



HALIFAX COUNTY
CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019

"From the time I started thinking about locating this business in Halifax County, the CVB has been there. They have been instrumental in getting this concept from inspiration to full operation. Thank you for your innovative and creative marketing partnership!" – Bruce Tyler, Owner Weldon Mills Distillery

photo credit: Richard Holm, Roanoke Rapids Daily Herald

ABOUT US



The Halifax County Tourism Development Authority dba the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau (HCCVB)

is the destination marketing organization for Halifax County, NC. The HCCVB is dedicated to promoting Halifax County as a visitor destination. We also represent and support the interests of the local tourism industry and promote public awareness of the importance of tourism.

Our funding is primarily provided by a 5% room tax paid by visitors while staying overnight in accommodations. No local tax dollars are used in our efforts.

In addition to the county-wide 5% occupancy tax, the City of Roanoke Rapids adopted a 1% tax that is dedicated to the marketing and tourism development of that city. These funds are administered by the HCCVB.

The HCCVB is managed by a 12 member Board of Directors appointed by the Halifax County Commissioners. The Halifax County Tourism Development Authority was formed in 1987 by enabling legislation that created the room tax.

We hope you will agree that the HCCVB team and board have a strong belief in the power of the tourism industry to be a driving economic force for Halifax County.

We invite you to engage with the HCCVB staff. We are always at the ready to build our community through tourism. Visitor dollars support jobs, drive demand for commercial development and improve the quality of life in Halifax County.

VISITOR SPENDING BREAKS \$100 MILLION MARK

County Spending by Domestic Visitors Increases by 4.6% Percent to \$101.45 Million

Visit North Carolina announced that domestic visitors to and within Halifax County spent \$101.45 million in 2018, an increase of 4.6% from 2017. The data comes from an annual study commissioned by Visit North Carolina, a unit of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

Tourism impact highlights for 2018:

- The travel and tourism industry directly employs more than 570 and indirectly employs more than 1,000 in Halifax County.
- State tax revenue generated in Halifax County totaled \$6.23 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income.
- \$2.48 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.
- This visitor spending, in Halifax County, saved each resident taxpayer \$169.59 in taxes.

These statistics are from the “Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2018.” The study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by the U.S. Travel Association.



“The numbers confirm the strength of North Carolina’s tourism industry as an anchor of economic development. As the No. 6 state in the country for overnight visitation, we can attribute our success to the natural beauty and authenticity that visitors experience, and to a passionate effort to inform and inspire travelers. The money they spend benefits everyone by sustaining jobs and reducing our residents’ tax burden.” ~ Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit North Carolina

MESSAGE FROM CEO & CHAIRPERSON

We are delighted with the strength of the tourism industry in our area. Breaking the \$100 million-dollar mark has been a goal of ours and it is exciting to see the tremendous impact visitor spending has throughout our area.

Delivering the marketing message that Halifax County is a great stop over point for travelers along the I-95 corridor is something we do every day. We also tell our story and make the case that Halifax County is the perfect destination for a long weekend get away from the triangle area or anywhere along the Mid-Atlantic, and we are an unforgettable vacation destination!

In addition to bringing visitors to what exist here today, we believe that the impact of tourism is vital to our development in the future. The HCCVB has funded a feasibility study of growth on the north east side of I-95 at Exit 173. Through the analysis of this study, we are confident that new tourism related businesses will be successful at this quadrant of Exit 173 in Weldon, NC.

We are also partnering with the County of Halifax, the City of Roanoke Rapids and Halifax Horizons to fund a best use study of the Exit 171 interchange. With the improvements happening at this interchange and the extension of Premier Boulevard, we are confident that tourism dependent businesses will consider this interchange for development. Retail development strategies are place-based and must be actively recruited. The HCCVB is at the table to tell the story of the impact visitor dollars can have on a potential business.

Our organization also believes that infrastructure is critical to tourism development and place development. The HCCVB has funded a consultant to guide us in the process of recruiting an Amtrak passenger station to Weldon, NC. In partnership with the Halifax County Economic

Development Commission and the Town of Weldon, we have worked through the process with NCDOT and Amtrak and have now set aside funds to participate in the build of the station for Amtrak in Weldon.

We believe that our best days are ahead. We feel we are poised for a growth period and will see new tourism dependent businesses developing in the near future! Our hospitality partners work hard every day to make our visitors feel

welcome and we all owe them a debt of gratitude! Let's all keep working together to make great things happen in Halifax County!

“We believe that our best days are ahead. We feel we are poised for a growth period and see new tourism-dependent businesses developing in the near future.”

Percilla West & Lori Medlin



PLATINUM AND BEST IN SHOW FOR MARKETING ACHIEVEMENT



The Halifax County Convention & Visitors Bureau received the top honors statewide from the North Carolina Travel Industry Association (NCTIA). The bureau won the “Platinum Award for Marketing Achievement in Leisure Marketing” and the top honor of “Best in Show” Award, all for their innovative and multifaceted, “Are we there yet?” campaign.

The campaign, which included the build and operation of a Visitor Center Dog Run adjacent to I-95 and the marketing of the park, was a first of its kind in the state. The goal was to drive travelers off I-95 into the Visitor Center and entice them to stay in the area longer to increase visitor spending.

We were starting to see impressive research on people traveling with their pets and decided to make our exit pet-friendly and actually build a Dog Run at our Visitor Center adjacent to and visible from I-95. Many visitors told us this was the first such amenity they had seen adjacent to I-95. We married the build of the Halifax County Visitors Center Dog Run to a promotional campaign aimed at visitors traveling with their

pets. We created billboard, social media, and print campaigns around the slogans “Everything you need for you...the kids...and the Dog!” and “Are we there yet?” We made sure to build a presence on digital media channels geared to travelers with pets. We also featured our pet-friendly accommodations wherever possible.

The HCCVB was honored at the NCTIA’s annual conference which was held in Concord, NC. The purpose of the Tourism Achievement Awards is to honor and showcase innovation, best practices, creativity and the results accomplished through the tourism industry’s marketing efforts.

“The Halifax County CVB has certainly led the way with the innovative build of the Halifax County Visitors Center Dog Run and the ‘Are We There Yet’ marketing campaign. This impressive, multifaceted approach has more than doubled the visitation at their visitor center,” Mark Shore, Director of Marketing for Visit NC, stated while presenting the award. “The new dollars visitor spend in the surrounding communities does much to support local businesses.”



Lori Medlin, President/CEO HCCVB; Mark Shore, Director VisitNC Tourism Marketing



Wit Tuttell, Executive Director VisitNC Tourism; Lori Medlin, President/CEO HCCVB

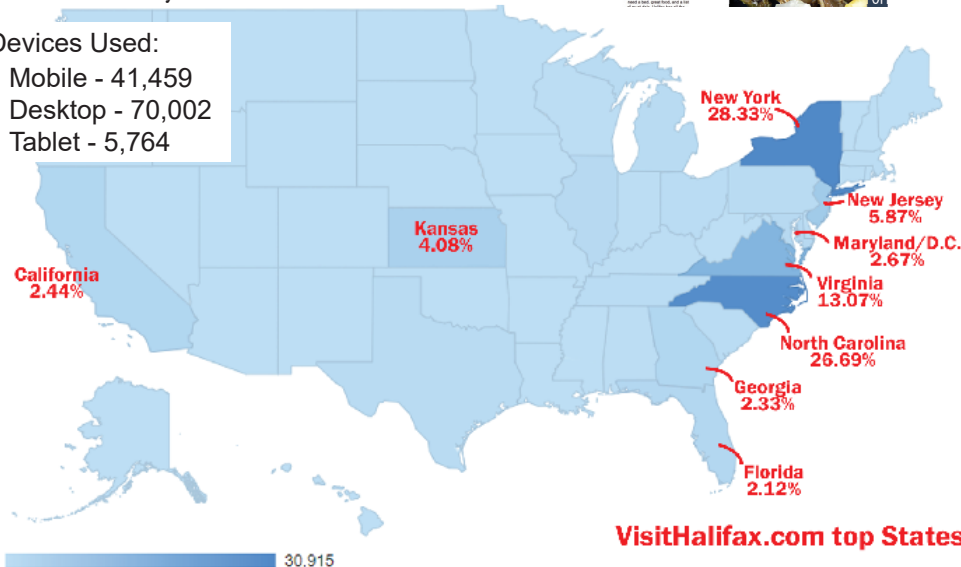
VISITHALIFAX.COM

For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, VisitHalifax.com received **116,481** visitors which was a **31.7% increase** over the last year. These visitors spent an average of 1:01 minutes viewing 2.06 pages. In addition to finding this resource on search engines, visitors also found visithalifax.com through billboards, print ads, digital ad placement, our online magazine, and digital promotion campaigns created by the Halifax CVB.

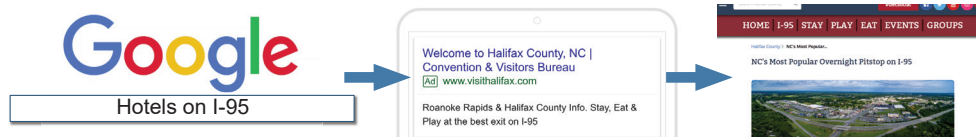
Our newly redesigned online magazine site received **62,430** visitors in 2018-2019, showing an increase of **12.9%** over the previous fiscal year.

Devices Used:

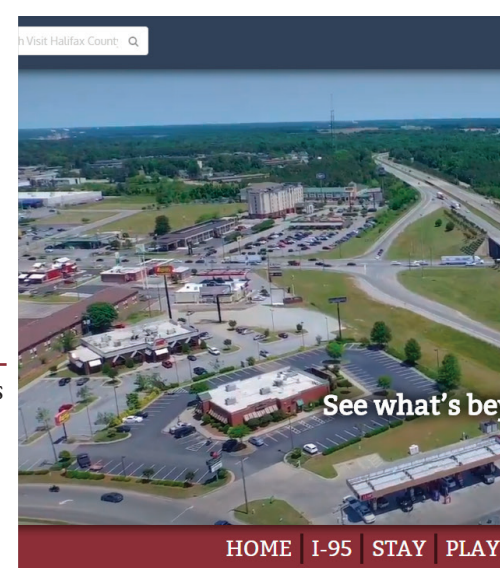
Mobile - 41,459
Desktop - 70,002
Tablet - 5,764



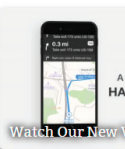
A new digital promotion intercepting travelers on Interstate-95 to increase overnights at the Roanoke Rapids/Weldon exits served almost **3 million** targeted impressions. These campaigns utilized geolocation technology to seek out travelers that were located within driving distance of Halifax County and served ads on their mobile device. The promotion yielded close to **10,000**



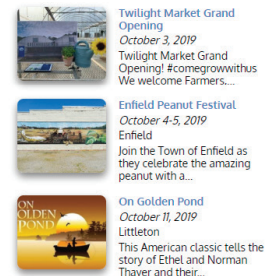
website and social clicks, approximately **4,500** referrals to Halifax County hotel booking pages, nearly **4,000** visits within hotel conversion zones, and doubled the average time reading information on visithalifax.com compared to regular website traffic during the campaigns.



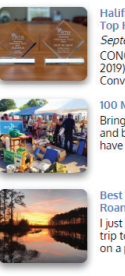
This is Halifax



Upcoming Events

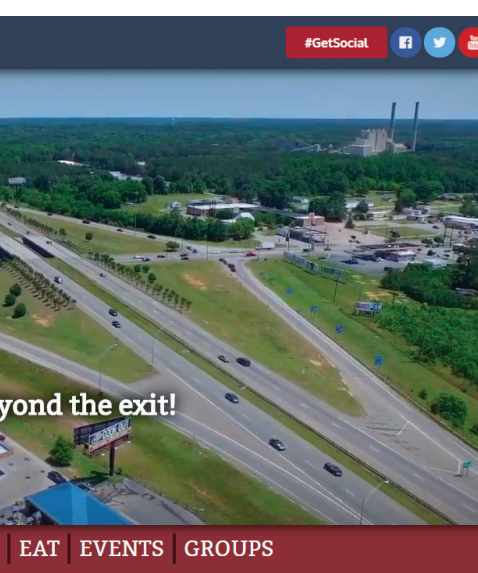


Stories, News &



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Weddings

Halifax County
About Us
Retire
Governance



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Halifax County CVB Receives Donations
November 20, 2019
CORD, NC (September 13, 2019) – The Halifax County CVB has received donations from the following:

Wiles of Diggers' Bliss
Your quarters, dollar bills, bargaining shoes! Tourists never...

Camping on the Roanoke River
Got back from a camping trip? Rule them all – Camping platform...

Featured

Bicycle Loaner Program
Explore the historic and scenic Roanoke Canal Trail on one of our bicycles!

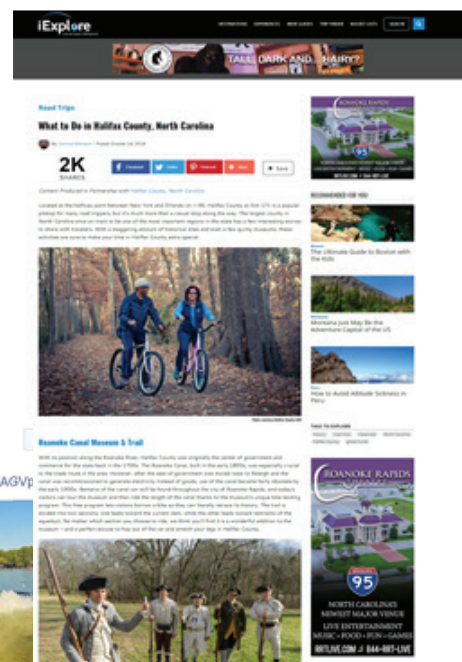
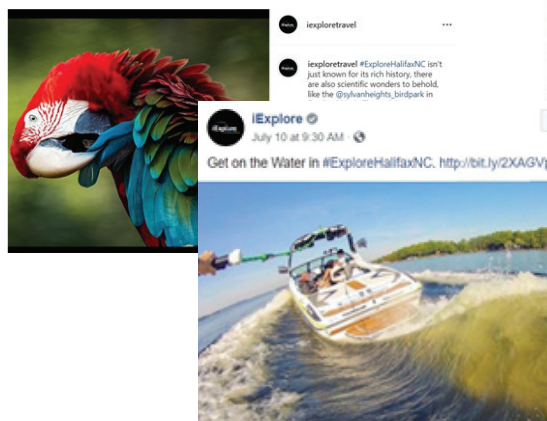
Online Magazine
Discover Halifax County! Check out our insider tips, must dos and more.

Roanoke Cinemas
You're invited! Check out what's playing and come see a movie tonight!

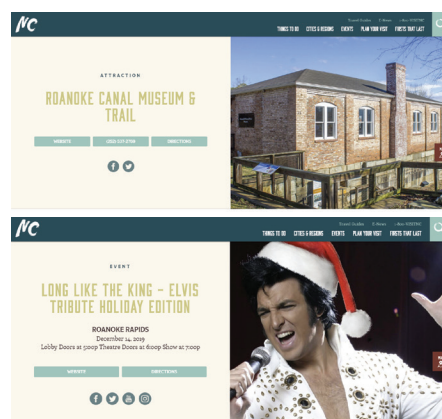


INFLUENCER VISITS

Through partnership with VisitNC, the Halifax CVB invited two digital influencers to experience a weekend in Halifax County. These fall 2018 and spring 2019 trips produced four online stories from a "genuine" visitor's perspective. From these stories and the combined 264 social media posts, the campaigns produced over **12 million** impressions, including **85,887** social media engagements. The online articles were accompanied by digital ads for attractions across the county.



The HCCVB sister site huntfishnc.com had **2,184** visitors increasing **13.4%**.



The HCCVB is Halifax County's local connection to VisitNC.com. Listings for lodging, attractions, and events that meet VisitNC's guidelines are submitted and maintained by the HCCVB. These listings provide additional exposure at the state level with information driving business downstream to our partners.

MARKETING

Social media continues to be a priority in marketing our destination. Being able to share engaging Halifax County experiences with our **12,342** followers daily provides an exponential value. We answer the question, "What's happening in Halifax County?" by sharing user-generated and in-house photos, videos, events, links, and more. In addition to Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter, we maintain a Youtube channel to highlight videos from the area in playlists which added **3,129** impressions to our reach. As video becomes increasingly popular across all social channels, we are increasing the number of clips we share and create.



2,308,182 impressions



16.3% new followers



1,592 average monthly viewers



198,700 tweet impressions



The Sally-Billy House, an antebellum plantation home circa 1808, is open to enjoy along with the Burgess Law Office, the County Clerk's office, the Eagle Tavern, the 19th century brick jailhouse, and more at Historic Halifax. (D2958Zxgarm/TripAdvisor) #DiscoverHalifaxNC #VisitNC

Have you eaten at Littleton Food and Spirits yet? Reviews rave, "Would recommend to everyone." "best food I've had in a long time!" "I had the prime rib. It was delicious!" (Tammys Place) #DiscoverHalifaxNC #VisitNC ... See More

Visit Halifax
Aunt Ruby's Peanuts
GOOD TO ME! Enjoy a behind the scenes look at Aunt Ruby's Peanuts. The most delicious NC p... See More



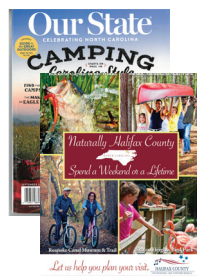
Billboards speak to our largest audience, Interstate-95. The HCCVB's permanent and temporary placed billboards reached over **92 million** impressions last year.



Partnership opportunities with VisitNC allowed us to tell the story of all that Halifax County has to offer to a wider market. Through this collaboration this

year, we placed ads in *Garden & Gun*, *Southern Living*, *Oxford American*, *Where to Retire*, *Ideal-LIVING*, *Recreation News*, *Richmond Magazine*, *The Roanoker Magazine*, *Pittsburgh Magazine*, *Cleveland Magazine*, *Columbus Monthly*, *Coastal Virginia Magazine*, *Nashville Lifestyles*, and *Blue Ridge Country*. This program expands our reach tremendously.

Our State Magazine, *USA Today*, *NC Inland Fisheries Guide*, *North Carolina Field Trips* and *NC Heritage Guide* continue to offer a productive way to reach new visitors.



8,792,944 Combined Readers



Sponsored Customer Service Training classes in partnership with Halifax Community College and Halifax Economic Development Commission.



Created and funded the City of Roanoke Rapids wayfinding program leading visitors from the interstate to places of interest throughout Roanoke Rapids.



Co-hosted the annual 301 Endless Yard Sale with partners along NC's 301 corridor.



Sponsored events in Halifax County including *The Road to Yorktown* featuring *Horses in Action*.



Continued the Roanoke Valley Rocks Program with the planned launch of 12 more "fish," bringing the grand total to 62 throughout Halifax County.



Hosted NC Department of Commerce staff at our Visitor Center to continue offering visitors to North Carolina excellent visitor services while the I-95 North Welcome Center undergoes renovation.



EXIT 173

Funded a Feasibility Study and marketing collateral for a new hotel and restaurant at Exit 173 in Weldon.



EXIT 171

Partnered with the County of Halifax, the City of Roanoke Rapids and Halifax Horizons to fund a Best Use Study of Exit 171.



AMTRAK

Partnered with Halifax Economic Development Commission, the County of Halifax and the Town of Weldon towards securing an Amtrak passenger station in Weldon.



We continue to work with each of our small towns to market their assets and to develop new tourism-related product.



Attraction Visitation

Medoc Mountain State Park
115,398

Sylvan Heights Bird Park
56,686

Roanoke Canal Museum & Trail
25,101

Historic Halifax
24,882

Cryptozoology & Paranormal Museum
28,962



Dog Run: 32,501 - 89 daily average
Visitor Center: 22,722 - 62 daily average

OUR MISSION

**To promote the growth of tourism
in Halifax County**

HCCVB TEAM



Lori R. Medlin, CDME
President/CEO

Susan C. Wilhelm
Executive Assistant



Rich Lithgow
Director of Technology



Board of Directors

We thank our board for their support.

Percilla West, Chairperson
Jay Carlisle, Vice Chairman
Tina Gregory, Secretary
Yvonne Thompson, Treasurer
Sandra Bryant
Curtis Wynn

Jessica Hedgepeth
Brent Lubbock
Cathy Scott, Ex-Officio
Arthur Whitehead, Ex-Officio
Mary Duncan, Ex-Officio
Ginny Lewis, Ex-Officio