips originating from 4 NC DMAs. Up from 60.6% originating from 4 NC DMAs in 2021.



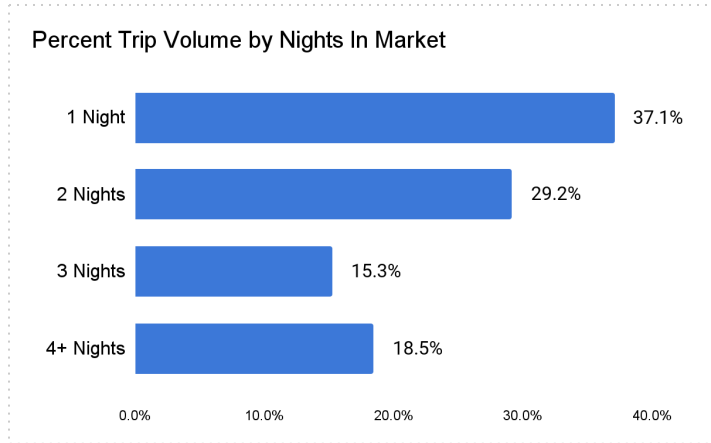
- 38.9% of overnight trips in Summer (JUN-AUG). Up slightly from 2021 (38.5%). 61.1% of trips took place in the off season (JAN-MAY, SEP-DEC), down from 61.5% in 2021.



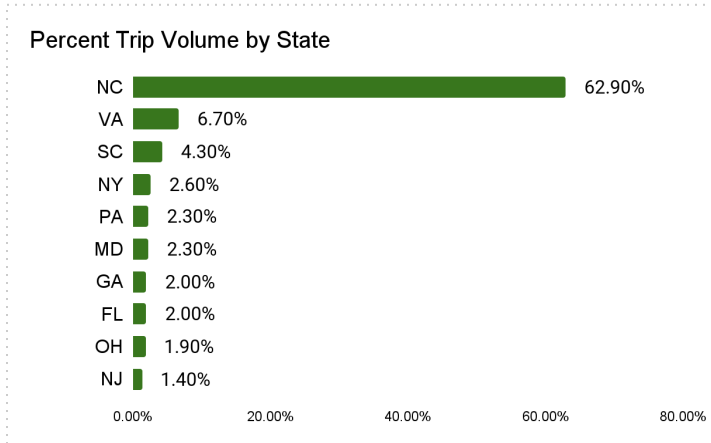
- 58.5% of arrivals came FRI-SUN versus 59.3% in 2021. 2022 overnights MON-FRI decreased slightly from 70.5% in 2021 to 68.5% in 2022.



- 66.3% of overnight stays are 1-2 nights. 3+ night stays increased from 32.3% in 2021 to 33.8% in 2022.



- Vast majority of overnight trips originated in NC (62.9%). Similar to 2021 (62.3%). Conversely, OOS trips slightly declined (37.1%) in 2022 from 37.7% in 2021.



### Arrivalist Summary (CY 2022)

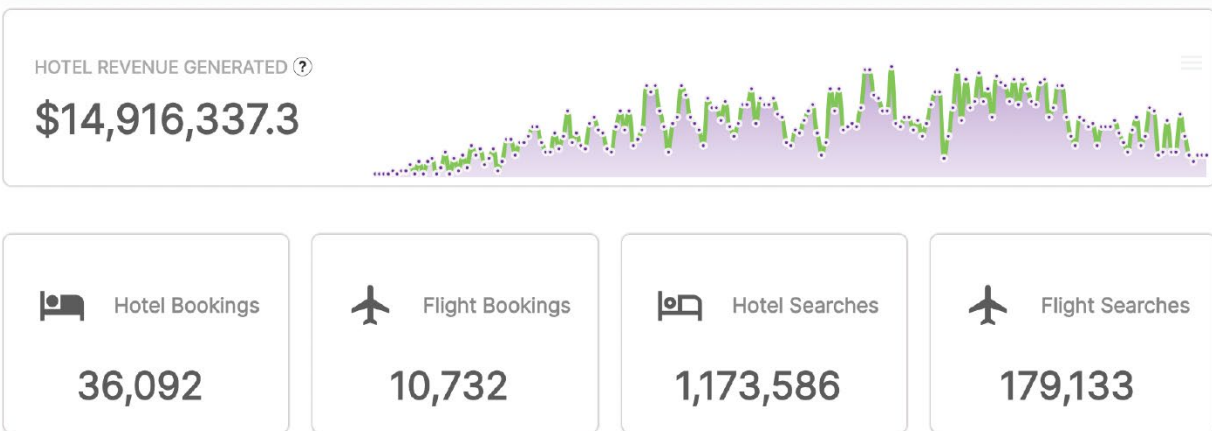
- Increase in average miles traveled for overnight trips (+20%) is a strong indication that our shift in media spend and OOS targeting is making an impact.
- These results only reflect 6 months of new creative in the market and less than 1 year of new media strategies being implemented. While we did not expect to move the needle drastically in this timeframe, an increase to distance traveled is a good beginning and we will look to next year's report for more analysis of the shifts that were made.

## Adara Overview

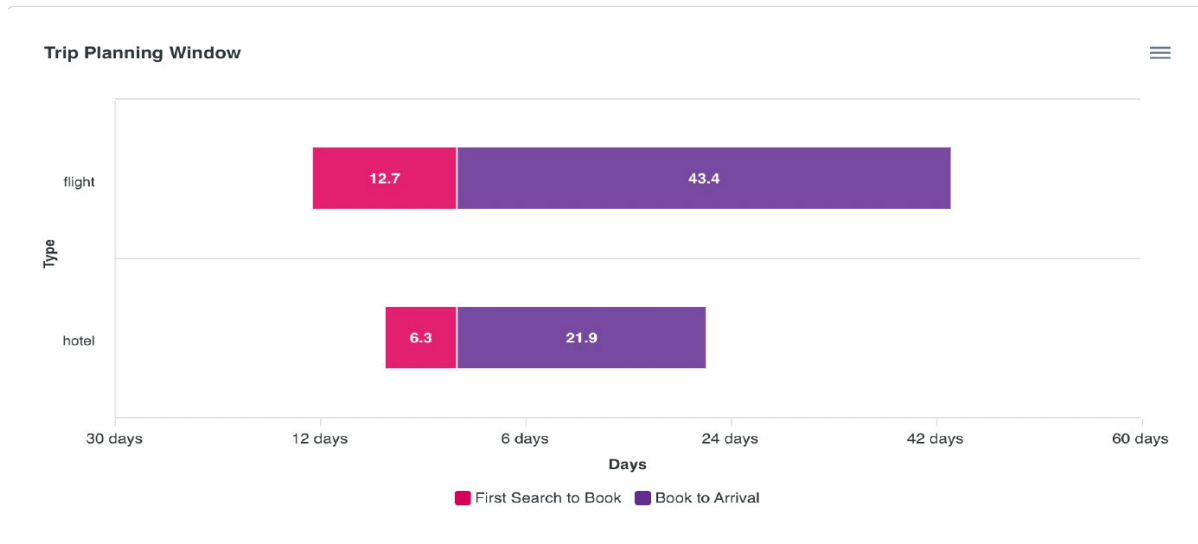
The CVB added to its portfolio of research partners in CY 2023: ADARA Impact PLUS. Adara brings an innovative, privacy-first approach to harmonizing disparate digital identities - providing the CVB with a global view of our customers, including measuring hotel and flight booking data, to create less friction, generate better outcomes, and win more customers.

There are three broad areas that Adara will help with:

1. Measuring Marketing Effectiveness: Connecting the CVB's digital media campaigns and website activity to visitors, flight bookings, room nights and hotel revenue from 850M+ monthly active travelers.
2. Gaining Deeper Customer Insights: Unlock better insights into the types of travelers that visit our destination and respond to our digital marketing efforts.
3. Validate Media & Marketing Spend: Show a direct connection between those who have seen our digital campaigns or been to our website and real visitors to our destination.



On average, people took 6.3 days from their first search to book a hotel, and another 21.9 days to arrive in the destination. Total 28.2 days.



Paid media drove significant website activity from January-June 2023:

166,482 Unique site visitors	207,211 Unique site visits	387,412 Page views
1.245 Avg. Site visits per visitor	2.327 Avg. Page visits per visitor	

### Adara Key Findings (January-June 2023)

- Paid digital marketing efforts from January through June 2023 led to:
  - \$14,916,337.3 in hotel revenue
  - 36,092 total hotel bookings, 10,732 total flight bookings
- The total trip planning window during this time was about a month (28.2 days). The trip planning window is measured from the first online search through arrival but does not include anything that occurs before the first search (i.e. awareness-related activities).
- Raleigh-Durham, Charlotte and the Triad were the top-ranked origin markets for hotel bookings, together accounting for 57% of hotel bookings.
- Couples accounted for 51% of travelers with families (34%) and solo travelers (14%) making up the rest.
- People aged 30-49 accounted for the vast majority (79.5%) of travelers to Wilmington & Beaches.

### North Carolina Coastal Regional Visitor Profile

The source of the domestic visitor profile data is TravelTrakAmerica, a comprehensive syndicated tracking survey, on behalf of Visit North Carolina to perform demographic profiles and volume analyses on the North Carolina Travel and Tourism industry. Domestic coastal visitation trends from Visit North Carolina’s 2022 Travel Summary are featured in the following link and summary pages can be found online (see table of contents for online information).

For complete survey methodology and results, go to:

<https://partners.visitnc.com/visitor-profile-studies>

### Economic Impact of New Hanover County Travel Annual Study

The “2022 Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties” annual study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics in collaboration with the U.S Travel Association. The study reveals that in 2022 domestic visitors to and within New Hanover County spent an estimated \$1.059 billion, representing a 13.9% increase from 2021 expenditures setting another new benchmark for visitor spending. New Hanover maintained its rank as number 7 among North Carolina’s 100 counties in tourism expenditures.

According to the study, in 2022 Travel and Tourism in New Hanover County directly provided 6,676 jobs up from 6,142 in 2021 that supported a payroll of \$276.6 million. Travel and Tourism in our county also generated \$74.8 million in state and local tax receipts. Travel-generated state and local tax revenues saved each New Hanover County resident approximately \$317.76.

New Hanover County Room Occupancy Tax (ROT) collections for calendar year 2022 increased by 10.67%, which totaled more than \$23 million; fiscal year 2022/2023 confirmed record increased growth and ROTs were up 4.63%, which totaled \$23.68 million.

For complete survey methodology and results, go to:

<https://partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies>

### **Smith Travel Research**

According to Smith Travel Research, \*New Hanover County's 2022 hotel/motel occupancy was 65% (+8.4%), Average Daily Rate (ADR) was \$141.90 (+5.5 %), and Revenue Per Available Room was \$92.30 (+14.4%), compared to North Carolina's competitive set data of 61.9% (+7.7%), \$120.46 (+13.5%), and \$74.62 (+22.3%), respectively.

*\*Sampling of hotels/motels only and does not include vacation rentals*

### **FY23-24 Research Initiative**

Given the timing of the FY22-23 wave, our new work will only have been in the market for a few months (having just launched in Spring 2023). Based on best practices regarding campaign time in market, reach and frequency, our plan for FY23-24 is to repeat the methodology leveraged this year. This will further allow us to track changes in attitudes and perceptions, consideration, and marketing effectiveness over time and to adapt messaging and media plans accordingly. We will update and finalize this recommendation and fine-tune study objectives based on findings from this year's study but feel reassessing after the campaign at least a year in the market will yield valuable information and insight.

# Visitation Dashboard: Wilmington & Beaches (CY 2022)

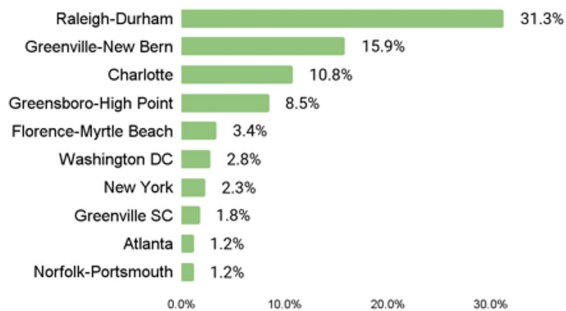
## Total Trips

Average Miles Traveled **257**

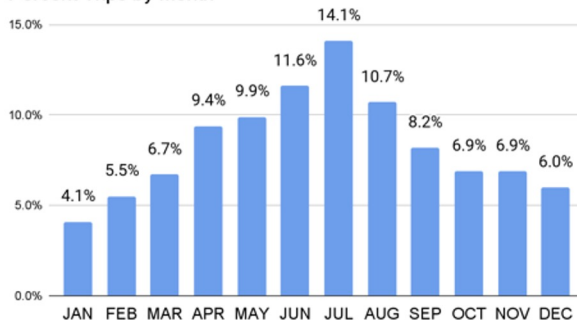
Share of Overnights **63.2%**

Average Nights in Destination **1.5**

Percent Trips by DMA



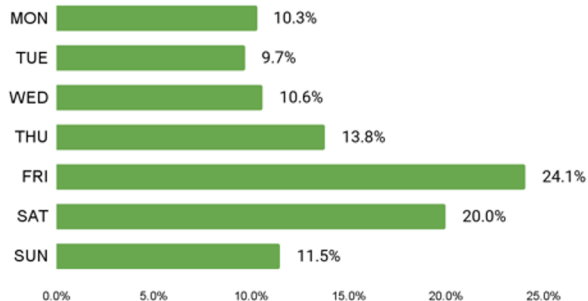
Percent Trips by Month



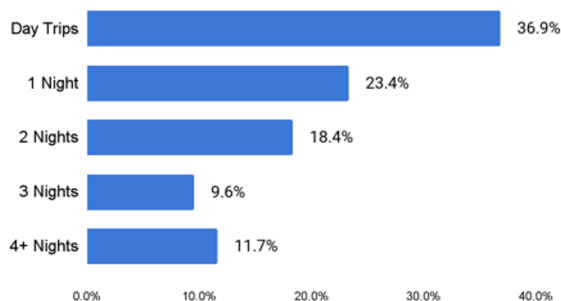
Trips By Origin States



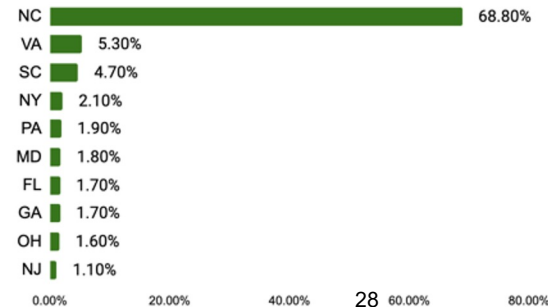
Trips by Day of Week



Percent Trip Volume by Nights In Market



Percent Trip Volume by State



# Visitation Dashboard: Wilmington & Beaches (CY 2022)

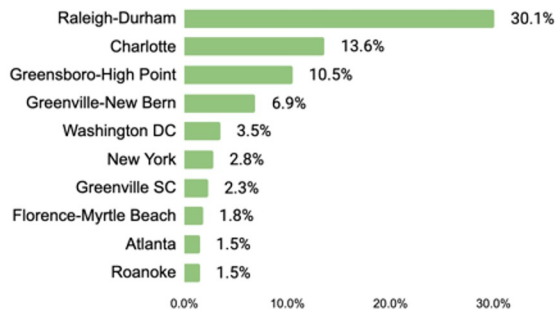
## Overnight Trips

Average Miles Traveled **350**

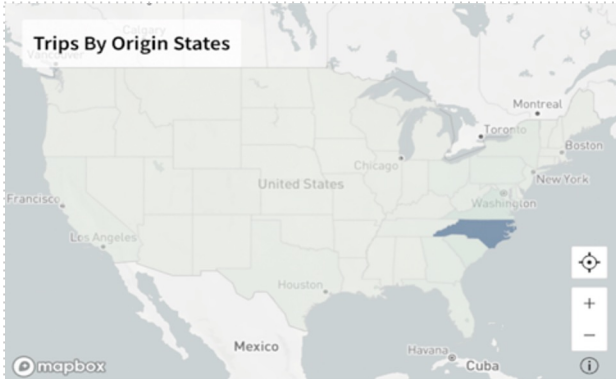
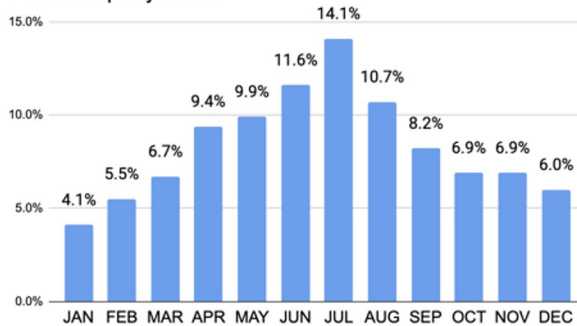
Share of Overnights **100.0%**

Average Nights in Destination **2.4**

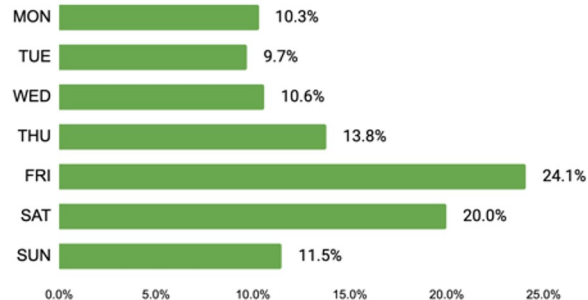
Percent Trips by DMA



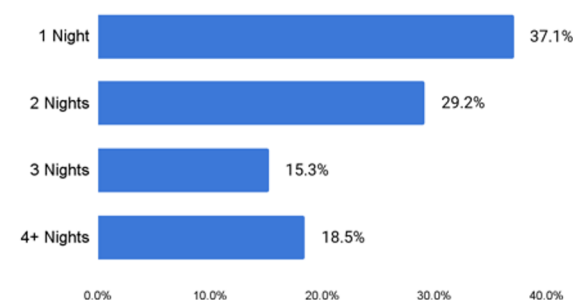
Percent Trips by Month



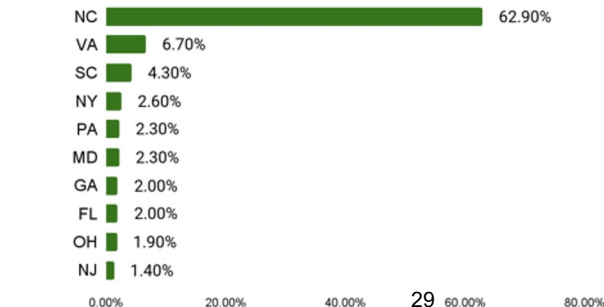
Trips by Day of Week



Percent Trip Volume by Nights In Market



Percent Trip Volume by State



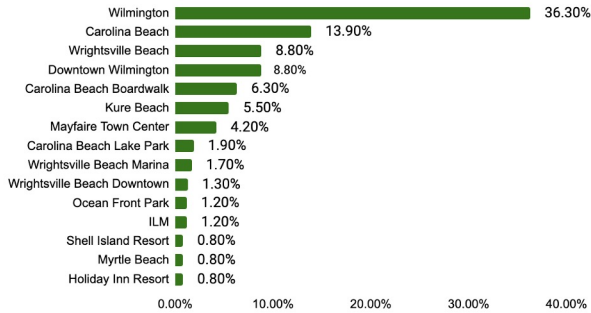
# POI Dashboard: Wilmington & Beaches (CY 2022)

## Total Trips

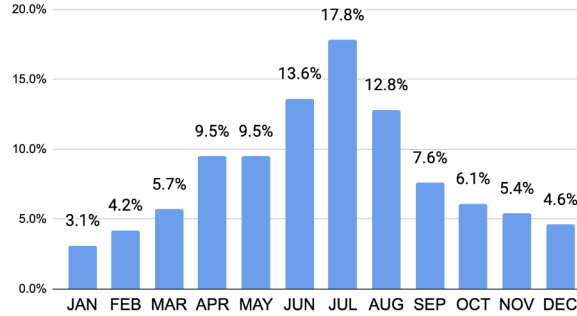
Share of Overnights  
**89.4%**

Average Nights in  
Destination **3.0**

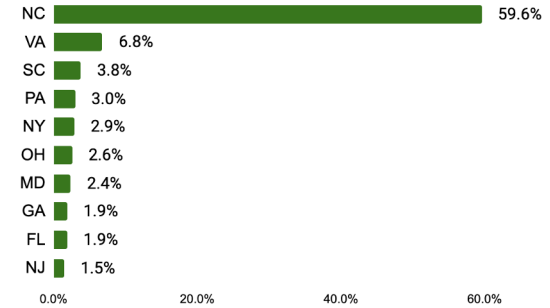
Percent Trips by POI



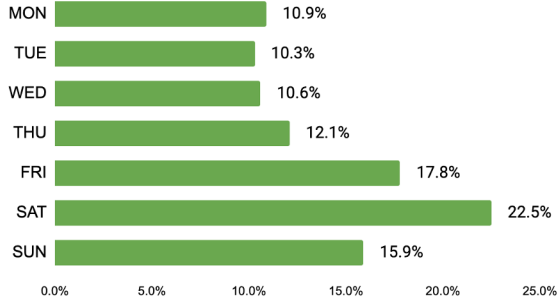
Percent Trips by Month



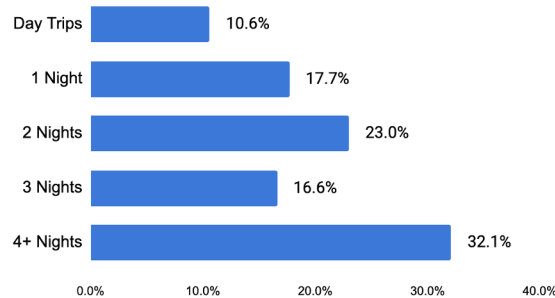
Percent Trip Volume by State



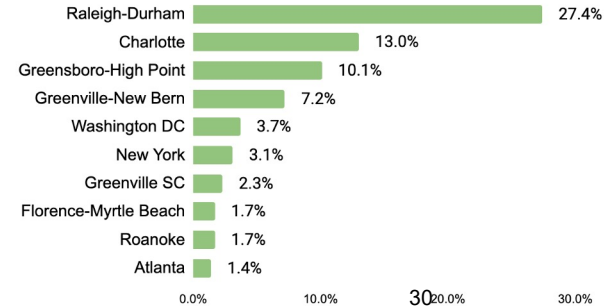
Trips by Day of Week



Percent Trip Volume by Nights In Market



Percent Trips by DMA





## ISSUES AFFECTING LOCAL TOURISM

### Overview

While it is hard to give a complete forecast for the upcoming year with the General Assembly still in session and many of the policy issues still unresolved, many issues remain to be on the radar as we move in to FY23-24. An incredible number of policy issues depend on the state budget to be finalized before they can be addressed, including new occupancy tax legislation and funding for workforce development. Issues at the local level remain to be addressed by the CVB and TDA Board of Directors and the TDA Board of Directors have implemented work sessions to specifically address those issues identified by the annually updated Wilmington and Beaches 3-Year Strategic Plan.

### Normalization of Travel / ROT Collections

Protecting Room Occupancy Tax legislation remains paramount. The U.S. Travel Association's June 2023 travel forecast reveals a 'normalizing' of leisure travel demand following the post-pandemic surge (source: [ustravel.org](https://ustravel.org)). Domestic leisure travel is expected to remain strong, but with normalized rates of growth (around 2%) in 2023 and 2024. In recent months a normalizing of travel has also been noted in New Hanover County. While the normalization of travel is not a legislative issue in and of itself, this leveling-off trend significantly impacts Room Occupancy Tax (ROT) collections, the CVB's primary funding mechanism.

As a result of the Covid pandemic, New Hanover County ROT collections experienced significant increases during fiscal years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. During 2022-2023, the percentage of increase year-over-year shifted from double-digit increases to single-digit increases.

As schools and businesses transition back to in-person versus remote, other industry-wide factors also contribute to the leveling-off effect including the rising cost of travel, service industry staffing shortages, and travelers' interest in international destinations. Locally, spring 2023 was further impacted by higher-than-average rainfall, including a soggy Memorial Day weekend. Foul weather negatively affects in-state leisure travel decisions.

### Occupancy Tax

The current House Finance Committee guidelines are still the rule rather than the exception but changes in Committee leadership is always a concern, especially since the House seems to want to split big chair responsibilities among several members. Representative Tim Moore has said that he will not seek reelection as Speaker and that's going to shake up key committee chair appointments as the Republicans shuffle the leadership deck. That, along with more municipalities eyeing occupancy tax as an alternative source of revenue to cover basic services (especially in tourism destinations), creates a bit of uncertainty until those appointments are made.

A number of occupancy tax bills are moving through the legislature and could continue into 2024. The NC Travel and Tourism Coalition, NC Travel Industry Association and the NC Restaurant & Lodging Association all support the House Occupancy Tax Guidelines for any additions or changes to occupancy tax legislation. Both the House and Senate are moving legislation that comply with the House Guidelines.

## **Workforce Shortage**

A labor shortage continues to plague the hospitality industry, creating unprecedented challenges to hire staff to meet travel demand. AHLA reports that 87% of hotels are experiencing staffing shortages. Airlines and other sectors of the service industry are also experiencing workforce shortages.

According to the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association (NCRLA), the workforce shortage issue seems to be improving and the gap in workers vs. needed workers is closing in a bit. They are currently pulling together a listing of vacant jobs in the state and by city/county. Also, NCRLA is expected to roll out a recruitment campaign this fall and it will run through next spring. It should help to spark interest in hospitality jobs and career opportunities. The Wilmington and Beaches CVB shares news of NCRLA's workforce training tools and job boards with travel partners through partner communications and at industry events.

The North Carolina Travel Industry Association (NCTIA) believes finding and retaining employees in the hospitality industry will remain a problem for some time. The Tourism Education Foundation of NC successfully worked through a pilot program in the greater Charlotte area, educating, training and recruiting students from high schools and community colleges. The hotel HR managers who partnered with the Foundation are reporting great improvements in their volume of employees and are now nearly staffed fully. NCTIA has submitted to leadership an expanded plan for the upcoming year that includes destinations along the Coast and the Greater Wilmington area was part of that proposal. That plan is tied to the state budget and at this time it is uncertain if the project will be funded or just parts of it.

The lack of affordable housing and public transportation in New Hanover County continue to contribute to the workforce shortage. In 2019, New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington developed the Joint Housing Advisory Committee to study affordable and workforce housing and develop recommendations for tools and strategies to guide government efforts in addressing the housing affordability needs of our residents. The committee's [2023 Housing Report](#) includes a newly adopted Housing Strategic Plan that includes details of County and City funding allocations for affordable housing.

The Wilmington and Beaches CVB continues to work with hospitality programs at Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) and SeaTECH (industrial high school) to connect trained students and graduates with potential employers. During 2022-2023 the CVB distributed approximately 2,500 student-focused hospitality career brochures at career centers in public and private high schools, technical schools, colleges, job fairs and career workshops. The CVB also keeps the industry informed of available tools (hospitality training programs, job boards, presentations) relating to workforce development, and participates in community efforts to address staffing shortages.

## **Economic Concerns: Sticker Shock and Reduced In-Destination Spending**

According to Destination Analysts' [State of the American Traveler](#) in July 2023, concerns over a looming recession have eased somewhat but travelers are citing other economic concerns such as sticker shock. Destination Analysts' [June 2023 State of the American Traveler report](#) reveals that nearly 4-in-10 Americans report experiencing sticker shock planning a recent trip. Over 60% of those who experienced sticker shock reported that this came from hotel rates, while half named

airfare as the culprit. Nearly 47% attributed it to restaurant and dining costs, and 42% experiences the same from entertainment, recreation, or attraction costs.

The July 2023 report indicates that travel spending sentiment is cautiously optimistic as Americans continue to travel and adjust travel budgets. Many respondents anticipate spending differently on their trips, making compromises on food and dining experiences and shopping purchases over shortening trip days or even scrimping on lodging. Additionally, 38% of travelers surveyed would use budget-friendly hotel chains and 30.9% said they would stay with friends and family. (source: [DestinationAnalysts.com](https://www.destinationanalysts.com))

Meetings and conventions are on the rise. According to a [Global Business Travel Association business outlook report](https://www.gbta.org) (March 2023), 77% of travel managers expect conference/group travel to return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of this year; however, one in 10 do not expect business travel volumes to return until 2025 or later, citing inflation and rising prices as top concerns, followed by travel disruptions and a potential recession. (source: [gbta.org](https://www.gbta.org))

The CVB monitors ROT collections and other growth markers, as well as feedback from local travel partners. The CVB budget can be adjusted to accommodate shifts in revenues.

### **School Calendar Law**

The CVB monitors NHC Board of Education school calendar committee discussions that are relative to school start and end dates. New Hanover County schools implemented a traditional 2023-2024 school calendar with a start date of August 28 and an end date of June 5 that is compliant with state legislation.

As a member of the NC Travel & Tourism Coalition (NCTTC) and NCTIA, the CVB stays informed of school calendar bills filed in counties across the state. To date 16 NC counties, including several of our in-state visitor feeder markets, have adopted 2023/2024 school calendars that are not in compliance with legislation. It's unlikely that new legislation will be introduced that either solidifies the current law or creates penalties for those who break the law. Senator Berger has stated he sees no reason to make any changes to the current law and Speaker Moore has publicly stated that he sides with those who want calendar flexibility. Senator Berger also has repeatedly made it clear in media reports that school boards and administrators who break the law are setting a bad example for the students they serve. NCTIA believes the issue of compliance will reside with the Courts next year rather than the General Assembly. Many parents are upset with their rogue districts but fear retaliation from school district officials, administrators, and opposing parents. It is anticipated more school districts will announce early start dates and more lawsuits being filed next year, especially from businesses.

### **Beach Re-nourishment & Inlet Dredging**

The future of beach re-nourishment and its funding sources at the federal and state levels continue to be a topic affecting coastal communities throughout the state. Local governments continue to look for alternate funding sources and continue to lobby for a long-term sustainable funding source at the state level. While the Coastal Storm Damage Reduction (CSDR) fund has been established, no permanent funding has been identified.

- The CVB continues to engage with the County, City, and Beach municipalities to identify long-term sustainable funding solutions. Room occupancy tax continues to be the single source of local funding contributing over \$6.37 million dollars during FY22-23.
- As stewards of the tourism industry, the CVB advocates the importance of marketing the destination to new and repeat visitors, which in turn, grows room occupancy tax receipts that continue to fund beach re-nourishment coffers. It is important to protect the CVB's current budget to ensure that adequate funds are available to grow tourism in New Hanover County through innovative marketing programs.
- The Wilmington and Beaches CVB attends the Wilmington/New Hanover County Port, Waterway and Beach Commission meetings to keep abreast of issues relating to beach re-nourishment and inlet dredging. New Hanover County's (NHC) three Federally and State authorized Coastal Storm Damage Reduction (CSDR) Projects continue to provide public and private infrastructure protection as well as supporting our tourism-based industries. Our Federal, State and Local partnership continues successful participation supporting NHC's CSDR Program. Our DC delegation led by Congressman Rouzer was able to secure the necessary funding to ensure WB's forthcoming FY2024 maintenance event. Carolina Beach and Kure Beach are on schedule for their next maintenance events in FY2025. Our Federal partners the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and our State partners through the NC Division of Water Resources (NCDWR) are aligned with our CSDR funding needs for Pleasure Island's FY2025 events. NHC's room occupancy tax (ROT) is well positioned to meet our local participation responsibilities. We all recognize the fiscal and physical challenges associated with our CSDR program; however, our three-beach average of a \$45 return on each dollar invested, toward our scheduled CSDR maintenance events, speaks volumes to their success both economically and ecologically.

## **Budget**

During the pandemic years, the CVB noted a significant increase in vacation rentals and longer stays as people were more mobile and able to work or attend school remotely. There was also pent-up travel demand following the Covid lockdown and our destination was especially desirable due to the abundance of outdoor amenities and attractions. The increase in travel demand created a great boost for our economy and allowed many businesses to survive and thrive. An increase in ROT collections during 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 allowed the CVB to implement special initiatives during 2022-2023, including: an Out-of-State media campaign; additional marketing efforts in areas of new air service; a Riverwalk Assessment Study and new destination brand and audience research. We also expanded our photo/video assets and developed customized visitor resources, including the recently launched Mobile Trip Guide and an online Tourism Ambassador training and certification program.

The CVB's recent investments in research, out-of-state strategic marketing initiatives and customized visitor resources will position New Hanover County to continue an upward momentum of travel, albeit at a more 'normalized' pace as outlined in the Normalization/ROT Collections section. Meanwhile, the CVB will continue to monitor ROT collections and budget accordingly while also maintaining our commitments to:

- Protection of existing funds for marketing
- Long-term goals as identified in the TDA's 3-year Strategic Vision Plan
- Developing the TDA's first-ever Tourism Master Plan to serve as a 10-year road map for tourism development in New Hanover County

## **Industry Participation**

While leisure travel has rebounded sooner than anticipated and the business sector is starting to pick up, we should not rest on our laurels. Our industry remains vulnerable to unpredictable economic setbacks, weather, health and other crises. Together as an industry and a community, we must continue to support one another and keep each other informed. It is vital the CVB and travel partners work together to ensure that marketing efforts align with and adapt to current conditions. The CVB continues to request participation in the following areas:

- Partner Communication – Provide CVB with updates, events, staff / contact changes
- CVB Extranet – Partners provide CVB with up-to-date listing information for visitors
- Partner Events – Partners attend GM roundtables, HIP meetings, NTTW Travel Rally, Program of Work industry presentation, CVB education and networking events

## **Crime/Safety**

- Negative impact of crime and its effect on visitor perception of destination
- Opioid Epidemic
- Ocean Safety (Rip Currents, Sharks)
- Homeless
- Gang violence

## **Infrastructure Needs and Issues:**

- Parking
- Traffic
- Key issues/needs identified by Riverwalk Assessment Study
  - Signage
  - Beautification and improvements
  - Adequate visitors center and public bathrooms
- Downtown construction projects timing to avoid peak season
- Public transportation schedules that align with hospitality employee needs

## **Environmental Issues**

- Hurricanes
- Water Quality
- Climate Change/Sea-level Rise
- Windmills

## **Artificial Intelligence**

AI presents both opportunities and risks for the travel industry. The CVB will monitor this emerging technology for updates and study how larger entities in the destination marketing space are effectively utilizing AI. As best practices are identified, the CVB will experiment internally. AI limitations and risks include: legal ramifications (intellectual property); ethical considerations (perpetuation of biases); outdated/inaccurate information; mixed results (conflicting details); and consumer skepticism. However, we recognize there may exist opportunities to leverage the technology for trip planning and content creation, along with human oversight.

# Wilmington and the Beaches Three-Year Strategic Plan Summary

## OUR DMO PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

### MISSION

The New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority (TDA), dba the Wilmington and Beaches Convention & Visitors Bureau, markets and develops the county and its communities' leisure and group travel experiences for sustainable economic growth and quality of place.

### VISION 2030

Wilmington and Beaches Convention & Visitors Bureau (WBCVB) is the recognized and influential community tourism leader providing impactful destination results and promotable branded visitor experiences through productive partnerships.

## Visitor Promise

Championing the Wilmington and Beaches brand experience.

FY2023/2024 –  
FY2025/2026



## OUR DMO CULTURE

### VALUES

Strategic / long-term focus  
Collaborative / industry-engaged  
Responsive / service excellence  
Innovative / new approaches  
Prudent / fiscally responsible  
Accountable / measurable returns

## Partner Promise

Being the voice of community tourism by facilitating and supporting increased brand marketing awareness, incremental business development and sales, and applied research, education, and advocacy.

## OUR DESTINATION OPPORTUNITY CHALLENGES

- 1. Unified approach to destination marketing for efficiency and reach to expand beyond seasonal leisure and weekend travel:** opportunity to extend seasonality, travel distance and visitor spending through year-round hybrid marketing (unified approach & beach dedicated plans), higher income targeting and more out of state marketing.
- 2. Qualified visitor industry professionals need:** support tourism/hospitality work force development.
- 3. Countywide public recognition of tourism as an economic driver:** advance TDA/CVB value and tourism contribution and advocacy
- 4. Quality visitor experience development & improvements:** Develop short-term and long-term (Tourism Master Plan) solutions to enhance the visitor experience.
- 5. Cooperative group meeting/sports event marketing and sales mandate:** Continue to develop partnerships to find workable paths toward Convention Center success to increase leads/bookings and decrease lost business by supporting group sales with vital block commitments and/or development of new downtown hotel.
- 6. Sustainable funding source for beach renourishment:** continue dialogue with county government/other proponents on a long-term agreement.
- 7. Industry Partnerships:** Develop process and procedures for partner funding requests.

## TDA Promise

Leading and investing in Wilmington and Beaches Convention & Visitors Bureau strategic direction and operational plans.



## OUR MISSION FOCUS

Drive Visitor Demand

Enhance the Visitor Experience

Communicate DMO Relevancy and Viability

## OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

Strengthen Destination Promotion and Visitor Conversion

Increase Destination Sales and Services

Facilitate Impactful Destination Development

Engage in Influential Stakeholder Relations and Tourism Advocacy

Affect Higher Resources Performance

## OUR PRIORITY INITIATIVES

- ✦ Build continued support for an executable hybrid targeted destination marketing and sales plan with effective brand promotional programming returns (2023/24 - 2025/26)
- ✦ Enhance out-of-state brand marketing awareness and promotions (2023/24-2025/26)
- ✦ Continue the investment in visitor behavior and performance marketing research program (2023/24 - 2025/26)

- ✦ Execute annual Wilmington Convention District (WCD) partnership and countywide sports tourism strategies and plans (2023/24 -2025/26)
- ✦ Develop a visitor services strategy including relevant digital communications and visitor information center presence (2023/24)

- ✦ Prepare an agreed-to destination development strategy/tourism master plan including 2030 destination/tourism vision and DMO specific roles (2023/24 – 2024/25)
- ✦ Continue an effective destination/hospitality career and brand host training program (2023/24)
- ✦ Participate and give support to tourism/hospitality workforce development (2023/24 – 2025/26)
- ✦ Enhance the Riverwalk visitor and resident experience to elevate it to a top attraction based on study recommendations (2023/24 - 2024/25)

- ✦ Formulate and implement a targeted advocacy and stakeholder/resident communications plan (2023/24 – 2025/26)
- ✦ Engage fully with TDA and civic leadership on key issues of critical importance to the tourism industry (2023/24 - 2025/26)
- ✦ Form a county-wide tourism advocacy coalition to raise the profile of the WBCVB and its community impact (2023/24 – 2025/26)
- ✦ Execute the airport-CVB marketing partnership (2023/24)

- ✦ Approve updated strategic plans tied to annual marketing/operational plans with respective budgets (2023/24 – 2025/26)
- ✦ Continue investment in TDA/DMO professional development programming (2023/24 – 2025/256)
- ✦ Assess current TDA/WBCVB funding competitiveness with opportunity recommendations (2023/24)

## OUR STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Volume of county/city visitor expenditure
- Transient accommodation occupancy and related performance statistics
- Volume of transient lodging tax receipts and growth
- Key attraction/event attendance growth
- Convention and sports tourism leads and contracted room bookings

- Stakeholder and resident awareness of tourism and DMO
- Effective local and state partnership development and leveraging value
- Visitor satisfaction rating indices
- Agreed-to tourism brand acceptance and usage
- New business growth analytics

## **FY23-24 MARKETING OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES**

### **A Look Back**

The CVB addressed these core marketing objectives with performance insights from FY22-23 Program of Work:

1. Launched a new Mobile Trip Guide to better serve visitors in-market
2. Launched new Wilmington and Beaches TikTok channel
3. Conducted a Riverwalk Assessment Study in partnership with the City of Wilmington
4. Added new research partner ADARA Impact PLUS to CVB portfolio
5. Fielded third research study with Destination Analysts designed to track improvement on key benchmarks established in New Audience Research
6. Implemented new Out-of-State Media Campaign
7. Launched new ad creative campaign
8. Completed inbound marketing campaigns with new air service carriers at ILM
9. Developed new Sports SkyNav Virtual Tour and sports video
10. Produced video direct mailer for meetings and convention solicitation
11. Implemented new platform for sales staff to create and send web-based meetings proposals
12. Conducted leisure and sports photo and drone shoots
13. The tourism website outperformed last fiscal year by 19% for overall traffic for a total of 3.3 million sessions and generated 585,027 downstream partner listing referrals, a slight decrease of 2.5% from last fiscal year's benchmark increase of 32%; average time on site increased 9.41%
14. Worked in concert with Simpleview to transition from Universal Analytics to Google Analytics 4 to ensure seamless website tracking before Google sunset Universal Analytics
15. Printed Visitor Guide requests from the website remained similar to last FY with 8,437 requests; digital Visitor Guide views also remained similar with 53,066 views
16. Website cooperative advertising opportunities for industry partners generated nearly 4.1 million impressions and 75,604 clicks to partner websites, a 17.8% increase from last fiscal year
17. Developed and distributed 31 eNews to 126,046 Wilmington and Beaches subscribers, a 3.4% increase from last fiscal year
18. Generated 80 blogs, which included new and refreshed content
19. Wilmington and Beaches social media channels reached over half a million followers totaling 528,497, a 2.8% increase from last fiscal year
20. Implemented production of 34 repurposed website videos transitioning to vertical formats, updated footage and shorter lengths for better mobile viewing experiences to address decrease in video views
21. Received the 2022 North Carolina Travel Industry Association Best of Show and Platinum awards for Best Destination Leisure Marketing for Hallo-Scream Getaway social media promotion

### **Recent Travel Trend Highlights**

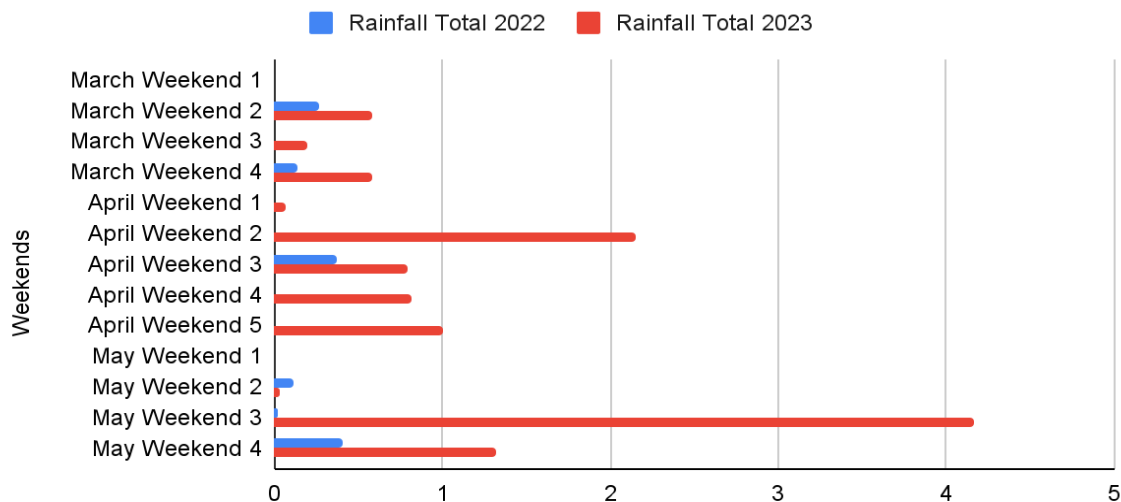
While visitation and ROTs are below the 'Covid Travel' period of 2020-2022, ROTs are still above the most recent non-Covid/normal period of FY2018-2019. Besides this expected



normalization of visitation, another contributing factor could be a somewhat sluggish Spring in 2023, due to a few key external facts:

- Particularly raining Spring - By Memorial Day weekend, NOAA reports Wilmington and Beaches had already accumulated **nearly 15 inches of rain for the year** making visits less appealing for in-state visitors.
- Sticker Shock, State of the Economy - According to Mintel in 2023, nearly **four-in-ten Americans said they experienced sticker shock** when planning their most recent vacation, with airfare, hotel rates, and dining costs being the primary cause.
- Service Industry Staffing Shortages - AHLA reports **87% of hotels are experiencing staffing** shortages. This is also true of airlines and other service industries as well, making living up to consumer service expectations a challenge.
- Globetrotting on the Rise - The U.S. State Department is **fielding half a million passport** applications per week, which is 30-40% above 2022 rates. There's also a 55% increase in the number of Americans traveling to Europe compared to last summer

### Spring Weekend Rainfall Totals YOY



### DETERRENTS TO TRAVELING IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS

**Question:** In the PAST SIX (6) MONTHS, which (if any) of the following have kept you from traveling more than you would have otherwise preferred? (Select all that apply)

(Base: All respondents, 4,011 completed surveys. Data collected June 15-21, 2023.)



## **FY22-23 Media Performance Insights**

- The increased focus on driving visitors from further away to stay longer has seen positive results:
  - Arrivals from in-state markets did not see a decline as a result, however, out of state visits did see a lift
  - The average miles traveled for overnight visitors increased +20% to 350 from 292
  - The average length of stay for overnight visitors remained at 2.4
  - All media tactics performed above benchmark, with a few callouts:
    - Clickable video received some of the highest click rates of the campaign, indicating that the target audience is responding extremely well to video content
    - Creative, articles and copy points in regard to “things to do” outperformed other topics, indicating we’re creating awareness with a “travel intender audience,” as evidenced by high engagement with content regarding trip planning.
- The unified campaign delivered 878,785 inquiries, a 60% increase from FY21-22 due to shifts in media strategy, increased media spend including a special Out of State funded marketing initiative, and a strong-performing creative campaign.
- Other Paid Media Travel Intent Indicators were also up over FY21-22 including Digital Visitor Guide Views (+109%), Clicks to Partner websites (+7%), Clicks to Event Website (+60%), and Average Time Spent on Site (+28%).
- Share of overnights (63.2%) exactly the same in 2021.
- 3+ night stays increased to 33.8% in 2022.
- Top 4 Wilmington and beaches’ origin markets were again all in NC.

## **Special Out-of-State Initiative Results**

The out-of-state initiative was a media campaign designed to test which out-of-state markets are likely to be most positively impacted by ad spend. We paired six test markets including Richmond/Petersburg, Columbus, Philadelphia, DC and Atlanta with six control markets and ran streaming ads on ConnectedTV in the test markets only. The ConnectedTV campaign delivered 14,160,671 impressions to televisions in our test markets and as a result, we tracked 24,532 post-exposure visits to the website. The retargeting campaign worked to keep Wilmington & Beaches top of mind after seeing the television spot, and delivered 78,068,913 impressions and 169,597 clicks with a CTR of .22%, much higher than the benchmark of .08%.

Additionally, Arrivalist data shows that 75.1% of FY22-23 media-attributed arrivals came from over 100 miles away, representing a significant increase from 58.7% in FY21-22. Through the fall, we will monitor several different data points to determine overall performance of media in the test markets vs. control markets in order to confirm our next outer market set.

## **FY23-24 Marketing Objectives**

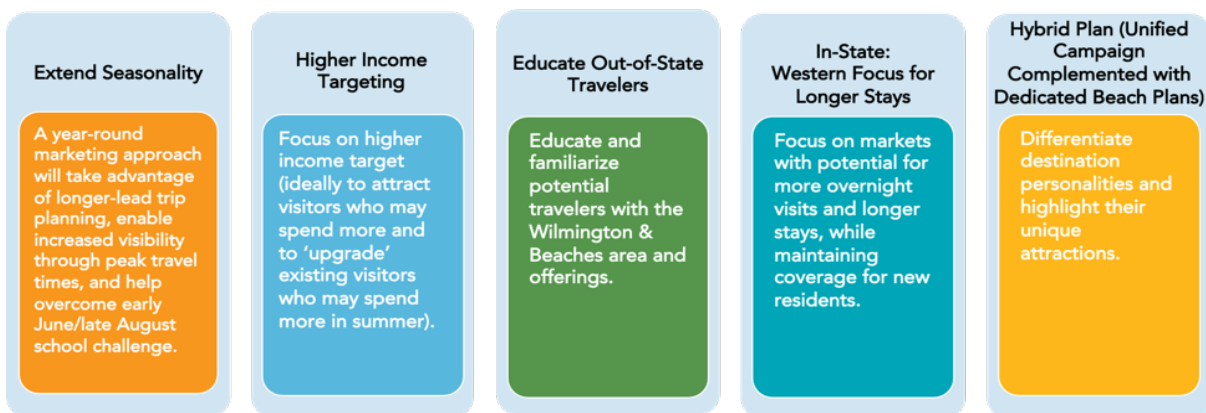
Prior to COVID-19, our marketing objectives focused on contributing to incremental visitation, driven by the number of overnight visits among new and returning visitors. During FY22-23 we began to build on the learnings of our opportunity to build awareness out-of-state while maintaining a presence within key NC markets.

Our goals remain:

1. To contribute to incremental visitation by:
  - # of overnight visits among new and returning visitors
  - Length of stay
  - Spend per visit by focusing on higher income target audience
2. To increase awareness and familiarity within priority out-of-state markets and in Western North Carolina (e.g., Charlotte, Asheville, Triad)

## Marketing Strategies

FY22-23 marked the first year we committed to a significant shift in strategy that aligns with the objectives noted above. For FY23-24, our five core Marketing Strategies will remain in place. Paid media will continue to increase awareness of Wilmington and Beaches in audiences living in Western NC and key out-of-state markets. There is an added focus on high-impact impression and awareness tactics (streaming video, paid social, paid search, etc.) that will move the audience towards consideration of a visit and/or longer stay year-round.



### Extending Seasonality

While Spring and Fall will continue to be a major focus for our marketing efforts, our plans now have more of a presence year-round. This is critical as we recognize, especially post-COVID, that trip planning windows are not as predictable and can vary from a few weeks or even days before travel up to a year in advance. Our goal - especially in paid search and digital advertising - is to have our messages present no matter when people are researching their upcoming travel plans.

### Higher Income Targeting

To align with our findings about High Potential Visitors, we increased our household income targeting from \$75K to \$100K in FY22-23 and this targeting will remain in place.

### Educate Out-of-State Travelers + In State: Western NC Focus

We will continue to broaden our geographic presence to directly address the lack of awareness and familiarity in Western NC and in out-of-state markets.

Base Plan: 40 percent in-state (Western NC focus), 60 percent out-of-state (SC, VA, DC, GA, PA, OH, MD, TN)

Out-of-State Special Initiative: 100% out-of-state

## Hybrid Plan

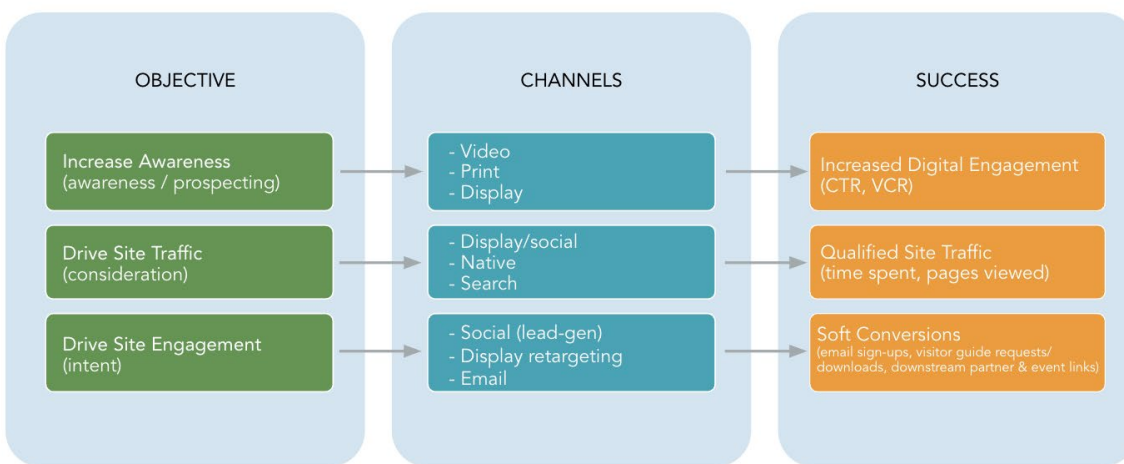
We are continuing with a hybrid approach that will use a Unified campaign to promote the entire area and it will be complemented by Dedicated Beach plans for Carolina Beach, Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach. This will allow us to continue to find efficiencies while differentiating destination personalities and highlighting their unique attractions.

## Measurement

Measurement will follow established guidelines and metrics and will look to maximize performance across the entire funnel from awareness to intent. We will also be tracking movement in upcoming audience research as previously mentioned.

Specifics are as follows:

### Media Metrics



### In-Market Metrics

Objective	Increase # overnight visits among new and returning visitors	Increase length of stay	Increase spend per visit	Increase familiarity (within priority out-of-state markets)
KPIs	Total # Arrivals	Total time in market	Average spend per day	Awareness, familiarity & consideration (from audience studies)  i.e. Why NOT come, 28% don't know enough about it*
	Total # Overnight Stays		Average spend per trip	Out-of-state lift in this metric in heavy-up markets vs base markets
	Repeat visitation			

\*Consider evolving study over time to get a clearer reading on familiarity and consideration

Data Source:

- Arrivalist & Adara
- Destination Analysis / Primary Research
- Destination Analysis & Adara

## CREATIVE STRATEGY

Early 2023 marked the launch of four new creative campaigns for Unified and each of the three Dedicated Beach campaigns. These campaigns will continue to run in FY23-24 to ensure they are effectively seeded with our traveler targets. We plan to continue to optimize the creative rotations of these campaigns based on higher-performing executions and seasonal topics. We also plan to create some new assets with fresh imagery to build on the existing campaigns.

### Creative Approach

- The strategy for FY23-24 continues to build on previous in-market and research learnings.
- Our hybrid approach will consist of one Unified creative campaign that will act as umbrella advertising for the whole region, as well as Dedicated Beach campaigns that will differentiate the three beaches and highlight their unique personalities and offerings.
- Our creative continues to combat the lack of familiarity by educating viewers on why Wilmington and Beaches should be a top consideration for their coastal destination. We want to give High Potential Visitors who aren't familiar with us the complete feeling of what it's like to be here. We'll demonstrate that Wilmington and Beaches is the best of both worlds - multiple beautiful beaches AND a historic, charming, lively city. Our work does not just highlight amenities and activities but also helps people feel the distinct nature of the area.
- Advertisements are strategically placed throughout the year to promote relevant attractions and activities for each destination.

Unified Campaign Samples:

Print



**Come for  
sandy shores.  
Stay for  
elegant gardens.**

Combine beach bliss with historic downtown charm and you get one epic vacation destination. Explore Wilmington and Island Beaches from enchanting gardens to a storied fishing pier and outdoors galore.

**Discover the best of the  
Carolina coast all in one place.**

**Wilmington.c.**  
River District & Island Beaches  
[WilmingtonAndBeachesTravel.com](http://WilmingtonAndBeachesTravel.com)

Print



## Come for the gills. Stay for thrills.

At Wilmington and Island Beaches you can make a splash beyond our scenic shores. Go with the flow at a water park with a million-gallon wave pool and high-speed slides. Then visit the aquarium to go face-to-fin with all of the fish in the deep blue sea.

Discover the best of the  
Carolina coast all in one place.



Wilmington.c.  
River District of Island Beaches  
[WilmingtonAndBeachesTravel.com](http://WilmingtonAndBeachesTravel.com)



## Come for smooth sailing. Stay for historic charm.

Discover the best of the  
Carolina coast all in one place.

Wilmington.c.  
River District of Island Beaches  
[WilmingtonAndBeachesTrips.com](http://WilmingtonAndBeachesTrips.com)

Print



**Come for high-flying views.  
Stay for deep-sea dishes.**

Make the most of your vacation days with historic experiences all around. At Wilmington and Island Beaches you can dine on fresh local seafood with a view of our charming riverfront. Then fly high along the oceanfront on our vintage Boardwalk.

**Discover the best of the  
Carolina coast all in one place.**

**Wilmington.c.**  
River District & Island Beaches  
WilmingtonAndBeachesGetaway.com



Display Banners



Oceanfront & riverfront stays.  
Watersports.  
Wellness.  
All in one place.

Wilmington.c.  
+ Island Beaches

Explore More



Oceanfront & riverfront stays.  
Watersports. Wellness.  
All in one place.

Wilmington.c.  
+ Island Beaches

Explore More



Oceanfront & riverfront stays.  
Watersports.  
All in one place.

Wilmington.c.  
+ Island Beaches

Explore More

Oceanfront & riverfront stays.  
Watersports. Wellness.  
All in one place.



Wilmington.c.  
+ Island Beaches

Explore More




Display Banners



Oceanfront yoga.  
Riverfront concerts.  
Ale trail.  
All in one place.

Wilmington.c.  
+ Island Beaches

Explore More



Oceanfront yoga. Riverfront  
concerts. Ale trail.  
All in one place.

Wilmington.c.  
+ Island Beaches

Explore More



Oceanfront yoga.  
Riverfront concerts.  
Ale trail.  
All in one place.

Wilmington.c.  
+ Island Beaches

Explore More

Oceanfront yoga.  
Riverfront concerts.  
Ale trail.  
All in one place.



Wilmington.c.  
+ Island Beaches

Explore More

Out-of-Home Billboards



**High-Flying Views  
& Deep-Sea Dishes**



Wilmington and  
Island Beaches




**Island Time  
& Family Time**

Wilmington and  
Island Beaches




Paid Social



 **Visit Wilmington, NC and Beaches** ... ×  
Sponsored · 

Finally, a getaway the whole family can agree on. Enjoy historic adventures, beach bliss, thrills and gills—all in one place.




wilmingtonandbeaches.com  
**Discover your next  
getaway** [Learn more](#)




 Like  Comment  Share

 **Visit Wilmington, NC and Beaches** ... ×  
Sponsored · 

Enjoy historic adventures, a vibrant nightlife and the joy of island life—all in one place.



wilmingtonandbeaches.com  
**Discover your next  
getaway** [Learn more](#)

 Like  Comment  Share

## Creative Production

We completed a successful video and photography production shoot in September 2022. The assets we captured are heavily featured in the new campaign work combined with the strong imagery from the existing asset library. At this time, there are no plans to conduct another production shoot in FY23-24, but as new images and video are collected as part of regular content creation throughout the year, they will be considered for rotation in future advertising placements.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology

### Background

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools powered by large language models like ChatGPT, Microsoft Bing AI and Google BardAI, among others, rely on machine learning algorithms to process and analyze large amounts of text-based data. As the [University of Central Arkansas](#) explains, these tools use datasets “to learn about language, grammar, and the structure and meaning of words and sentences,” which enables them to understand the context of inquiries people submit and generate copy ranging from poems to travel itineraries that mimic human writing.

Travel and destination powerhouses like Booking.com, Expedia, Kayak and Tripadvisor are among the industry leaders already experimenting with generative AI. Booking.com, according to [PhocusWire](#), is among the latest travel agencies to implement an AI Trip Planner powered by Chat GPT into its mobile app. The goal of this new integration, Booking.com explained, is “to help our customers plan and search for travel options in a very natural, human way.” Even more recently, Tripadvisor announced plans to integrate a similar travel itinerary generator to its platform with the goal of driving, “deeper engagement with travelers,” according to [PhocusWire](#).

While adoption of this technology is quickly gaining momentum because of its low barrier to use and accessibility, with generative AI's abundant potential also comes the risk of relying upon or placing too much confidence in a tool that's facing some growing pains.

OpenAI, the AI research laboratory that created ChatGPT, made the newest version of its language model, GPT-4, available to Plus subscribers in mid-March 2023, according to [Forbes](#). From a content generation perspective, one of the most significant challenges GPT-4 presents is that it can't access information that occurred after September 2021, according to [Digital Trends](#).

### Evaluating Limitations and Risks

With this in mind, there are limitations and risks to consider when using generative AI for work that falls within the creative sector.

- **Legal ramifications:** As the 4As describes in a [blog post](#), these algorithms are “capable of producing original advertisements or mimicking existing ones,” which could raise questions about intellectual property infringement. There have already been [cases filed in 2022 and 2023](#) with artists and other visual media companies alleging developers have trained their AI based on their style or work without permission.
- **Ethical considerations:** When using generative AI for content creation, it's important to review the output to ensure it doesn't perpetuate biases, according to the [4As](#). As

[McKinsey](#) points out, any model trained on data that's based on human decisions has the potential to introduce bias.

- **Outdated information and “hallucinations”:** Because many of these generative AI platforms don't know anything that occurred after September 2021, as [The New York Times](#) points out, accessing timely travel-related information to account for flight delays, weather events or even consider seasonality is out of the question. These tools also routinely suggest visiting businesses or attractions that are permanently closed, as demonstrated in articles by the [Washington Post](#) and [CNBC](#). Many of the travel writers who have experimented with creating time-sensitive itineraries have found that AI is logistically unable to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information about tours and travel times between locations due to the data lag, making these platforms less helpful from a logistical perspective. On top of that, these platforms frequently generate factually inaccurate information, referred to as "hallucinations," because they are unable to distinguish between fact and fiction.
- **Results vary:** As this [CNBC article](#) points out, while asking chatbots questions like “Where should I eat?” and “What are the best restaurants?” should seemingly garner similar answers, that's not the case. Instead, the reporter received two very different lists, with one highlighting the most popular places to eat in the given city and the other including only restaurants with industry awards.
- **Consumer skepticism:** Despite increased consumer awareness of this technology compared to earlier this year, a May 2023 [Gartner](#) report notes that concerns these emerging platforms will produce misinformation remain top-of-mind. The report notes that the top five most common concerns among consumers included AI's potential to: spread false or misleading information, replace human jobs, introduce security risks or identity theft/phishing attempts, and produce content influenced by AI bias. In fact, nearly three-quarters of those surveyed by Gartner said it's either “very important” or “of utmost importance” that brands label content generated with the help of AI. Current consumer perceptions indicate that brands using AI to produce external-facing work may run the risk of damaging their reputation or established trust if they fail to disclose AI-assisted content.

### Future Considerations

Although there are certainly reasons to be wary of solely relying on these platforms for content generation, there are opportunities to leverage this technology in meaningful ways for trip planning and content creation with some human oversight. We will evaluate these considerations and opportunities for potential implementation:

- **Continued monitoring of this technology for updates:** As new models launch based on more up-to-date datasets, this technology could potentially streamline processes for the CVB. Monitoring updates and how larger entities in the destination marketing space are leveraging it will ensure the CVB is aware of potential use cases.
- **Begin experimenting internally at the CVB:** Testing the platforms' capabilities is a great way to get familiar with its potential and limitations while also providing foundational knowledge for if/when it is appropriate to use for content generation.
- **Identify ways the CVB would be comfortable using generative AI:** Begin discussing the areas in which the CVB would like to test streamlining processes and evaluate if generative AI would improve those with human oversight to ensure accuracy.

## **MEDIA STRATEGIES AND TACTICS**

FY22-23 represented a significant shift in the way that the CVB promotes the Wilmington and Beaches area. These shifts were directly related to the CVB's goal of increasing overnight visitation, length of stay and first-time visitors to Wilmington and the Beaches. Shifts in these metrics were measured by Arrivalist and Adara, which provided attribution results that helped guide the FY23-24 media recommendations. FY23-24 will focus on optimizing within these same strategic priorities in order to continue to drive more, longer visits with the most efficient media mix.

The following provides an overview of key paid media strategies and tactics:

- **Timing**
  - Fall and spring remain a priority and we will utilize tactics such as paid social to extend a targeted presence in a longer season.
- **Target Audience:** The overall target audience for FY 23-24 is defined as adults 25-54, \$100k+ HHI with tweaks specific to the spring and fall travel seasons.
  - Fall
    - Exclude families with kids under 16 given school schedules
    - Interested in coastal vacations
  - Spring/Summer
    - Focus on families
    - Interested in coastal vacations
  - New in FY 23-24, we are exploring efforts to reach an adult audience 55+, especially in the Fall travel season
- **Target Geographies:** These may shift slightly in Spring as more Arrivalist and Adara results become available:
  - Eastern NC (ENC): Raleigh-Durham, Greenville-New Bern-Washington, EXCLUDE New Hanover County
  - Western NC: Charlotte, Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem, Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville
  - SC (Charleston, Florence w/o Myrtle Beach), VA (Roanoke-Lynchburg, Richmond-Petersburg, Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, Tri-Cities), Washington D.C., GA (Atlanta), OH (Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland), PA (Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York), Baltimore MD, Nashville TN
- **Channels:** The FY 23-24 plans focused on the following channels, in priority order:
  - Paid Search – Paid search remains one of the most efficient inquiry drivers on the plan. Because it is an intent-based medium, we can actively reach interested consumers with highly relevant messaging which is based on their specific search terms. Paid search will serve as the foundation of the plan and will be used to build continuity across the fiscal year.
    - Text ads - Competitive keyword bidding, driving to relevant landing page(s)
    - Performance Max Display Ads (placed across the Google Display Network) may be used on a limited basis to increase the overall reach and cost efficiency of the buy

- Paid Social – Paid social provides a strong complement to search. It has always been a very cost-efficient traffic/lead driver for the destination. It also allows for more consumer engagement.
  - Facebook / Instagram - Prospecting - Video Views and Traffic Ads to obtain maximum reach
  - Facebook / Instagram - Lead Ads - Retargeting Website Visitors and New Prospects; Ad Unit Types - Static, Carousel, Video
  - Paid social’s reach will be supplemented with an amplification effort to stay top of mind in front of an audience already engaged with the CVB YouTube - Prospecting - non-skippable :15 Video Views
  - TikTok advertising was strongly considered, but not recommended because of volume and cost of content required for a successful campaign.
- Programmatic Display/Video – Programmatic allows for highly targeted reach at scale by combining the cost efficiency of bid-based placements with data-based targeting, enabling us to achieve a lot of impressions for not a lot of money.
  - Contextually relevant sites/content
  - Audience-based targeting intended to reach people interested in travel no matter what site/content they are consuming at the time
  - Mix of traditional cross-screen display and video
  - FY 23-24 will introduce a new partner that delivers specialized information on niche audiences which can be deployed across other channels to maximize targeting efforts
- Targeted eBlasts – Allow us to deliver custom content (via email) to people who have traditionally been interested in travel and are open to receiving communications from coastal destinations. Historically, eBlasts have been very cost-efficient inquiry drivers given the targeted nature of the email lists we rent on behalf of the destination. We will continue to leverage audience segments based on research available to the CVB indicating interests of visitors.
- Custom content – Custom content allows us to create and distribute articles that highlight all Wilmington and Beaches has to offer. These articles will live on the website as well as travel partner sites and be promoted in social media and on websites within the Hearst network like Country Living, Good Housekeeping and Men’s Health.
  - New in FY 23-24 is a digital custom content program with Garden & Gun to introduce readers to Wilmington & Beaches through an editorial-style article promoted on their website
- Streaming Video – targeted :15/:30 ads online and on ConnectedTVs on premium, ad-supported networks like Hulu, Peacock, ESPN, Paramount+ and HBO Max
- Publisher-Direct (Digital, Print)
  - Visit NC – Fall print in Blue Ridge Country, Cleveland Magazine, Columbus Monthly Magazine, Orlando Magazine, Pittsburgh Magazine, South Carolina Living and Tennessee Magazine. Fall and Spring print in Atlanta Magazine, Philadelphia Magazine, The Washington Post Magazine. Digital presence in the Fall and Spring on gardenandgun.com, audience-targeted native placements and social media.
  - Other Print (outside of Visit NC co-op buy) include: Our State, Southern

Living, Garden & Gun, Outside Magazine, Charlotte Magazine, Better Homes & Gardens, Country Living and Coastal Living

- New in FY 23-24 is a print buy to Atlanta-based subscribers receiving the luxury publications Elle Decor, Food & Wine, Real Simple, Town & Country and Travel & Leisure. This recommendation is built on research showing that Atlanta-based visitors are spending more money when visiting Wilmington & Beaches than travelers from other areas.
- TripAdvisor - Continue with the Destination Sponsorship page and content for Wilmington and each of the individual beaches, along with layering in targeted display ads. We will continue utilizing the custom content hub that lives on TripAdvisor.com, which allows us to deliver in-depth reasons to visit Wilmington and the Beaches where consumers are already planning their travel.
- Other: VRBO (display) to target the vacation rental market
- Streaming audio – targeted 15/:30 audio commercials on the two largest streaming services Pandora and Spotify.
- Out-of-Home – we will expand on FY 22-23’s efforts to deliver a targeted out-of-home and transit campaign to Western NC.

## **Special Marketing Initiative**

### **Out-of-State Paid Media Campaign**

In FY22-23, the CVB employed a special marketing initiative using funds to target out of state markets through a media plan using a testing scenario. We selected six key markets with lower awareness (this includes 5 OOS markets and 1 Western NC market) to receive a 'heavy-up' approach of media support above the unified base media plan. These 'heavy-up' or 'variable' markets were paired with 'control' markets of a similar profile in Arrivalist data, population size, and location/distance from Wilmington. The control markets will only receive the unified base media plan support. We are measuring the effectiveness of these efforts in several ways: media metrics such as click through rates to banners, increased website traffic from these markets, visitor guide downloads, etc. but we will also be evaluating awareness through our Destination Analysis Study. This research began mid-year 2023 after several months of the campaign running. Findings of that research will determine how the initiative will be optimized for best results in FY23-24 and could include tweaks to markets, timing, tactics and/or messaging.

### **Out-of-State Objectives:**

- Increase awareness and familiarity of Wilmington and Beaches in the variable markets
- Generate engagement as measured by increased click thru rates and website traffic - specifically attributed to those who have seen our ads - and ultimately contribute to increased visitation

### **Media Channels:**

- ConnectiveTV or CTV (videos on premium streaming channels such HBO Max, Discovery+, Paramount+, Peacock)
- Retargeting digital banners served to those who have seen our videos to further entice them to explore the website or sign up for visitor guides

**Reach:**

- With this plan, we expect to reach a total of 38 million targeted impressions an average of 3 or 4 times per week

**Markets:**

- Variable: (base media + heavy-up media): Charlotte, NC
- Control (base media only): Greensboro/High Point/Winston-Salem, NC
- Variable: Richmond/Petersburg, VA
- Control: Roanoke/Lynchburg, VA
- Variable: Columbus, OH
- Control: Cincinnati, OH
- Variable: Philadelphia, PA
- Control: Pittsburgh, PA
- Variable: Washington DC
- Control: Baltimore, MD
- Variable: Atlanta, GA
- Control: Cleveland, OH

**Rationale and Measurement:** By delivering ConnectedTV impressions in the six chosen markets, we can efficiently reach a targeted audience with moderate-to-high frequency in order to drive awareness through a high-impact, high-profile approach. Retargeting those who have been served ConnectedTV ads keeps Wilmington & Beaches top of mind by driving frequency across platforms. Research-backed increase in awareness will be the defining KPI, but this approach also allows us to measure latent activity to the website for post-commercial web visits, which will help inform future campaigns. If the test proves successful, and we are effective in increasing awareness and interest in the variable markets, we can assume that further investment in the future will continue this same positive result.

**Email Marketing**

The marketing team will continue to optimize content and email templates to increase engagement and click-through rates (CTR) and promote visitation to the destination, as well as evaluate new functionality within the CVB's current growth marketing automation platform as it becomes available while also evaluating various other platforms for enhanced reporting, functionality and more for consideration in FY24-25.

**Website**

This fiscal year, the marketing team is focusing its efforts on refreshing the design and content of the unified website and three beach microsites. This includes drafting new, more concise content for tertiary pages, adding new design widgets and both repurposing past videos and adding new images to feature more visual content. These efforts will continue to support the marketing team's mobile optimization of the websites, as mobile remains the top device used to access CVB websites. In addition to the content and visual updates to the site, there are two new modules on all four websites: AudioEye and Dynamic Content.

- AudioEye supports the marketing team's goal to ensure all websites are in compliance with the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and American Disability Act



(ADA) guidelines. This new feature is a managed service that provides an accessibility toolbar for web visitors with disabilities to use while navigating the websites.

- The Dynamic Content module provides the marketing team with the ability to deliver targeted content to visitors based on their location. We can create audiences based on geographical location and customize top pages with content geared toward interests, length of stays, etc. for those IS and OOS audiences. Additionally, the marketing team is able to include Mobile Trip Guide sections on all pages for those visitors in-market.

## **Publications and Mobile Trip Guide**

The marketing team will produce two publications (Official Guide Map and Visitors Guide) while continuing to monitor usage of the Mobile Trip Guide and evaluating potential new developments of the mobile guide based on advancing technology. The 2024 Visitors Guide (print and digital versions) will be refreshed and redesigned from previous editions to reflect current travel trends. With a more image-first design, the guide will feature a new content section specific to Carolina, Kure and Wrightsville Beach, as well as new sections featuring kid-free vacation ideas, new offerings and more. Additionally, the lodging section will be redesigned from the current grid format to a more simplified layout providing contact information in a more easily digestible format. The Official Guide Map will be refreshed in 2024 to include more wayfinding and visitor information like public restrooms, public parking lots, QR code for the Mobile Trip Guide and compass points.

## **Tourism Master Plan**

In FY23-24, the CVB will begin an RFP process to select a firm to guide the development of a ten-year Tourism Master Plan for New Hanover County consisting of phases including: research, analysis of infrastructure, assets and town master plans, industry and community engagement, visioning workshops with a multitude of stakeholders and plan development and delivery. The planning process and the agreed to master plan including roles is estimated to be completed in FY24-25.

## **Riverwalk Assessment Plan**

The CVB worked in partnership with the City of Wilmington to conduct an assessment study to enhance the Riverwalk visitor and resident experience to elevate it to a top attraction. As a core attraction complementing the boardwalks and oceanfront experiences and used as an anchor to position visitor activities from the river to the sea, the assessment identified ten suggestions to strengthen the appeal and experience of the Riverwalk including: better parking and gateway signage, pedestrian wayfinding to tours, restaurants, shops, and entertainment, identification of public restrooms, enhancement to visitor information, enhancing programming/activities, and addition of an experiential main attraction to increase and disperse visitation throughout the county. In FY23-24, the plan will be segmented into short and long-term tactics to identify and establish funding sources, roles and responsibilities and to begin implementation where applicable.

## **Wilmington International Airport Partnership**

The CVB completed several inbound marketing campaigns with Avelo Airlines and Sun Country to promote visitation to the area. The airport visitor information desk features the new mobile trip guide through promoting its QR code to better serve visitors while in-market. In FY23-24, the CVB will continue to support new air service as awarded with inbound marketing and will be developing a digital destination ad placed in the airport with space compliments of the Wilmington International Airport.

# WILMINGTON CONVENTION DISTRICT MEETINGS/CONVENTION STRATEGY AND SALES & MARKETING PLAN SUMMARY

## Meetings/Convention District Role and Direction

### Strategic Goal

To formulate and execute a partner-based segmented meetings/convention marketing, sales and services strategy with agreed-to measurable programming to increase group room night production with higher quality business that benefits the convention center and area hotels and optimizes economic value for the community.

### Vision 2030

Wilmington Convention District with its spectacular Cape Fear riverfront promenade and adjacent downtown and park entertainment areas is the preeminent Carolina Coastal destination for exciting, entertaining and productive meetings and events.

FY2023/2024



## Wilmington Convention District Partners

*(Nine entities: City of Wilmington, Wilmington Convention Center, Wilmington and Beaches CVB, Embassy Suites, Hotel Ballast, Coastline Inn, Aloft Hotel, Hampton Inn Downtown and Courtyard by Marriott Downtown)*

## Meetings/Convention District Value Proposition

## Meetings/Convention District Strategy Opportunity Challenges

- 1. Uncoordinated partnership focus:** acknowledging group meetings value contribution and game plan to lead and pursue new opportunities
- 2. Insufficient and meaningful participatory communications:** ongoing informative dialogue to secure increased meetings business
- 3. No agreed-to districtwide sales and promotional strategy:** New directions with less reliance on repeat and state associations with a focus on corporate & small regional/national groups
- 4. Long-term dedicated resources:** Secured additional funding for incentivizing group markets on a trial basis. Need for recurring funding source to assure continued growth.
- 5. Rates/availability of room blocks:** Based on strong leisure visitation and downtown events, group rates and blocks are limited

### Promise

*Providing a unique Carolina Coastal riverfront meeting experience adjacent to vibrant downtown park and entertainment districts and three town beaches nearby.*



# STRATEGY PILLARS WITH 16 PRIORITY INITIATIVES

1 Renewed Convention Partnership	2 Influential Convention Marketing	3 Aligned Convention Sales & Services	4 Supportive Convention Product Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common research and planning needs determined</li> <li>• Relevant ongoing communications enacted</li> <li>• Annual sales and marketing strategy formulated ✓</li> <li>• Increased funding support to become a recurring budget item.</li> <li>• Address priority initiatives with hotel GMs and DOS</li> </ul> <p>✓ completed and/or in progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consensus on best group meetings attained ✓</li> <li>• Integrated advertising, promotion and public relations/publicity program developed ✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select tradeshow, sales mission and FAM attendance and follow-up approach evaluated and selected ✓</li> <li>• Increase Third party group meeting company engagement and business development pursued</li> <li>• Achievable CVB production goal with sales/services process activity and performance metrics finalized ✓</li> <li>• Specific professional development assistance committed</li> <li>• CRM capability fully customized and used Relevant memberships, sponsorships and group services program activated ✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post COVID-19 convention center upgrades/improvements completed</li> <li>• Convention Center District wayfinding/signage plan to be enacted in partnership with Riverwalk project</li> <li>• Newly purchased City-owned public space usage understood</li> <li>• Integration of convention and park entertainment districts with downtown area attained</li> </ul>

## STRATEGY SUCCESS METRICS

- Total contracted room night bookings and by five group segments
- Total number of leads and by group segment and respective conversion
- Number of relationship touchpoints (email/phone calls, on-site sales calls and site visits) with new clients by group segment
- Promotion-based planner engagement indicators (reach, value and site traffic analytics)

## **FY23-24 GROUP SALES OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES**

### **A Look Back**

- The number of FY22-23 definite bookings (83) increased by 55% from the previous fiscal year bookings. Definite room nights booked (39,604) increased by 81%, while delegates (48,544) increased by 52%.
- The number of FY22-23 definite bookings using the Wilmington Convention Center (29) increased by 71% from previous fiscal year bookings. Definite room nights booked using the WCC (19,730) increased by 17%.
- The number of FY22-23 leads (180) increased by 42%. The number of room nights associated with the leads (83,817) increased by 74% and delegates increased by 57%.
- Association groups continue to be the top market segment, generating 99 bookings. Sports groups generated 13 bookings, maintaining the second highest percentage of definite bookings.
- There were 82 groups documented for lost business, a 41% increase. These groups represented 44,562 lost room nights, an 112% increase from the last fiscal year. Reported reasons for lost business remain consistent: higher rates compared to competitors, lack of available downtown hotel rooms, dates not available and not enough committable rooms offered for groups by hotels.
- Sales staff hosted three sales missions in Raleigh, Charlotte, and Greensboro with 17 attendees resulting in 5 leads.
- The sales staff hosted a FAM tour in March with 8 attendees resulting in 3 leads.
- Staff sent 3,584 email solicitations and made 303 sales calls and follow up calls, staff also attended more than 171 industry events for networking purposes.

The sales department set a benchmark in booked room nights for fiscal year 2022-2023. Based on the CVB's strategic plan, we saw big wins with large corporate clients booking the convention center. However, there are challenges with hotel room commitment ceilings/room block sizes. Staff was able to coordinate rooms in multiple hotels and provide transportation to deliver them to the convention center. One of the new corporate leads required 18 hotels to house 600 people and 8 shuttles to transport them. These efforts worked well enough to help set the benchmark but will not help to establish long-term repeat business. The lack of available rooms, lack of meeting space availability, and high room rates were among the top reasons for lost business. Higher rates and availability of rooms are being driven by several factors including a strong leisure market and the success of the Live Oak Pavilion.

### **Objective 1: Target new corporate clients with ability to book both large and small meetings**

#### **Strategies & Tactics**

- Search for and solicit corporate groups that have larger incentive and tradeshow regional meetings.
  - Utilize Knowland to search for groups that are currently using similar-sized centers in our region.
  - Coordinate with Wilmington Convention Center to attract larger events during need times.
  - Implement a branded welcome flag and sidewalk signage campaign to give added value to larger groups.

- Search for and solicit corporate groups that have smaller board of directors or training meetings.
  - Reach out to the contacts for larger pieces of lost business to inquire about smaller meetings that may be hosted at one property.
  - Increase 3<sup>rd</sup> party and Independent Planner contacts who will typically work with several potential clients.

**Objective 2: Broaden the scope of potential groups to include regional and national conventions and tradeshow. Focus on new groups that are comfortable with higher rates and using multiple properties**

**Strategies & Tactics**

- Attend regional and national trade shows such as Connect DC and Connect Chicago seeking smaller regional association events. Attend the Independent Planner Education Conference seeking smaller regional corporate events. Attend Christian Meetings and Conventions Association seeking smaller regional religious events.

**Objective 3: Utilize the CRM to its full capabilities**

**Strategies & Tactics**

- Incorporate SendSites into all leads in SimpleView to deliver a more formal bid to clients.
- Educate industry partners in providing the most relevant information to fit the formatting of SendSites.
- Assist clients to understand SendSites and its benefits.

**Objective 4: Increase engagement with 3<sup>rd</sup> party and independent planners**

**Strategies & Tactics**

- Utilize Knowland to search specifically for 3<sup>rd</sup> party and independent planners.
- Attend IPEC (Independent Planner Education Conference) to network with new potential contacts.

**Objective 5: Address and update current sales and marketing summary and priority initiatives based on input from industry partners**

**Strategies & Tactics**

- Strategize with the Wilmington Convention Center staff to determine the markets that best fit our destination and center needs
- Coordinate a planning session with the Convention District General Managers and Directors of Sales to update current strategies and initiatives.

**Visitor Services**

**Objective 1: Plan and host a FAM tour for the staff of the NC Welcome Centers**

**Strategies & Tactics**

- Coordinate with Visit NC to bring in at least one representative from each welcome center.

- Host an overall training session to discuss the destination and major attractions.
- Coordinate tours in county attractions to give a better understanding of what is available to visitors.
- Host meals at popular, locally owned restaurants to share the diversity of flavors in the destination.

## **Objective 2: Lay groundwork for building a “Show Your Badge” program**

### **Strategies & Tactics**

- Educate business owners/managers on the benefits of participating in a program offering incentives and discounts to convention attendees at area businesses and restaurants. Highlight numbers of convention attendees that would be exposed to the program and that many of those are held in the off-season.
- Utilize an intern to assist in gathering paper coupons and building participation in fiscal year FY23-24 in preparation for an online version starting in FY24-25.

## 2023-2024 Tradeshow List

TRADESHOW	DATES	LOCATION	SM
Connect Association	August	Minneapolis ,MN	MJ
Connect Sports	August	Minneapolis, MN	JS
Destination South East	August	Cape Coral, FL	MJ
S.P.O.R.T.S.	September	South Bend, IN	JS
TEAMS	October	Boca Raton, FL	JS
Connect DC	November	Washington, DC	MJ
Association Executives of NC	December	Raleigh, NC	MJ
Connect Chicago	TBA (January)	Chicago, IL	MJ
Independent Planner Education Conference	January	Greenville, SC	VP
Sports ETA	April	Portland, OR	JS
Christian Meetings and Conventions Assn	TBA (May)	TBA	JS

VP – John W. Sneed II

JS – Joel Smith

MJ – Molly Johnson

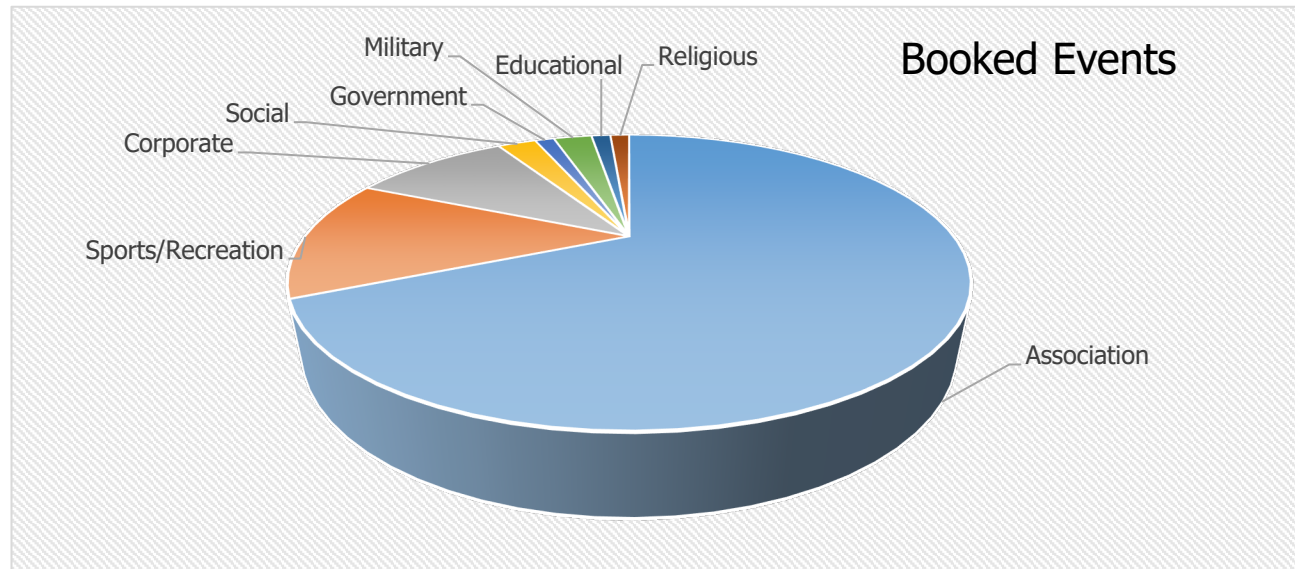


**Booked Events**

2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022
Booked	Booked		Rooms	Rooms		Delegates	Delegates
83	55		39,604	21,839		48,544	32,037
51%			81%			52%	

**Market Segment Bookings**

Association	56
Sports/Recreation	11
Corporate	8
Social	2
Government	1
Military	2
Educational	1
Religious	1
Reunions	1



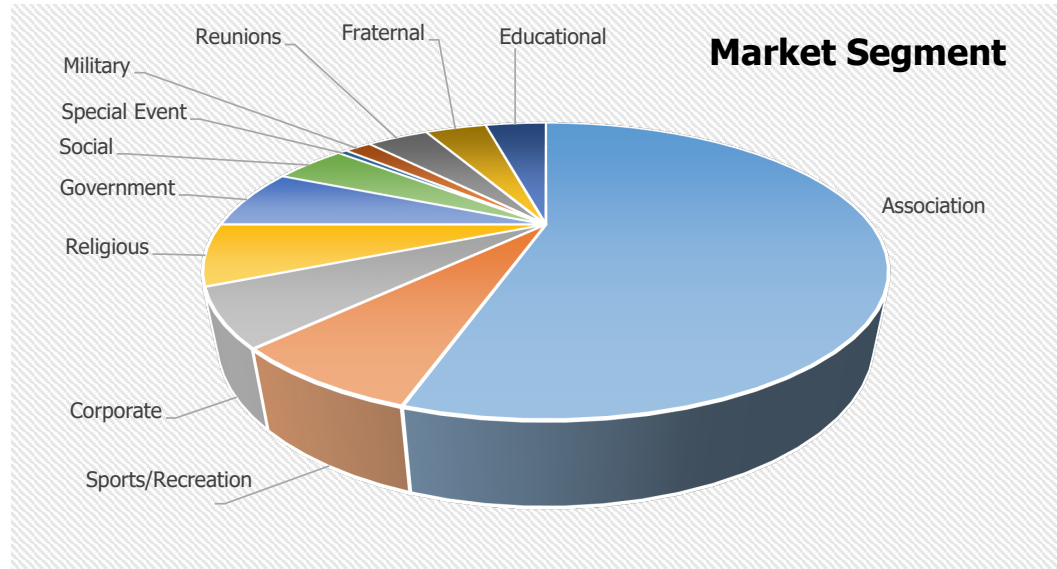
**WCC Booked Events**

2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022
Booked	Booked		Rooms	Rooms		Delegates	Delegates
29	17		19,730	16,815		30,095	24,397
71%			17%			23%	

**Leads**

2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022
Leads	Leads		Rooms	Rooms		Delegates	Delegates
180	127		83,817	48,218		96,759	61,576
42%			74%			57%	

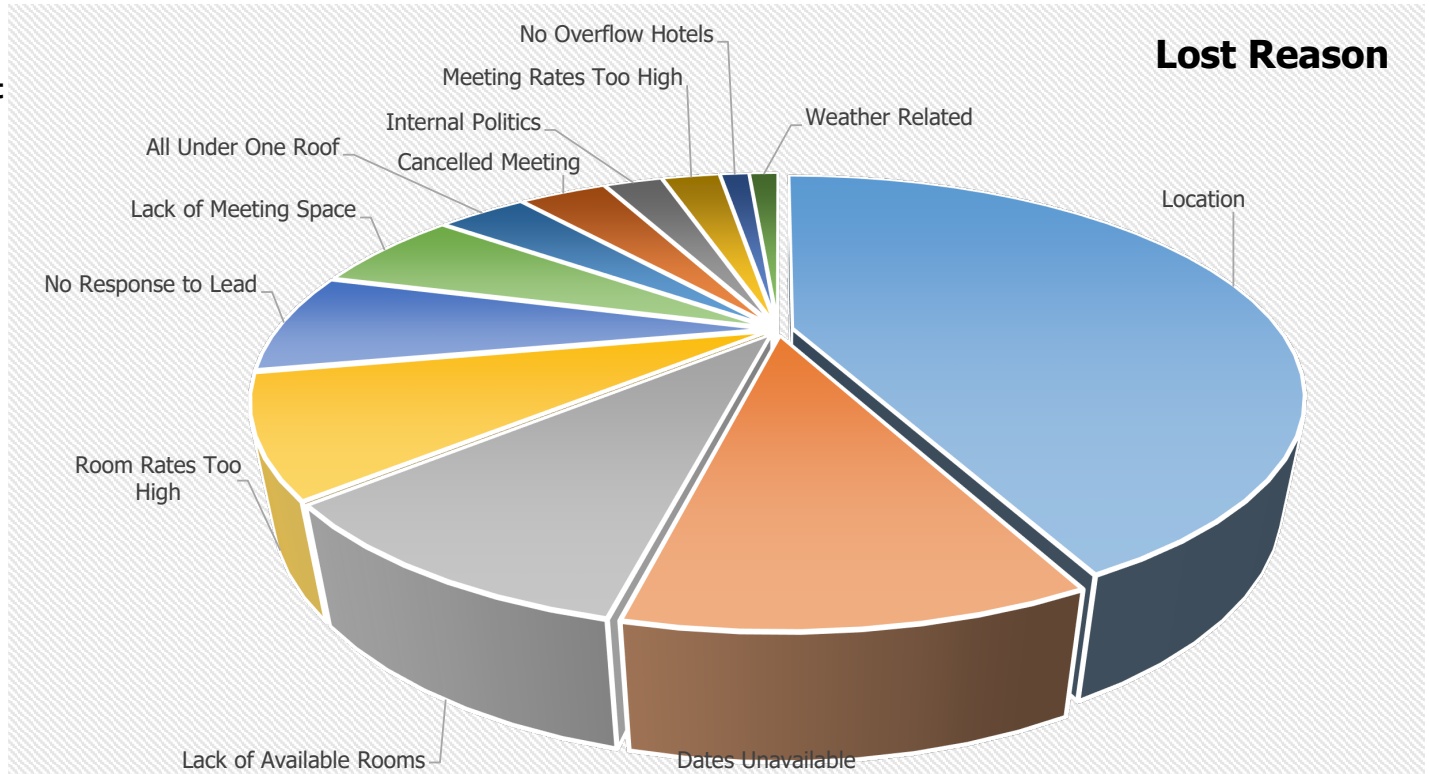
<b>Market Segment</b>	
Association	99
Sports/Recreation	13
Corporate	11
Religious	12
Government	12
Social	8
Special Event	1
Military	3
Reunions	7
Fraternal	7
Educational	7



**Lost Business**

2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022
Lost	Lost		Rooms	Rooms		Delegates	Delegates
82	58		44,562	21,000		27,646	16,517
41%			112%			67%	

Lost Reason	Lost Count
Location	35
Dates Unavailable	9
Lack of Available Rooms	8
Room Rates Too High	7
No Response to Lead	6
Lack of Meeting Space	5
All Under One Roof	3
Cancelled Meeting	3
Internal Politics	2
Meeting Rates Too High	2
No Overflow Hotels	1
Weather Related	1



# SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGY AND SALES & MARKETING PLAN SUMMARY NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

## Sports Tourism Role and Direction

### Strategic Mission

To formulate and execute a sports tourism marketing, sales and services strategy with agreed-to measurable goals to increase room nights with a focus on existing events and new business that improves off-season bookings.

### Vision 2030

New Hanover County with its spectacular Cape Fear riverwalk, downtown hotels and restaurants and the laid-back atmosphere of Wrightsville, Kure, and Carolina Beaches is the preeminent Carolina Coastal destination for sports teams, competitors, spectators, family and friends.

FY 2023/2024



## New Hanover County Sports Event Partners

Seven entities: New Hanover County, City of Wilmington, Wilmington and Beaches CVB, University of North Carolina Wilmington, Wrightsville, Kure, and Carolina Beaches.

## Sports Tourism Value Proposition

### Promise

Providing excellent competition facilities and services and the best of a Carolina Coastal Experience to all sports participants and observers.

## Sports Tourism Strategy Opportunity Challenges

1. Building additional support for locally produced events that bring in sports to the county and produce room nights
2. Leveraging locally produced events to assist in increasing overnight stays and attendance.
3. Identifying and qualifying new event prospects in the off-season
4. Creating a countywide sports event calendar and coordinating available resources to properly serve all visitors
5. Managing expectations given a part-time commitment

# Strategy Pillars/Goals with 19 Priority Initiatives

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Create Strong Local Event Partnerships</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Invest in Influential Sports Event Marketing</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Activate Aligned Sports Event Sales &amp; Services</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Support Sports Event Development</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing meetings and discussions with local produced and existing event proponents on topics of mutual interest</li> <li>• Year-round countywide sports event calendar compilation and distribution</li> <li>• New partnership alignment with existing sports events</li> <li>• Annual sports tourism sales and marketing strategy formulation</li> <li>• Local parks &amp; recreation department communications for new event potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New value proposition messaging activation</li> <li>• Integrated advertising, promotion in public relations/publicity program development</li> <li>• Local communications strategy on value/benefits of sports tourism. Will be part of 22-23 PR plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select trade show, sales mission and FAM attendance and follow-up approach execution</li> <li>• Third-party sports event business development evaluation</li> <li>• CVB production goal with sales/services process activity and agreed-to performance metrics finalization</li> <li>• Relevant ongoing memberships, sponsorships, and group services activation</li> <li>• New event bidding coordination and formal production/ presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New event development based on existing facilities assessment</li> <li>• Wilmington Convention Center sports-related/ capital improvements &amp; follow-up</li> <li>• Capitalize on Cape Fear Regional Soccer Complex expansion for new event opportunities</li> <li>• CVB sports event incentive program setup and activation</li> <li>• Sports tourism &amp; leisure promotion for extended stays</li> <li>• CVB sports tourism commitment evaluation</li> </ul>

## Strategy Success Metrics/Measures

- Existing sports event contractual agreements
- Locally produced sports event expansion
- New sports tourism event growth

- Beach tourism/sports event attendee growth
- Sports event tourism funding program results

## **FY23-24 SPORTS MARKETING STRATEGIES**

Based on strategies identified in the 2021 Sports Tourism Assessment Study, the CVB began implementing a “crawl, walk, run” approach to our sports marketing efforts to adequately build the solicitation efforts.

Efforts in FY22-23 to provide financial assistance to grow race attendance worked well. We saw gains in registration and attendance for both Novant Wilmington Marathon and Ironman North Carolina 70.3. Establishing a Sports Incentive Program with metrics designed to reward increased attendance, not only for races but any qualifying sporting event, is the next step.

The Sports Tourism Assessment recommendations included the creation of AutoCAD floorplans for the Wilmington Convention Center exhibit hall and grand ballroom. This will provide the information needed to maximize the space and better understand the capacity of sporting events that can be attracted to the center.

Competitor CVBs with larger staffs have the ability to solicit more event organizers which puts us at a disadvantage. By implementing a structured internship program, additional efforts directed towards the sales process can be created resulting in the potential for booking more events each year. A practicum student will be used in the fall and an intern in the spring. The end result will be multiple actionable items for the sales staff to pursue.

### **Objective 1: Continue attendance building successes with existing races and sporting events**

#### **Strategies & Tactics (for Walk Phase)**

- Fully outline and implement our Sports Incentive Program to aid in increasing the attendance of existing events.
  - To promote registration via a targeted social media ad campaign to OOS markets.
  - Guidelines for eligibility will be established and include tracking metrics

### **Objective 2: Plan and implement internship program**

#### **Strategies & Tactics**

- Outline a program to bring in a fall practicum student and spring internship.
  - Fall practicum project will include researching sports facilities, updating where needed, and identifying events that would match well with those facilities.
  - Spring Intern will work on multiple projects, including assisting in planning and hosting a Sports FAM, planning and hosting a sports industry partner meeting and other projects assisting other CVB departments.

### **Objective 3: New event development based on existing facilities (for Walk Phase)**

#### **Strategies & Tactics**

- Use data collected to identify sporting events that have the best potential to produce overnight rooms, the best facilities to host them and match those with historic needs time periods.

- Based on the 2021 Sports Tourism Assessment, filter out potential sports organizers to assure we are soliciting events with the highest room night potential.
- Using data from ROT reports and recent fiscal year booking information, identify need months for the area, and events that match with these time periods.
- Use AutoCAD floorplans for specific sports outlined by the Sports Tourism Assessment and CVB in-house research, identify the area capabilities and solicit those events with the most potential to maximize space.
- Utilize the new sports video to introduce sports organizers to our facilities and destination.

#### **Objective 4: Plan and host a Sports FAM tour**

##### **Strategies & Tactics**

- Coordinate with the Wilmington Convention Center to bring in a total of 10 qualified organizers.
  - Identify potential attendees through contacts made at sports tradeshows such as Connect Sports.
  - Search specifically for events outlined in the Sports Tourism Assessment as likely fits for the convention center.
- Welcome reception to present the areas sports facilities and amenities.
  - Invite applicable industry partners to attend and meet with the potential clients.
- Set up tours of sports venues and area hotels to showcase the variety of overnight accommodations.

#### **Objective 5: Compile and distribute a year-round countywide sports event calendar**

##### **Strategies & Tactics**

- Research and compile a full list of sports events around the destination.
  - List will include all sporting events booked through the CVB as well as any other major events hosted by the municipalities or non-CVB organizers.
- Distribute the list to industry partners and VIC locations.

#### **Objective 6: Utilize SendSites to enhance the bid process for leads**

##### **Strategies & Tactics**

- Utilize CRM capabilities to provide customized bids and proposals to clients.
  - Educate industry partners in providing the most relevant information to fit the formatting of SendSites.

# **FY23-24 PROACTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN**

## **A Look Back**

Proactive public relations outreach and social media efforts for FY22-23 complemented paid media by developing content geared toward the higher income target and extended seasonality; encouraging week-day stays; and educating and familiarizing potential out-of-state travelers to drive longer stays. On proactive PR efforts, we placed an increased emphasis on Eastern North Carolina through earned media outreach to compensate for less paid spend in those markets. On social efforts, we continued prioritizing video content, specifically Reels, and the CVB's new social media manager and in-house content producer generated additional original content from the destination to address shifts in social media algorithms. The addition of this new position and content generated in real time had a positive impact as social media followers for Wilmington and Beaches combined channels reached 528,497, a 2.8% increase from last fiscal year.

Prioritizing more Reel-style videos and swipe-through social carousels resulted in an overall positive impact on metrics and followers. Impressions, engagements and video views all increased significantly year-over-year, and we also saw an increase in link clicks to the Wilmington and Beaches website from social. The 12 paid influencers we hosted in the destination generated content that resulted in 1.22 million impressions and 906k engagements. Earned media outreach resulted in destination coverage in 25 earned placements in-state outlets like (News & Observer, Raleigh Magazine, WRAL.com, Our State), out-of-state outlets (365 Atlanta Traveler) and national outlets such as (Reader's Digest, MSN.com, Southern Living), garnering more than 16 million impressions and \$1.7 million in PR value.

## **Special Out-of-State Initiative Results**

Wilmington and Beaches hosted six paid influencers and four journalists to support the paid media out of state campaign to increase awareness among target geographies and audiences. Influencers generated 12.3 million impressions and 11.9k engagements. Journalists published a total of 10 earned media placements to date, garnering 518k impressions and \$70k in estimated PR value, with additional coverage slated to publish in the new fiscal year.

## **FY23-24 PR & Social Media Objectives**

- Increase awareness for Wilmington and Beaches
- Target visitors that align with our target audiences and geographies for the highest conversion potential
- Reach higher income potential visitors with targeted content and messaging
- Promote "Beach and Beyond" activities to reach various target audiences during fall
- Implement a new method of developing content intended to reach and build relationships with visitors during different phases of the travel planning cycle
- Motivate visitation

## **Target Markets & Media**

- In-state (IS):
  - Western NC (WNC): Charlotte, Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem, Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville



- Assume people in WNC are less familiar with the destination like people in OOS markets
  - Eastern NC (ENC): Raleigh/Durham/Fayetteville and Greenville/New Bern/Washington
    - Heavier focus on ENC for earned media
- Out-of-state (OOS):
  - Align with paid media based on Arrivalist data, website traffic, etc.; Currently defined as:
    - GA: Atlanta
    - MD: Baltimore
    - OH: Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland
    - PA: Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York
    - SC: Charleston, Florence-Myrtle Beach
    - TN: Nashville (measure growth potential)
    - VA: Roanoke-Lynchburg, Richmond-Petersburg, Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, Tri-Cities
    - Washington, D.C.
- Secondary:
  - Nonstop flight destinations
  - Select national outlets/writers

### **Target Audiences**

- Primary target audience:
  - Adults, 25-54 years old, with expansion to 55+, especially in fall season
- Content will be geared toward the following audiences, depending on when these groups are most likely to travel:
  - Families with kids of all ages
  - Multi-generational families
  - Couples
  - Groups of friends
  - Empty nesters and retirees
  - Solo travelers

### **Strategies + Tactics**

#### **New**

- Content Development:
  - Implement a new tiered way of looking at content development – i.e., content hub
    - Tier 1 Pull Content: “How To” and “What You Can Expect to See” content targeting visitors in the discovery phase
    - Tier 2 Push Content: Focuses on relationship building with our most loyal audiences
    - Tier 3 Hero Content: Breakthrough content highlights large scale moments, people and stories that create a sense of place
  - Develop content to address consumer concerns around inflation and the economy
  - Flesh out content around diversity, inclusion and accessibility
- Public Relations:

- Work with authorized voices to author select blogs on a quarterly basis
- Increased emphasis on online outlets with larger readership numbers
- Implement a new method of tracking/reporting on earned media coverage to align with VisitNC tracking/reporting methods
- Social Media:
  - Continue to monitor headlines/changes to Twitter and TikTok
  - Assess new social options (i.e., Threads), as well as updates to and CVB presence on existing platforms (i.e., X/Twitter)
  - Utilize YouTube to increase brand visibility through launch of “How To” and “What You Can Expect to See” videos
  - Social channel verification + subscription fees for Twitter and Meta, if needed
  - Leverage new videos supporting content hub across all social platforms

## Ongoing

- Content Marketing:
  - Develop content promoting the following themes:
    - Craft beer and cocktails
    - Outdoors/nature
    - Wellness
    - Culinary/foodie
    - Sustainability
    - Arts and culture
    - History
    - Music
  - Develop and promote content geared toward the target higher income potential visitor:
    - Attract new visitors likely to spend more
    - “Upgrade” existing visitors who may spend more during the summer
    - Focus on the value the destination offers (i.e., variety of things to do, just a short drive or flight away, no passport required, etc.)
  - Highlight “What’s New” whenever possible
- Public Relations:
  - Ongoing proactive earned media outreach utilizing targeted pitches, doing as much legwork for journalists as possible – customized pitches, story ideas, etc.
  - Monitor/respond to editorial opportunities and one-off requests
  - Develop new and refreshed blog content aligning with content hub
  - Assist with content production for native/custom advertising buys
  - Develop longer form itineraries and blogs encouraging longer and mid-weekday stays
  - Execute a second phase of OOS press trip initiative, including coordinating fall trips we secured interest in last fiscal year
    - Target writers/publications with higher income readership
- Social Media:
  - Ongoing community management
  - Content development and posting:
    - Facebook and Twitter - FWV

- Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn and TikTok - CVB
- Source and leverage User-Generated Content (UGC) on social and on the website
- Incorporate video content from influencers, brand partners and local content creators
  - Continue to prioritize IG Reels as they are still the highest performing type of content
- Capture original and opportunistic static and video content
- Utilize native features on each social platform as applicable
- Approach destination events with a tiered approach, prioritizing most-marketable
- Ideate and execute thematic and/or seasonal social media content series as outlined in content hub, as well as incorporate relevant, timely social media trends when applicable
- Conduct quarterly health checks of all pages to make needed optimizations and updates
- Facilitate deeper level interactions by opportunistically engaging with content posted by users featuring or mentioning Wilmington and Beaches through keyword, hashtag and location searches
- Showcase destination on TikTok with a focus on growing follower base
- Elevate influencer programming by continuing with a year-round approach and working with higher level influencers for longer stays and increased deliverables
- Paid amplification of organic posts with good engagement

### **Social Media Channel Strategy**

The marketing team's approach for each respective channel:

- Facebook
  - 2-3 feed posts per week
  - Optimize posts by utilizing minimal copy, link previews and compelling creative to increase organic reach
  - Update seasonal cover photos
  - Instagram Stories will automatically push to Facebook
- Instagram
  - 3-4 feed posts per week consisting of a mix of images and Reels
  - 4-5 stories weekly; Within each slide of the story, tag location and users/businesses (if possible) to expand reach
    - Incorporate as many engagement stickers as possible to train the brand's audience to take an active interest in content
    - Reshare stories when applicable
  - Optimize video for Reels, as well as Explore feed and Stories to increase impressions and reach
- Pinterest
  - 1-2 inspiration-focused posts per week, repurposing FB/IG/TW content
  - Focus on amplifying influencer and blog content
  - Pin content with UTM to track traffic from the platform to the website to help identify top performing content
- TikTok
  - 2-5 videos per month

- Create vertical video based on monthly content calls, optimized for posting on TikTok
- Utilize FWV-created video content, along with CVB-created real time content
- Repurpose UGC from TikTok, Instagram Reels, influencers and content creators
- Optimize videos for TikTok, utilizing TikTok platform text overlay and best practices
- Monitor trends/audio on the platform to see which ones make the most sense to leverage
- Feature local partners when possible
- Twitter
  - 1-3 posts per week
  - Update seasonal cover photos
  - Optimize posts using hashtags
  - Focus on newsworthy, relevant content
- YouTube
  - 1-2 videos per month
  - Repurpose vertical video content to be shared as YouTube Shorts
  - House the new content hub, with tiered content
    - Tier 1 Pull Content: “How To” and “What You Can Expect to See” content targeting visitors in the discovery phase would be shared as YouTube Shorts
    - Tier 3 Hero Content: Longer form video content highlighting largescale moments, people and stories that create a sense of place
  - Prioritize YouTube descriptions to include SEO keywords to increase searchability and visibility

### **Influencer Programming**

The marketing team will oversee a year-round (minus summer) influencer campaign for Wilmington and Beaches. Through these campaigns, we will seek to partner with micro and mid-tier influencers to visit the destinations for longer periods of time to maximize deliverables and budget. Influencers will create content featuring the destination to be shared on influencer and brand channels.

- Priorities:
  - Work with higher level influencers with a focus on producing more video content, specifically for Wilmington and Beaches’ TikTok channel and Reels for Instagram
  - Produce additional original content from the destination
- Additional considerations:
  - Advertising budget to support allowlisting influencer posts that are performing exceptionally well on Facebook/Instagram, as budget allows
  - Collab post content across destination Instagram account(s) and influencer channels

Influencers will be selected a minimum of two months prior to when they would be in-market, prioritizing select markets and those within driving distance. We will require influencers to

provide their content a maximum of three weeks after their visit and provide updates on influencer outreach, campaign status and budgets bi-weekly.

## **Measurement + Reporting**

### **Public Relations**

The Barcelona Principles will be implemented to measure and report on the effectiveness of public relations efforts and the value of earned media. Following the Barcelona Principles, we will implement a standard scoring system that accounts for the inclusion of key messages, reach in target markets, tonality of press coverage and other success metrics. Reporting will include:

- Number of placements
- Circulation/reach
- Points score, according to a predetermined scoring scale based on the Barcelona Principles

### **Social Media**

The marketing team will measure and analyze social media success metrics leveraging a suite of social media tools including Sprout Social. Reports will be provided monthly, in addition to a comprehensive annual report. KPIs include:

- Impressions (brand awareness, reaching new audiences)
- Video views (brand awareness)
- Website visits from social media (intent to travel)
  - Execute by pulling general traffic from the Wilmington and Beaches social media channels via Google Analytics
- Engagements (brand loyalty)
- New followers (brand awareness, brand loyalty)

### **Influencer Programming**

The marketing team will measure influencer campaign success with metrics highlighting social traffic to posts and blog traffic as relevant. Influencers will provide screenshots of all metrics and the marketing team will provide post-campaign reporting. KPIs include:

- Impressions
- Engagements
- Video views
- Website visits from FWV-provided trackable links and influencers

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# FY23-24 Editorial Calendar Overview

## Social Media

- Social media content will reflect all seasonal themes, in addition to specific highlights/campaigns
- Content Hub/blog content will also be promoted across social channels
- Additional social content will include most marketable events and holidays, as well as relevant news, social trends, etc.

## Public Relations

- PR efforts will include proactive planned pitches that align with newsworthy seasonal themes
- Additional/alternative pitching may be recommended according to newsworthy developments in the area, evolving media trends, etc.
- PR efforts will also include reactive pitching to relevant media opportunities (i.e., HARO queries) and inquiries directed to the CVB

## Video Content

- Proposed Tier 1 (How To/What You'll See) video content will be produced and edited by the CVB (McKenzie)
- Proposed Hero video content will be produced and edited by FWV or a local videographer
- Proposed Hero blog/feature content will be managed by FWV

## Misc. Content

- See this slide for content related to anticipated news (i.e., Riverwalk plan) with timing TBD

# July/Aug. Themed Content

	Beaches	Water /Active Experiences	Family Travel	Other
Tier 1	<b>BLOGS</b> (CB/KB/WB NEW): Where to find the best/ local-favorite beach accesses	<b>BLOG</b> (KB REFRESH): "Perfect Paddle Spots"		
Tier 2	<b>BLOG</b> (WB REFRESH) "A Foodie's Perfect Day"			<b>BLOG</b> (WILM REFRESH): "Craft Beverages & Brews w/ Views" <b>BLOG</b> (WILM REFRESH): "Haunted Depths of Old Wilm" <i>(draft Aug.; promote Sept./Oct..)</i>
Tier 3				
PR			<b>PITCH</b> (UNIFIED; in-state) Convenient, last-minute Labor Day getaway	
Social	<b>SOCIAL</b> (CB): THT Mural Tour - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i>	<b>SOCIAL</b> (WILM/WB) Kayak & Yoga Masonboro highlight - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i>		<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Upcoming events - <i>see next slide</i> <b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Summer POV <b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Mobile Trip Guide

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# July/Aug. Key Dates

## Marketable Events

- CB
  - Fireworks by the Sea & Boardwalk Blast
  - Pleasure Island July 4th Fireworks (7/4)
  - "Got-em-On" King Mackerel Tournament (7/7)
  - Whomparama (8/12)
  - Movies at the Lake
- KB
  - Kure Beach Market
  - Storytime by the Sea
- WB
  - Bluewater Summer Music Series
  - Oceanic Summer Music Series
  - Pier Yoga on the Crystal Pier
  - All Levels SUP Yoga
  - Wahine Classic (8/12)
- WILM
  - City of Wilmington July 4th Fireworks
  - Butterfly House/Releases

## Holidays

- Fourth of July (7/4)
- National Ice Cream Day (7/17)
- National Hot Dog Day (7/20)
- International Beer Day (8/5)
- National Relaxation Day (8/15)
- National Beach Day (8/30)



# Sept./Oct. Themed Content

	Trails, Biking, Birding, Fishing	Experiences for Adult Travelers	Arts & Entertainment	Pet-Friendly	Halloween/ Upcoming Holidays & Festivals	Other
<b>Tier 1</b>		<b>SOICAL</b> (ALL): How to navigate the Ale Trail + find craft brews - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i>			<b>BLOG*</b> (CB NEW): Island of Lights Flotilla <b>BLOG</b> (KB NEW): CFKF <b>BLOG*</b> (WB REFRESH): NC Flotilla (guest) <i>*draft Oct.; promote Nov</i>	
<b>Tier 2</b>		<b>BLOG</b> (WILM NEW): Adult/child-free family vacations	<b>BLOG</b> (WILM REFRESH): "More than Just Music in Wilm"	<b>BLOGS</b> (ALL REFRESH): Dog-friendly		
<b>Tier 3</b>					<b>HERO VIDEO</b> (WILM): Rebekah the Ghost Guide	
<b>PR</b>		<b>PITCH</b> (UNIFIED; national/interest) Retiree getaway			<b>PITCH</b> (UNIFIED; in-state) Halloween happenings	
<b>Social</b>	<b>SOICAL</b> (ALL): Outdoors <b>SOICAL</b> (ALL): Birding	<b>SOICAL</b> (ALL): Shopping/fall finds		<b>SOICAL</b> (ALL): Pet-friendly spots	<b>SOICAL</b> (ALL): Halloween happenings <b>SOICAL</b> (WILM): Haunted Wilmington	<b>SOICAL</b> (ALL): Upcoming events - see <i>next slide</i>

# Sept./Oct. Key Dates

## Marketable Events\*

- CB
  - Fireworks by the Sea & Boardwalk Blast (Ends 9/1)
  - Carolina Beach Dragon Boat Regatta and Festival (9/22-23)
  - Pets in the Park (10/7)
  - Pleasure Island Surf Fishing Challenge (10/20-22)
- KB
  - Halloween Story Time by the Sea (10/28)
- WB
  - Mackerel Mania Fishing Tournament (10/6-8)
  - Bark in the Park (10/7)
  - Swim the Loop and Motts Channel Sprint (10/15)
- WILM
  - Kayak and Yoga Excursion to Masonboro Island (9/13)
  - American Craft Walk (9/16)
  - Wilmington Fall Wine & Beer Walk (9/30)
  - Riverfest (10/7-8)
  - IRONMAN 70.3 North Carolina (10/21)
  - Voracious Rare Beer Festival (10/27)
  - Lighthouse Beer & Wine Festival (10/28)

## Holidays

- Hispanic Heritage Month (9/15 –10/15)
- Labor Day (9/4)
- National North Carolina Day (9/28)
- National Coffee Day (9/29)
- Halloween (10/31)

*\*Additional events and dates TBD*

## Nov./Dec. Themed Content

	Holidays	Shopping - Local/Small Businesses	Other
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): How to find holiday lights, decorations and events - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i>	<b>BLOG</b> (WILM REFRESH): How to "Shop Local this Holiday Season in Wilmington and Island Beaches"	<b>BLOG</b> (WB NEW): How to find WB's mystery mailbox (early Nov.) <b>SOCIAL</b> (WB): How to find the WB Mailbox - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i> ; <i>early Nov.</i>
<b>Tier 2</b>			<b>BLOG</b> (KB REFRESH ft. WILM day trip): "Take A Stress-Free Trip to Kure Beach" ft. adding WILM spas/wellness activities <b>BLOG</b> (ALL NEW): Local favorites
<b>Tier 3</b>			<b>HERO VIDEO</b> (WILM) Places that Give Back (incl. Bitty & Beau's)
<b>PR</b>	<b>PITCH</b> (ALL; national/interest) Holiday happenings		
<b>Social</b>	<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Holiday postcards (designed/approved in 2022) <b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Holiday, including decorations/lights on beach homes, Historic District, etc.	<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Small businesses/local shopping	<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Upcoming events - see <i>next slide</i>

# Nov./Dec. Key Dates

## Marketable Events\*

- CB
  - Christmas by the Sea
  - Island of Lights Holiday Flotilla & New Years Eve Celebration (12/2)
- KB
  - Cape Fear Kite Festival (11/3-5)
  - Cape Fear Festival of Trees (11/17)
  - KB Holiday Market (11/18-25)
  - Thanksgiving (11/24)
  - Kure Beach Holiday Whoobie Whatty (12/15)
- WB
  - 10th Annual Taste of Wrightsville Beach (11/4)
  - NC Holiday Flotilla & Day in the Park Festival (11/25)
- WILM
  - Enchanted Airlie
  - Old Wilmington by Candlelight Tour
  - CAM Art of Illumination
  - Thanksgiving (11/24)

## Holidays

- Veterans Day (11/11)
- Thanksgiving (11/23)
- Small Business Saturday (11/25)
- Hanukkah (12/7-15)
- Christmas (12/24-25)
- New Year's Eve (12/31)

*\*Additional events and dates TBD*

# Jan./Feb. Themed Content

*\*Note: This theme is subject to change based on continued TV/movie industry strikes. In late 2023, determine whether there's a need to shift theme to dining/ Restaurant Week.*

	What's New	Unique Neighborhoods	Famous Wilmington* (TBD)	Other
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>BLOGS</b> (ALL NEW): What's New for '24	<b>BLOG</b> (WILM REFRESH): "Unique Neighborhoods" or new blogs on each <b>SOCIAL</b> (WILM): "What You'll See in X Neighborhood" - <i>McKenzie (Video series)</i>	<b>BLOG</b> (WILM NEW) "Hollywood East" focused on recent productions; why the area attracts these projects*	
<b>Tier 2</b>				<b>TBD</b> (WILM): Launch multicultural resources
<b>Tier 3</b>			<b>HERO BLOG</b> (WILM) Q&A-style profile/feature ft. Chef Sunny Gerhart (Olivero)	
<b>PR</b>	<b>PITCH</b> (ALL, in-state): What's New	<b>PITCH</b> (WILM, in-state): Experience Wilm through unique neighborhoods	<b>PITCH</b> (ALL, national/interest): Destination for filmmakers + TV/movie buffs*	
<b>Social</b>	<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): What's New	<b>SOCIAL</b> (WILM): Unique neighborhoods campaign (showcase Soda Pop District, pending add. openings)	<b>SOCIAL</b> (WILM): Film/TV destination campaign* <b>SOCIAL</b> (WILM): Michael Jordan's Wilmington roots	<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Upcoming events - <i>see next slide</i> <b>SOCIAL</b> (WILM): Restaurant Week <b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Black History Month <b>SOCIAL</b> (CB/KB/WB): Beach 88 wonders highlight w/ coquina, WB mailbox, etc.

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# Jan./Feb. Key Dates

## Marketable Events\*

- CB
  - East Coast Shag Classic (1/25-28)
- KB
  - TBD (Battle of Fort Fisher Anniversary postponed)
- WB
  - 10th Annual Plunging into the New Year (1/1)
  - Novant Health Wilmington NC Marathon
- WILM
  - Restaurant Week (TBD)
  - NC Jazz Festival (2/1-4)
  - Novant Health Wilmington NC Marathon (2/24)
  - Port City Restaurant Week

## Holidays

- New Year's Day (1/1)
- Black History Month (all of Feb.)
- Valentine's Day (2/14)
- National Walking the Dog Day (2/22)

*\*Additional events and dates TBD*

# March/April Themed Content

	Go Green Travel	Active Adventures	Tours & Cruises	Parks & Gardens	Plan Ahead for Festivals	Other
Tier 1		<b>BLOGS</b> (ALL NEW): Find your perfect trail <b>BLOGS</b> (CB/WB NEW): Gear up for adventures	<b>SOCIAL</b> (KB): How to book a KB kayaking tour - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i> <b>SOCIAL</b> (WB): What you'll see on a Masonboro cruise - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i>	<b>BLOG</b> (WILM/WB NEW ft. WILM day trip): Find spring blooms ( <i>WB ft. NH Arb.+ Airlie</i> ) <b>SOCIAL</b> (WILM/WB): What you'll see: Airlie - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i>	<b>BLOG</b> (WILM NEW) NC Azalea Fest overview <b>BLOG</b> (CB NEW) CB Beach Music overview	
Tier 2			<b>BLOG</b> (KB NEW ft. WILM day trip): Discover the tides of history at FF + <i>WILM historical attractions</i>			
Tier 3	<b>HERO VIDEO</b> (WILM) Ana Shellem, Shell'em Seafood	<b>HERO VIDEO</b> (WB) Ashley Chapman, Evolve Freediving				
PR					<b>PITCH</b> (ALL, in-state): Spring festivals	
Social	<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Sustainable seafood in-season <b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Earth Day events /sustainability		<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Season start of top tours/cruises	<b>SOCIAL</b> (WB/WILM) Spring blooms, gardens, etc.	<b>SOCIAL</b> (WILM) NC Azalea Fest	<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL) Multicultural resources <b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Upcoming events - <i>see next slide</i>

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# March/April Key Dates

## Marketable Events\*

- CB
  - CB Beach Music Festival
- KB
  - 5K and One Mile Fun Run: Race for the Planet (4/21)
- WB
  - Carolina Cup (4/24-28)
  - Carolina Pro-Am SUP Tournament
- WILM
  - NC Azalea Festival (4/3-7)
  - Cape Fear Craft Beer & Cuisine

## Holidays

- Women's History Month (March)
- National Day of Unplugging (3/3)
- International Women's Day (3/8)
- St. Patrick's Day (3/17)
- World Water Day (3/22)
- Easter (3/31)
- Celebrate Diversity Month (April)
- National Beer Day (4/7)
- Earth Day (4/22)

*\*Additional events and dates TBD*



# May/June Themed Content

	Beaches	Family-Friendly Attractions	Water Experiences	Other
<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>BLOGS</b> (CB/KB/WB NEW) How to Build Your Best X Beach Trip <b>SOCIAL</b> (CB/KB/WB): How to find the best local beach accesses - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i>	<b>BLOGS</b> (ALL NEW) How to cool off this summer <b>SOCIAL</b> (CB): What you'll see on the Boardwalk - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i>	<b>BLOG</b> (WB NEW): Diving/shipwrecks overview	<b>SOCIAL</b> (KB): What you'll see at the new FF visitor center - <i>McKenzie (Video)</i> <b>BLOG</b> (KB): New FF visitor center - overview/exhibits
<b>Tier 2</b>		<b>BLOG</b> (KB NEW): NCAFF POV from an otter/sea turtle		
<b>Tier 3</b>		<b>HERO BLOG</b> (CB): Boardwalk history authority blog ft. FP Historic Preservation Society	<b>HERO VIDEO</b> (WB): Wrightsville SUP's Jarrod Covington	
<b>PR</b>		<b>PITCH</b> (ALL, OOS targets/national): Convenient, all-in-one vacation destination for families		
<b>Social</b>		<b>SOCIAL</b> (KB): NCAFF through a kid's eyes - <i>Content Creator/Influencer (Video)</i>		<b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Upcoming events - <i>see next slide</i> <b>SOCIAL</b> (ALL): Summer highlights

# May/June Key Dates

## Marketable Events\*

- CB
  - Carolina Beach Music Festival
  - Fireworks by the Sea & Boardwalk Blast
- KB
  - Boogie in the Park Concert Series
  - Fort Fisher State Historic Site new visitor center completion (6/3)
- WB
  - Cape Fear Blue Marlin Tournament
- WILM
  - Airlie Gardens Summer Concert Series
  - Downtown Sundown Concert Series
  - Cape Fear Blues Festival
  - Battleship NC Memorial Day Observance
  - Wilmington Wine & Food Festival

\*Additional events and dates TBD

## Holidays

- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (May)
- Jewish Heritage Month (May)
- Cinco De Mayo (5/5)
- National Travel and Tourism Week (5/5-11)
- National Tourism Day (5/7)
- Mother's Day (5/12)
- World Turtle Day (5/23)
- Memorial Day (5/27)
- National Donut Day (6/2)
- World Environment Day (6/5)
- World Oceans Day (6/8)
- National Go Fishing Day (6/18)
- Father's Day (6/16)
- Juneteenth (6/19)
- First Day of Summer (6/21)

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# Misc. Content

## Anticipated News/Updates

- Wilmington Riverwalk plan (timing TBD)
  - **TIER 1 SOCIAL VIDEO (WILM):** What you'll see on the Riverwalk and beyond (timing TBD) - *McKenzie (Video)*
- Fort Fisher State Historic Site updates (projected visitors center competition in early June)
  - **TIER 1 SOCIAL VIDEO (KB):** What you'll see at the new visitors center/How to experience FF in a new way - *McKenzie (Video)*
  - **BLOG (KB):** Overview of new visitor center (details TBD, but potentially cover new exhibits)
- Multicultural resources
  - FWV/CVB to discuss additional ways to incorporate these based on what is available to publish in early 2024
  - Social content will include Heritage month callouts, pending the publication of multicultural content.
- Famous Wilmington theme (Jan./Feb.)
  - FWV/CVB to discuss in late 2023 and determine whether to shift to a dining theme based on TV/movie industry strikes
- Additional noteworthy openings or new offerings will be included as needed throughout the year, in addition the usual What's New highlights.

# Video Content

## Tier 1 (How-To/What You'll See) Videos

- **TIER 1** (ALL): How to navigate/follow the Ale Trail
  - *Sept./Oct. launch for Adult Travelers theme*
- **TIER 1** (ALL): How to find holiday lights, events, etc.
  - *Nov./Dec. launch for holiday theme*
- **TIER 1** (CB): What you'll see on the Boardwalk
  - *May/June launch for Family-Friendly Attractions theme*
- **TIER 1** (KB): How to book a KB kayaking tour
  - *March/April launch for Tours & Cruises theme*
- **TIER 1** (WB): How to find the WB Mailbox
  - *Early Nov. launch*
- **TIER 1** (WB): What you'll see on a Masonboro Island cruise
  - *March/April launch for Tours & Cruises theme*
- **TIER 1** (WILM): What you'll see in X District/Neighborhood (series)
  - *Jan./Feb. launch for Unique Neighborhoods theme*
- **TIER 1** (WILM/WB): What you'll see at Airlie Gardens
  - *March/April launch for Parks & Gardens theme*

**Production/editing: McKenzie (cont. In next column)**

- **TIER 1** (CB/KB/WB): How to find local-favorite beach accesses
  - *May/June launch for Beaches theme*
- **TIER 1 SOCIAL VIDEO (KB)**: What you'll see at the new visitors center/How to experience FF in a new way
  - *May/June launch (tentative)*
- **TIER 1** (WILM) What you'll see on the Riverwalk and beyond
  - *Timing TBD*

## Hero Videos - TBD

- **HERO** (CB): Fishing capt. w/ AC Award
  - *Timing TBD*
- **HERO** (WB): Jarrod Covington, Wrightsville SUP; OR (WB): Ashley Chapman, Evolve Freediving
  - *May/June launch for Water Experiences & Beaches themes*
- **HERO** (WILM) Ana Shellem of Shell'em Seafood (TBD; CN to confirm)
  - *March/April launch for Go Green theme*
- **HERO** (KB): FF State Historic Site renovations
  - *Spring 2024*
- **HERO**: (WILM): Places that Give Back (incl. Bitty & Beau's)
  - *Nov/December in conjunction with Giving Season*

**Production/editing: FWV or local videographer**

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# Wilmington and Beaches PR Results

**25** Earned Placements

6 Print

19 Online

**16.3M** Reach/Impressions

**\$551K** Ad Value

**\$1.7M** PR Value

**34:1** ROI

The News & Observer

**RALEIGH**  
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**LIVING**  
A WESTERN HARBOR LIFESTYLE

**WRAL.com**

**AXIOS** Raleigh

A RALEIGH LIFESTYLE  
**MIDTOWN**

**Our State**  
CELEBRATING NORTH CAROLINA

**CARDINAL & PINE**

**365** Atlanta TRAVELER 

Reader's Digest

**Southern Living**

 **msn**






# Wilmington and Beaches Social Media Results

**73,219,996** Impressions

**1,541,962** Engagements

**4,749,604** Video Views

**233,279** Users to websites from social

<b>528,497 TOTAL FOLLOWERS</b>		
	<b>328,137</b>	<b>↗1.07%</b>
	<b>145,574</b>	<b>↗8.09%</b>
	<b>47,971</b>	<b>↘1.26%</b>
	<b>4,825</b>	<b>↗13.96%</b>
	<b>1,990</b>	<b>↗6.36%</b>

*% increase or decrease from 7/1/22 to 6/30/23*

# **FY23-24 COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PARTNER AWARENESS OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES**

## **A Look Back**

In addition to the FY22-23 efforts in media outreach, press trips, in-state and regional media meetups, professional development, and partner/stakeholder communications, the in-house PR team also spearheaded additional projects to support marketing and strategic plan initiatives.

### **1. Workforce Development**

- As part of the CVB's workforce development initiative, the in-house PR department rallied industry partners to participate in NCRLA's regional (coastal) workforce development town hall meeting. We also provided more than 2,500 student hospitality career brochures to college and public/private high school career counseling centers, as well as to CFCC's summer Career Academy and NHC school career fairs. Additionally, the CVB organized and moderated a hospitality presentation for Isaac Bear Early College Career Day students that featured the CVB and industry partners representing the lodging, attraction, and restaurant sectors, and coordinated a workforce speaking engagement at the Southeast NC Region for Career Technical Education Leaders Conference (May).

### **2. Local Awareness**

- In conjunction with Tourism Academy, the CVB PR team developed the CVB's first tourism ambassador training and certification course designed to enhance the visitor experience by expanding employees' destination knowledge and training with CVB visitor information tools, and customer service best practices. The course launched in June 2023 as a professional development tool whereby tourism/hospitality employees can apply what they learn to their current jobs, whether in lodging, restaurant, attraction, tour company, event venue, etc. Upon completion the Tourism Ambassador certificate can be printed and displayed.
- Additionally, the PR team hosted a local sports media meet and greet for local event organizers to share sports events with local sports media. Ongoing: The PR team distributes local press releases and continues to communicate with industry partners via seasonal Navigator newsletters and Industry Updates.

### **3. Expand Multicultural Content**

- During 2022-2023 the PR department continued expanding multicultural content for attractions and experiences that fall outside the mainstream American culture. This year we worked with freelance writers to create new content on Wilmington's Scottish and Jewish heritage and culture. We also expanded African American content with travel itineraries and new blogs, along with updates to existing content. The PR department will continue to expand multicultural content during 23-24 with a combination of cultural inventories, itineraries, guest blogs and press trips that focus on Greek and Latinx cultures.

### **4. Other PR Activity Highlights**

- Press Trips & Assists: Hosted 37 journalists and travel bloggers, including a VisitNC Film Media FAM tour in May with 6 participants. Additionally, the CVB PR department assisted French, West Vaughan's PR team, as needed, to review/develop/facilitate itineraries and welcome bags for journalists and

influencers that were hosted as part of the Out-of-State media campaign and other pitch/outreach efforts.

- Editorial Highlights: Coverage in People, Us Weekly, OK!, Local Palate, Our State, NC Farm & Family, AAA Living, Garden & Gun, and Carolina Country magazines, as well as digital publications CardinalPine.com, Carolina.Eater.com, NCTripping.com and TravelAwaits.com, and multiple travel blogs, including @AshleyontheMove, @BetsiWorld, @TriangleFamiliesExplore, @ImFixinToBlog, @SobeSavvy and @HeidiBillotto. We also worked with producers to provide content and logistical support for broadcast segments on PBS-NC “NC Weekend; WRAL “Tarheel Traveler;” Family Travel Radio Network; and My Tarheel Adventures.
- Awards: The CVB PR team received a 2022 NCTIA Gold Award in the Community Relations category for its Local Tourism Ambassador Video, which launched in May 2022 to raise awareness among residents of the benefits of tourism in our community.
- Media Events: In 2022-2023, the PR team participated in the STS Media Meetup in Nashville (summer ‘22); Visit NC’s New York (fall ‘22) and Atlanta (spring ‘23) media missions; a virtual SATW Media Marketplace (fall ‘22) and 2 in-state media events (fall ‘22/spring ‘23). The CVB PR team also coordinated a media luncheon in Fort Lauderdale to promote the destination and new direct flights to Florida cities; however, the event was canceled due to low invitation RSVPs, with many respondents citing conflicts in scheduling.
- Tradeshow Banners: The PR and marketing teams collaborated on new floor and table banners designed specifically for media tradeshow and events.

## 5. Trends

- Interest in customized and luxury travel experiences (fine dining, high-end boutique lodging, niche interests) dominates press trip requests. The rising cost of room rates, on-demand experiences, elevated dining and travel expenses (airfare, gas, Uber) continues to impact the PR hosting budget.
- Non-media assists by the PR department are steadily on the rise in recent years, including but not limited to partner/stakeholder communications, information inquiries (economic developers, students), visitor and partner complaints, internal requests, job fair participation, event organizer/business/partner requests for materials, images and video.
- Online editorial coverage continues to outpace print editorial.

## FY23-24 Objectives & Strategies

**To support Marketing Department strategies and initiatives.**

**Support the pro-active PR campaign and outreach efforts of the PR agency as needed and referenced in the marketing strategies and tactics.**

- Reinforce brand position featuring “Wilmington and Island Beaches” unified and individual brand and associated marketing tactics.



- Incorporate destination messaging and positioning brand and advertising campaign themes in PR materials where appropriate, shifting as external factors warrant a change:
  - Fall/Holiday (2023):
    - Inaugural Fall Events:
      - USCT Descendants Reunion at Cameron Art Museum (Nov. 11)
      - Outlander at the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge (Scottish heritage event (October 14)
    - Film/Pop Culture events: Cucalorus Festival (29<sup>th</sup> annual) & Three Chambers Festival (inaugural, Oct. 14)
    - Holiday fun at the beach and beyond
  - Winter (2024):
    - What's New in 2024
    - Places to warm up in winter – cozy spaces/indoor arts, culture, food (Port City Taste restaurant week); spas/salt caves
    - Black History Month (February)
  - Spring/Summer (2024):
    - Lifeguard-protected beaches
    - Spring bloom; festivals and outdoor recreation; concerts
    - Places to cool off in summer (ocean/watersports/water park; ice cream/smoothies; refreshing cocktails; evening walks along the river)
  - Hybrid Destination Approach – Unified & Individual:
    - Unified: Highlight unique attractions of Wilmington and each beach
    - Individual: Reinforce brand platforms
      - Wilmington: Vibrant historic district and beyond: Downtown, Midtown, Neighborhoods
      - Beaches: There's only one Carolina Beach; Naturally beautiful Kure Beach; Elevate your beach experience-Wrightsville Beach
- Work in concert with the CVB's PR agency on second phase of the Out-of-State press trip initiative. Continue forward momentum in hosting press trips for journalists with select publications in select markets with readership that aligns with audience research.
  - Continue to target and host staff and freelance writers for out of state media outlets and publications that reach affluent travelers in select cities in Western NC (Charlotte, Triad, Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville), GA (Atlanta), MD (Baltimore), OH (Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland), PA (Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York), SC (Charleston, Florence-Myrtle Beach), TN (Nashville), VA (Roanoke-Lynchburg, Richmond-Petersburg, Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, Tri-Cities), and Washington DC markets.
  - Secondary markets include nonstop flight destinations and national outlets/writers
  - Customize itineraries that include activities that appeal to affluent travelers
- Focus pitches and press materials on concepts that align with travel trends, visitor interests, and Visit NC marketing campaigns:
  - Affluent travel
    - On-demand and customized experiences
    - Boutique lodging, vacation rentals, full-service; add-on amenities
    - Destination dining (accolades, star chefs, inventive cuisine)
    - Sublime nightlife and entertainment; craft beverages

- Extended seasonality
  - Year-round experiences
  - Midweek activities
  - Extended weekend, more relaxed pace
- Set-jetting
  - Monitor popularity of locally made productions; maintain lists of visitor-friendly locations
- Wellness and outdoor recreation
- Multi-cultural experiences
- Update pitch sheets for 2024
  - Incorporate What's New Highlights where applicable and timely:
    - Cameron Art Museum USCT Descendants Reunion, oral histories, collaboration with National Civil War Museum (Nov. 11, 2023)
    - Emerging Soda Pop District; expanding footprint of Cargo District
    - Houseboat community at Port City Marina
    - Beaches: watersports/cruises, accessibility; Fort Fisher visitor center opening (spring 2024); Aquarium sustainability efforts; sea turtles
    - Destination-wide: new lodging, tours/guides, notable restaurants/chefs, breweries, exhibits; accolades and designations
    - What's New in 2024 round-up
    - Culinary: Notable new restaurants; restaurant/chef accolades
    - Pet-friendly
    - Multicultural experiences
    - Set-Jetting: Popular film/television locations
    - Destination Accolades- Promote awards/contest wins; Pursue nominations
- Work with PR agency to implement an additional method of tracking/reporting on earned media coverage to align with Visit NC tracking/reporting methods:
  - Implement the Barcelona Principles, a scoring system to measure and report on the effectiveness of public relations efforts of earned media

**To communicate messages to potential visitors in key feeder markets via PR efforts with state, regional, national and international media.**

- Maintain and develop rapport with state/regional editors, journalists and freelancers for feeder market newspapers, magazines, television stations, travel websites (ongoing):
  - Participate in Visit NC in-state media events (Raleigh - Sept. 19, 2023) and Tourism Conference media roundtables (Greenville – March 2024)
  - Pitch customized story ideas (ongoing)
  - Cultivate existing relationships with editors, freelancers, digital journalists, bloggers and influencers with in-state/regional audiences (ongoing)
- Maintain active memberships in regional and national media associations (ongoing):
  - Society of American Travel Writers (SATW, Eastern chapter, National)
  - Public Relations Society of America (NC Chapter & Travel/Tourism section)
  - Southeast Tourism Society (STS)
- Host travel journalists and bloggers on verified assignment (ongoing):
  - Work with PR agency to refine media guidelines for hosted press trips

- Review journalist/social media influencer requests and verify that stats and audience align with our targets (ongoing)
- Seek qualified in-state travel journalists for press trips
- Host journalists/bloggers in top out-of-state markets that did not visit last FY
- Develop customized itineraries for visiting journalists/social media influencers
- Facilitate journalist/influencer visits with passes/tickets, reservations, meal options, interviews (ongoing)
- Coordinate email campaigns targeting media outlets and freelance journalists:
  - What's New in 2024
  - Spring travel with trip ideas and links to pitch sheets
- Participate in media tradeshow/marketplaces/FAM Tours that draw national & regional travel media and freelance journalists/travel bloggers and influencers:
  - SATW joint Eastern & Central states chapter conference & marketplace (Lansing, WV - May 13-17, 2024)
  - STS Regional Media Meetup (Location/Date TBD)
  - Visit NC Out-of-State Media Missions: (Location/Date TBD)
  - Partner with Visit NC on individual press trips and FAM tours (ongoing; domestic and international)
  - Others TBD as budget allows.
- Expand Outdoor NC content with articles by experts and freelance writers
- Customize story ideas and pitches for national/international media outlets and journalists:
  - Respond to travel-related media leads generated by journalists and lead sources (HARO, SATW, Visit NC)
  - Proactive pitches to editors, staff writers, broadcasters, freelance journalists, bloggers and social media influencers during media marketplaces and events

### **To integrate diverse and inclusive perspectives through content that features multicultural experiences that reflect the diversity of New Hanover County**

- Create new inventories and itineraries that include diverse cultural assets and authentic experiences that fall outside the mainstream American cultural experience.
  - Use inventories of multicultural assets to create theme itineraries:
    - Greek American
    - Latinx
  - Host diverse content creators, bloggers, freelance writers to experience itineraries that align with cultural heritage interests: African-American, Scottish, Jewish, Latinx
- Expand content that increases awareness of Wilmington's multicultural assets and experiences:
  - Expand African American heritage content:
    - Gullah Geechee connections
    - Civil Rights history

### **To Increase Local Awareness of Importance of Tourism and Role of the Wilmington and Beaches CVB**

- Enroll local travel partners, stakeholders and residents in understanding and supporting tourism:

- Promote CVB's new certificate-based Tourism Ambassador course designed for local travel partners and stakeholders
  - Announce launch of Tourism Ambassador training program
    - Navigator Newsletter
    - Industry presentations
    - Partner meeting announcements: WAHA, HIP, MAC
    - Stakeholders: Chamber of Commerce, DBA, WDI, Arts Council
- Expand awareness among residents of the Tourism Ambassador video that instills community pride and demonstrates how tourism improves our quality of place:
  - Provide updated video with 2022 statistics to local government cable access channels GTV8 and NHCTV
  - Incorporate video into ambassador training course
  - Include video in presentations to local civic organizations, students, newcomers, etc.
- Organize and promote Annual National Travel & Tourism Week observance (May 5-11, 2024):
  - Pursue County Proclamation to designate National Travel & Tourism Week in New Hanover County
  - Provide tourism talking points to travel partners
  - Press release to announce NTTW theme, dates, events, local tourism stats
  - Host Travel Rally industry meeting (May date TBA):
    - Invite travel partners, industry stakeholders, economic development groups and community leaders, local business media
    - Share annual report/statistics demonstrating importance of tourism
    - Secure keynote speaker on relevant industry topic
- Participate as guest speaker/panelist for tourism-related events (ongoing)
  - Tourism classes; civic groups, newcomers
  - Economic development panel discussions / guest speaker
- Distribute industry communications to travel partners and stakeholders:
  - Relevant industry news: grant/funding opportunities; workshops/training; legislative/advocacy issues (ongoing)
  - Navigator newsletter via ActOn platform (biannually)
  - Create TDA Annual Report handout; distribute at industry and guest speaker events (spring)
- Address hospitality industry workforce shortages and training:
  - Seek out and participate in professional development offerings on workforce topics:
    - NCRLA Workforce development and training programs
    - Industry-specific webinars/workshops (NCTIA, NCRLA, Visit NC, EDPNC, STS, US Travel, Destinations International)
    - Local webinars/workshops/panel discussions (Chamber, UNCW, CFCC, WAHA)
  - Engage with local public and private educational institution career centers:
    - Serve on SEATech Hospitality Academy advisory board (Com/PR Director)

- Serve on UNCW Recreation, Sport Leadership & Tourism Management curriculum advisory committee
- Distribute Hospitality Career brochure to New Hanover County Public High School principals/career counselors; CFCC Career Academy and career center; SEATech career fairs; private high schools (ongoing)
- Guest speaker for hospitality/tourism/business classes and educational conferences (ongoing)
- Explore ways to partner with local college hospitality/tourism programs
- Update /reprint student-oriented Hospitality Career brochure (as needed)
- Provide opportunities for hospitality partners and stakeholders to participate in workforce development initiatives:
  - Encourage partners to participate in NCRLA Workforce Development initiatives and training programs; advise of workforce presentations and workshops offered by local and state organizations
  - Partner with Tourism Education Foundation of North Carolina (TEFNC) efforts to expand workforce development efforts in coastal NC
  - Feature workforce experts and hospitality education leaders as guest speakers at CVB industry events (travel rally, GM roundtables, industry presentations)
  - Provide workforce resources to industry partners (brochures, programs, contacts)
  - Inform partners, TDA Board, elected officials, community stakeholders of key workforce development and hospitality industry trends and challenges

### **Ongoing Initiatives**

- Encourage travel partners to participate in PR programs
- Update Crisis Communications Plan (annually) to ensure effective and efficient communications
- Heighten awareness of tourism's importance to the local economy and increase awareness of the CVB's role in the community through local media communications
- Monitor and boost Tourism Ambassador Certification enrollment



**PUBLISHER-DIRECT**

<b>TripAdvisor</b>				
Destination Sponsorship, Includes Individual Beach Pages				
	Destination Sponsorship	Horizon, 728X90, 320x50, 300x250 Banners Clicks to client site	100% SOV	
Branded Hub	North Carolina Travel Intenders	Boost Link to Destination Page	1,041,667	
	Destination Hub	Refresh of Branded Hub		
	NC Coast Content + US IPs		462,962	
	Eastern/Western NC + Beach & Family Travel Interests	On-site Boosts	520,833	
	Out-of State Markets + Beach & Family Travel Interests		416,667	
Client-Branded Media	Retargeted Sponsored Social/Facebook Posts	Carousel Posts	1,200,000	
	NC + Beach & Family Travel Interests		416,667	
	North Carolina Coast Content + US IP's	On-site Boosts	555,556	
<b>VRBO</b>	Added Value: ROS Travel Intenders	728x90, 300x250	50,000	
	WNC + Previous Destination Competitive	160x600 (Right 1)	418,270	
	ENC + Previous Destination Competitive	160x600 (Right 1)	375,802	
	OOS + Previous Destination Competitive	160x600 (Right 1)	937,500	

**E-BLAST (WILM 1st 3%)**

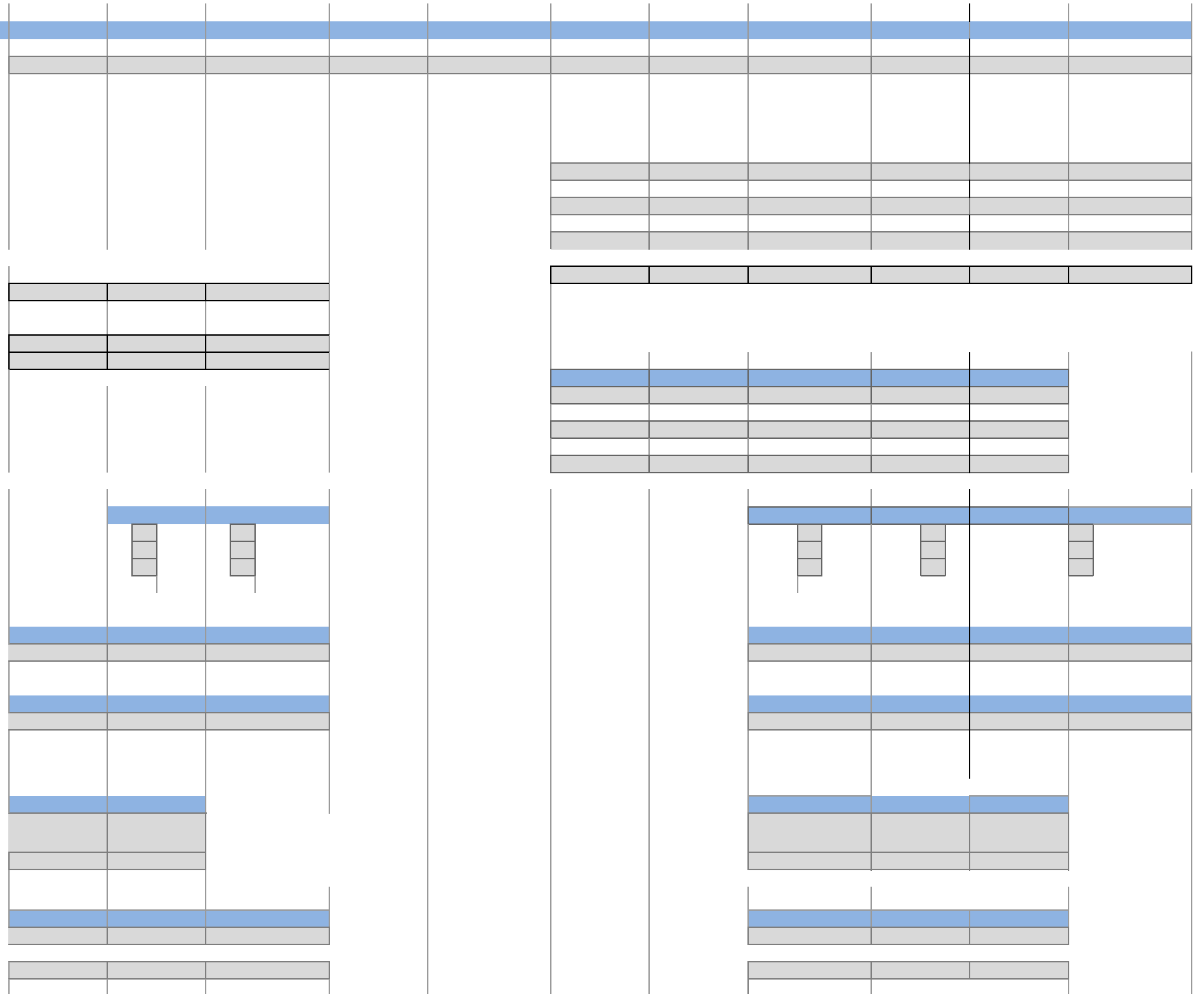
<b>Engagement Marketing</b>				
	Travel Intenders - ENC Geo		198,000	
	Travel Intenders - WNC Geo	e-Blasts	300,000	
	Travel Intenders - OOS Geo		492,000	

**DIGITAL VIDEO**

<b>Pre-roll</b> - Mythic	Targeting: Adults 35 - 64, \$100k+ HHI, Travelers (Fall, exclude families with kids under 16, Spring focus on families)	:15 and/or :30 Video	5,901,794	
<b>OTT</b> - Mythic	Targeting: Adults 35 - 64, \$100k+ HHI, Travelers (Fall, exclude families with kids under 16, Spring focus on families)	:15 and/or :30 Video	6,800,408	

**STREAMING AUDIO**

<b>Spotify</b>	Sponsored Sessions: Adults 25 - 54, \$100k+ HHI, Travelers (Fall, 35 - 64, exclude families with kids under 16)	Max :30 video + 640x640 companion banner	175,325	
	Spotify Audience Network: 3P Travelers, Luxury Travelers, Frequent Flyers, Beach Vacationers	:30 Audio	1,437,500	
<b>Pandora</b>	Streaming Select - Mobile Display With Responsive Banner	1:1	4,552,352	
	Streaming Select - Audio	:30 Audio	4,184,800	



<p><b>VisitNC CO-OP</b> Print Co-Op</p> <p>LMC, Large Markets, 1/4-Page Co-op Ad, Magazines Include: Atlanta Magazine, Philadelphia Magazine, The Washington Post Magazine, Total Circulation Per Drop = 522,546</p> <p>LMC, Small Markets, 1/4-Page Co-op Ad, Magazines Include: Blue Ridge Country, Cleveland Magazine, Columbus Monthly Magazine, Orlando Magazine,</p> <p>Digital Co-Op</p> <p>Garden &amp; Gun, Targeting: GardenandGun.com site visitors cross-channel: Food &amp; Drink, Home &amp; Garden, Arts &amp; Culture, Travel, Music, Sporting</p> <p><b>Native</b>, Things to Do, 400x400 image, 50-character headline, click-</p> <p><b>Native</b>, History &amp; Heritage, 400x400 image, 50-character</p> <p><b>Native</b>, Natural Attractions &gt; Beaches, Rivers, Lakes, 400x400</p> <p><b>Native</b>, Coast &gt; Wilmington Area, 400x400 image, 50-character</p> <p><b>Native</b>, Coast &gt; Outer Banks and Currituck, 400x400 image, 50-</p> <p><b>Native</b>, Coast &gt; Crystal Coast, 400x400 image, 50-character</p> <p><b>+ eNewsletter Insider Trio Authorship</b></p> <p><b>+ Facebook Promotion:</b></p> <p>NC Holiday Flotilla (Featured Event) NC Azalea Festival</p> <p><b>Custom Content Refresh Program,</b></p> <p><b>Instagram UGC Promotion</b></p>														
<p><b>Print</b> <b>Our State</b></p> <p>Spread + Advertorial      2-page spread, first 1/3</p> <p>Print - 1/2 page      1/2 page horizontal</p> <p>Custom Content Re-Launch      Existing "Your Ultimate Guide to A Wilmington Getaway"</p> <p><b>Southern Living</b></p> <p>Full Page (Mid-Atlantic Region)      Full Page Print</p> <p>Half Page (Mid-Atlantic Region)      Half Page Horizontal Print</p> <p><b>Family Travel Planner (Compass Media)</b></p> <p>Print: Better Homes &amp; Gardens (Jan/Feb Issue), Woman's Day (Jan/Feb Issue) and Country Living (Mar Issue), 500k Digital (Added Value): YouTube, 5k</p> <p><b>MNI Travel Bundle</b></p> <p>Atlanta Subscribers Only- Elle Decor, Food &amp; Wine, Real Simple, Town &amp; Country, Travel &amp; Leisure</p> <p>Full Page Print</p> <p><b>Pilot Magazines</b></p> <p>GO! Travel Edition - Walter, O'Henry, Southpark</p> <p>Full Page Print</p> <p><b>2024 NC Travel Guide (Meredith)</b></p> <p>Full Page</p> <p>Full Page Print</p> <p><b>Chamber Map</b></p> <p>Listing Ad w/Logo</p>														
<p><b>Out-of-Home</b> <b>Wilkins</b></p> <p>High-visibility bulletins and transit in Charlotte &amp; Triad</p> <p>Bulletins and light rail station kings</p> <p>TBD</p> <p>100%</p>														

Geographic Target:

- ENC Raleigh-Durham, Greenville-New Bern-Washington, EXCLUDE New Hanover County
- WNC Charlotte, Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem, Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville
- OOS SC (Charleston, Columbia, Florence w/o Myrtle Beach), VA (Roanoke-Lynchburg, Richmond-Petersburg, Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, Tri-Cities), Washington D.C., GA (Atlanta), OH (Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland), PA (Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York), Baltimore MD, Nashville TN (measure growth potential).



# FY 2023-2024 MEDIA FLOWCHART: DISTRICT U CAMPAIGN

Date: #REF!

TACTIC/VENDOR	TARGET/PLACEMENT	ASSET	IMPRESSIONS (EST)	Region (% Budget)			July							August					September					October					November				December					January				February				March					April				May				June				
				ENC	WNC	OOS	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24				
<b>PROGRAMMATIC DISPLAY</b>																																																															
Sojern			7,807,760																																																												
- Sojern	Sojern Travel Intenders & Searchers to Wilmington/Competitive Destinations; Also Includes Behavioral, Category, Keyword Contextual Targeting All Layered with Travel Intent Data + Custom Targeting.	Cross-Platform Display (300x250, 728x90, 160x600, 300x600)		23%	29%	48%																																																									
<b>PUBLISHER-DIRECT</b>																																																															
Outside			3,518,519																																																												
- Outside	High Impact Ad Unit Partner Spotlight	OOL Inline Partner Spotlight																																																													
	Channel Targeting Display	970x250,970x90,728x90,300x60 0,300x250,320x50,320x100,300x50																																																													
	High Impact Ad Unit - Inline	1x1,300x250																																																													
	Run of Site Single Title Outside Online	970x250,970x90,728x90,300x60 0,300x250,320x50,320x100,300x50																																																													
	In Stream Video - :15 (CPM)	[Master=640x480v]																																																													
<b>PRINT</b>																																																															
- TBD			TBD																																																												
<b>Out-of-Home</b>																																																															
- Wilkins	High-visibility bulletins and transit in Charlotte & Triad	lletins and light rail station kings	TBD																																																												
- Wilkins (TBD)	Experiential, Charlotte	TBD	TBD																																																												

**NOTES:**  
 Demo Target: ANNUAL (except for Fall): Adults 25-54, \$125K+ HHI, focus on families | FALL: Adults 35-64 without kids in the home ("Empty Nesters")

**Geographic Target:**

- ENC Raleigh-Durham, Greenville-New Bern-Washington, EXCLUDE New Hanover County
- WNC Charlotte, Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem, Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville
- OOS SC (Charleston, Florence, excluding Myrtle Beach), VA (Roanoke-Lynchburg, Richmond-Petersburg, Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, Tri-Cities), Washington D.C., GA (Atlanta), OH (Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland), PA (Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York), Baltimore MD, Nashville TN (measure growth potential).

**FY 2023-2024 MEDIA FLOWCHART: OOS HEAVY-UP CAMPAIGN**

TACTIC/VENDOR	TARGET/PLACEMENT	ASSET	IMPRESSIONS (EST)	Region (% Budget)			July			August				September				October				November				December				January				February				March				April				May				June					
				ENC	WNC	OOS	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27
<b>CONNECTED TV</b> <b>Mythic</b> - Mythic	Adults 25-54, \$100K+ HHI 100% of streaming impressions to run on TVs (meaning no mobile devices, tablets, etc.) Retargeting Digital Banners served to those who have seen our videos to further entice them to explore the website or sign up for the travel guides.  Premium streaming channels such as Max, Discovery+, Paramount+, Peacock	:30/:15-second video	18,000,000	0%	20%	80%	7/4 July 4th							9/4 Labor Day																								3/29 Good Friday/Easter								5/27 Memorial Day									

NOTES:  
Demo Target: ANNUAL (except for Fall): Adults 25-54, \$125K+ HHI, focus on families | FALL: Adults 35-64 without kids in the home ("Empty Nesters")

Geographic Target:

- ENC
- WNC Charlotte NC
- OOS Richmond/Petersburg VA, Columbus OH, Philadelphia PA, Washington DC, Atlanta GA