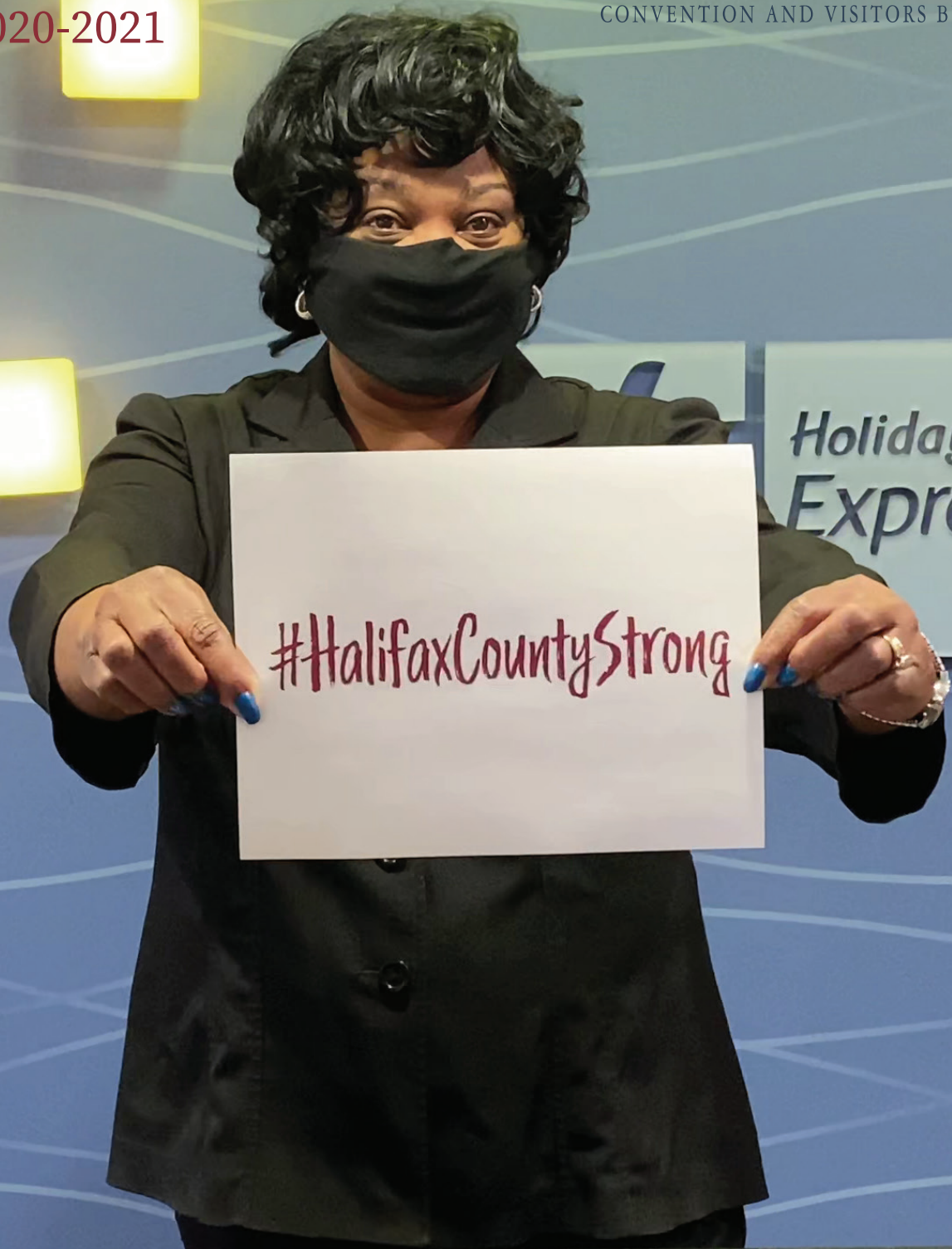


# HALIFAX COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



# HALIFAX COUNTY Tourism Development Authority

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## MISSION STATEMENT

To promote the growth of tourism in Halifax County

## HCCVB BOARD MEMBERS

Our efforts are lead by volunteers appointed by the Halifax County Commissioners, who provide leadership and expertise to ensure effective operations. The Halifax County Tourism Development Authority does business as the Halifax County Convention & Visitors Bureau (HCCVB) and 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 HCTDA, which 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. Visitor dollars support jobs, drive demand for commercial development and improve the quality of life in Halifax County.

## Board of Directors

We thank our board for their support.

Yvonne Thompson, Chairperson  
Jay Carlisle, Vice Chairman  
Brent Lubbock, Secretary  
Sandra Bryant, Treasurer  
Mike Davis  
Brian Harris

Jessica Hedgepeth  
Curtis Wynn  
Cathy Scott, Ex-Officio  
Beth Burchell, Ex-Officio  
Mary Duncan, Ex-Officio  
Ginny Lewis, Ex-Officio



# VISITOR IMPACT FOR HALIFAX COUNTY

Calendar Year 2020

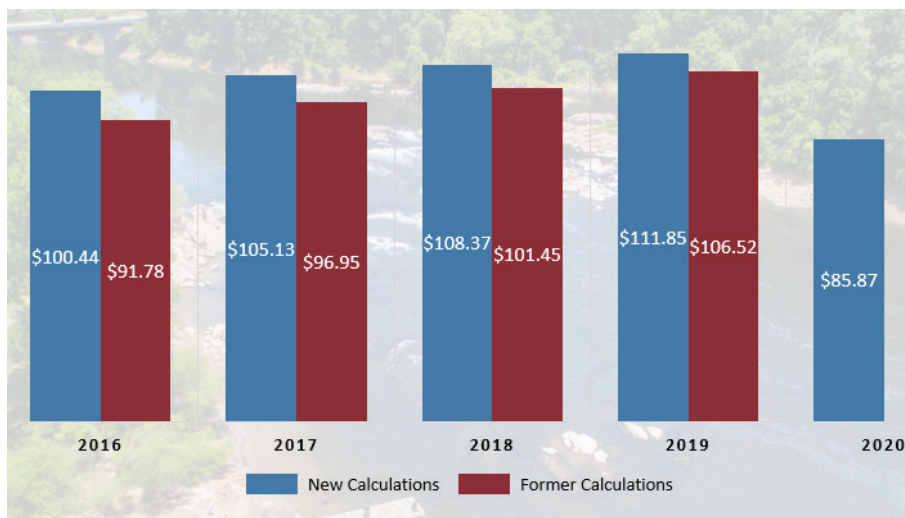
## County Spending by Domestic Visitors Decreased by 23.2% Percent to \$85.9 Million

**D**omestic and international visitors to and within Halifax County spent \$85.9 million in 2020, a decrease of 23.2% from 2019. The data comes from an annual study commissioned by Visit North Carolina, a unit of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

These statistics come from the "Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2020," which can be accessed at [partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies](https://partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies). The study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics in collaboration with the U.S. Travel Association.

### Tourism impact highlights for 2020

- The travel and tourism industry directly employed more than 593 people in Halifax County.
- Total payroll generated by the direct employment of tourism in Halifax County was \$21.2 million.
- State tax revenue generated in Halifax County totaled \$4.1 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income. \$3.2 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.



Visit NC has worked with Tourism Economics to provide county partners with 5 years (2016-2020) historical data so that partners will have a proper trendline of spending data as well as employment estimates and taxes generated as a result of visitor spending.

**"Understanding that the state average tourism spending was down 32%, we are gratified that Halifax County fared better than the average. We want to thank all the employees in the tourism industry in our county that worked on the front lines through the pandemic to keep our businesses open! Even with a worldwide pandemic throughout the year, visitors spent over \$18 million in our hotels and over \$30 million in our restaurants!"**

*~ Lori Medlin, President & CEO of the Halifax County CVB*

# GLOBAL PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has had devastating impacts on the local tourism and hospitality industry. We witnessed dramatic losses in revenue and jobs due to the pandemic, especially by beloved small businesses dependent on customers from out of town.



## Halifax County Strong!

From April 12, 1776, to today, Halifax County has always welcomed visitors with open arms to our communities.

Our tourism community is strong and made up of large businesses and small family businesses that have done a great job growing this industry over the past several years.

Today the Visit Halifax team has worked to compile this landing page that provides information on how you can support our local restaurants and hotels that are staying open to serve you.

Everyone is working hard to follow government mandates and maintain health and safety as our top priority.

Please follow the links below for what we hope will be helpful current information.

### Dining

North Carolina's restrictions have been changed to allow restaurants to open following strict guidelines. Here are some of the Halifax County restaurants offering take-out, curbside pickup or delivery. Please check ahead with the location for possible dine-in options.

Applebee's  
Arby's  
Browning's Grill  
Burger King Roanoke Avenue  
Burger King Weldon Rd  
Carni's  
Carolina BBQ and Chicken  
Chick-fil-A  
China Lin  
Community Drive In  
Cook-Out  
Crockett Barrel  
Dairy Queen  
Domino's  
El Mexican Restaurant  
El Tamarindo  
Haggerty's  
Hardie's 10th Street  
Hardie's Julian Allbrook  
Hunan Chinese  
La Casella in Scotland Neck  
Little Caesar's Pizza  
Logan's  
Madeline's Kitchen in Weldon  
Mayflower Seafood  
McDonald's Julian Allbrook  
McDonald's Roanoke Avenue  
New China  
O'Aetos  
Oscar's  
Papa John's  
Pino's  
Pizza Hut  
Poppyes  
Ralph's BBQ  
Ruby Tuesday  
San Jose  
Exhausted Cheesecake 1 month

### Hotel Updates

All of our national brand hotels are currently open.  
<https://www.visithalifax.com/places-to-stay>

### Attraction Updates

Historic Halifax State Historic Site - Open with restrictions  
Milescor Mountain State Park - Campgrounds (except groups)  
Trails, Restrooms open, Visitor Centers Open with restrictions  
Roanoke Rapids Park & Rec / Roanoke Canal Museum - Closed for now  
Weldon Mills Distillery - Open with restrictions  
Sylvan Heights Bird Park - Outdoor Exhibits Open  
Riverside Mill - Open

### Resources

Count on ME NC restaurant training and certification available at <https://countonmen.org/business-training/>

The N.C. Mortgage, Utility and Rent Relief (MURR) Program - up to \$20,000 in relief funds per qualifying business location.  
SBA Loans - The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved the request for North Carolina's disaster declaration.

N.C. Restaurant & Lodging Association - NCRLA has a fantastic COVID-19 Resource page. It gives guidance and tutorials for employers and gives specific resources for restaurants and lodging.

NC Restaurant Workers Fund - Click here to help those that work in the hospitality industry or if you are struggling, apply now for funds.  
North Carolina Business Relief Resources (via ESRHC)  
Solutions for N.C. Business & Employers (N.C. Dept. of Commerce)

NC Rapid Recovery Loans  
SBA All Business Briefing  
Unemployment Insurance Changes Due to COVID-19

The CARES Act, the largest economic relief package in our nation's history, was signed into law on March 27 and includes major provisions U.S. Travel fought for to deliver economic support to travel businesses, travel workers and their families. Read More from The US Travel Association

### Additions

Rivertown Consignments - Open with limited hours.

From the start of the public health emergency, we forwarded information to partners from the Governor's Coronavirus Task Force - Visit Halifax became proactive in supporting our industry and our local community, as revealed throughout this report.



The pandemic required we share authoritative information related to the pandemic. We did this with a new landing page on [visithalifax.com](https://www.visithalifax.com).



We pivoted [visithalifax.com](https://www.visithalifax.com) to become more user friendly and created tours of our communities on a new Discover Halifax County Communities landing page.

## Discover Halifax County Communities

Places to stay, great food, attractions, and entertainment. Halifax County towns have it all.



Town of Halifax



Town of Weldon



Town of Scotland Neck



Town of Littleton



City of Roanoke Rapids



Town of Enfield



Town of Hobgood



Town of Hollister

**"The support and guidance shown by the Halifax County CVB during the COVID Crisis was so important to our efforts to stay open! The emails and notes of encouragement were just enough some days to keep us going! We are lucky to have such an active and supportive CVB!"**  
~ Jessica Hedgepeth - Manager Quality Inn

# THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

From July 2019 to March 2020, the Halifax County Convention & Visitors Bureau was on the road to a record-breaking year. We were bringing people to Halifax County who would contribute to our economic growth.

Then in March of 2020, all that came to a screeching halt. The global pandemic has affected each of us in ways no one could have expected.

For over 34 years, this organization has represented Halifax County as a great place to visit, explore, dine and stay. We invest the occupancy tax that visitors leave in our county to bring in more visitors, and these dollars roll over in our economy many times.

We believe we are on the road to recovery. Research in partnership with VisitNC shows customers are moving toward being comfortable with travel and have an optimistic outlook for the future. Thanks to our partners in the industry and our "Halifax County Strong" attitude, we are well-positioned to recover fast. We are committed to the health and safety of everyone who works in the industry and our visitors. We know that in the future, together we will be stronger than ever!

Yvonne Thompson    Lori Medlin  
Board Chairperson    President/CEO  
FY 2021-2022



## Halifax County Convention & Visitors Bureau Partnering to Bring Visitors Back

The Halifax County Convention & Visitors Bureau (HCCVB) is counting on partners and guests to do their part to bring visitors back to Halifax County. An earlier adopter of the Count on ME NC program, the HCCVB has been encouraging partners to take the training for their perspective industries. Once a partner has completed the training, the CVB delivers name tags, door clings, and 6ft apart floor stickers to that business. They also give them a shout



"I would like to thank you and your team for all they have done for our restaurant during this most trying times of our lives. With the local communities help, advertising, following protocols, and just plain hard work, Haggerty's Steakhouse has doubled our daily sales figures since before the Covid-19 crisis!! Lisa and I are thrilled with the growth of this little restaurant and strive daily for new ideas to keep everyone's interest. Halifax County Travel and Tourism has been a great help and we will continue to stay involved in the future. Thanks to everyone."

~ Lisa & John Haggerty - Haggerty's Steakhouse and The Trophy Room

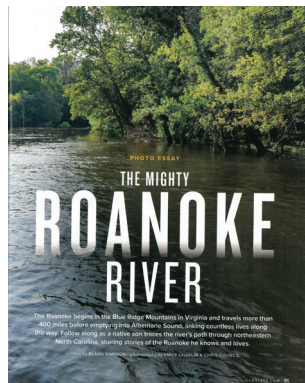
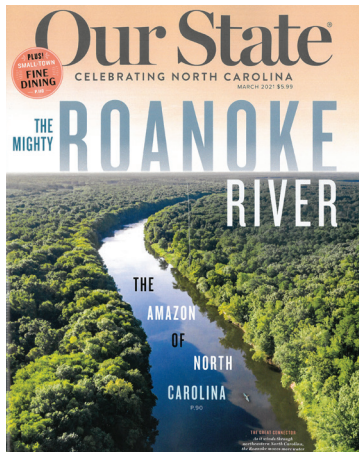
# MARKETING & PR

Advertising pivots to outdoor adventure and safe travel options

Visit Halifax manages a complete marketing plan designed to create awareness of all that Halifax County offers. Our goal is to inspire people to visit and stay overnight in our accommodations. With the onset of the global pandemic and our industry's following attempts at recovery, we have focused on safe exploration and our many outdoor attractions.

We have continued to lead with the Halifax County Strong message.

As the situation evolved, we garnered several earned media placements saving our organization valuable marketing dollars.

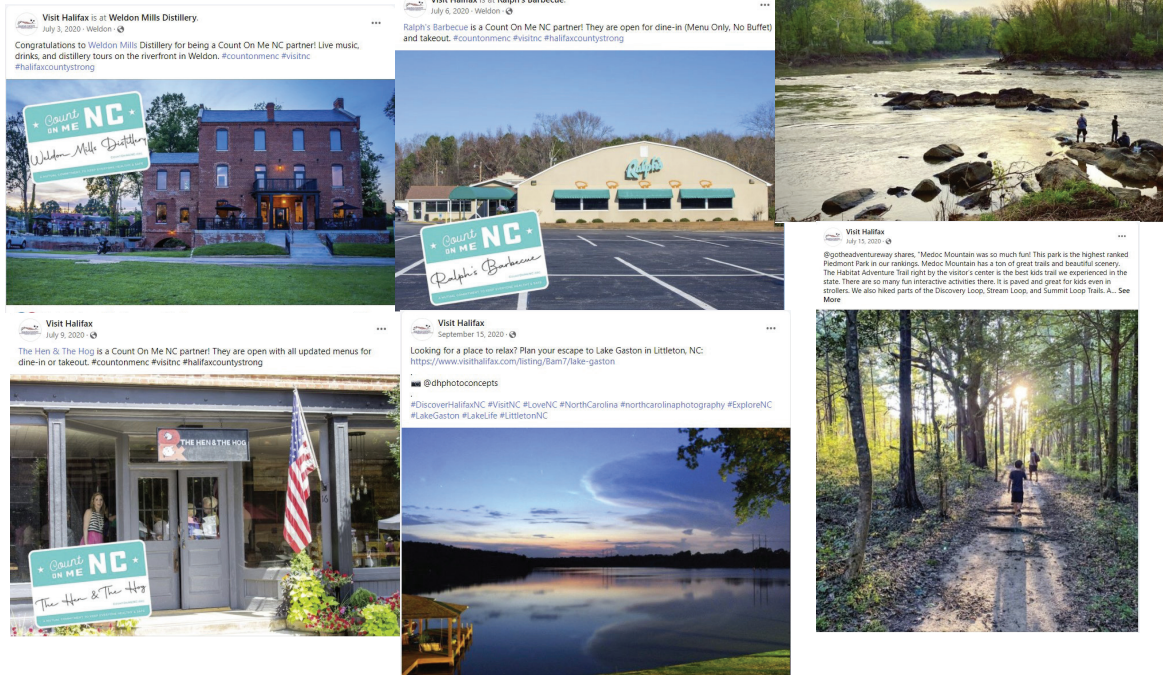


"Historic Halifax would like to thank the Halifax CVB for its regular supply of information and fostering a continued feel of "connectedness" during the height of the pandemic. Tourism's efforts to help attract visitors and keep them aware of all that we have to offer was invaluable as we reopened, in stages, beginning last summer. Since reopening, Historic Halifax has seen a steady increase of visitors, with visitation trending at or above pre-pandemic norms. In 2021, we saw one of the best summer seasons in recent memory. Thanks for your tireless efforts to promote Halifax County's many attractions."

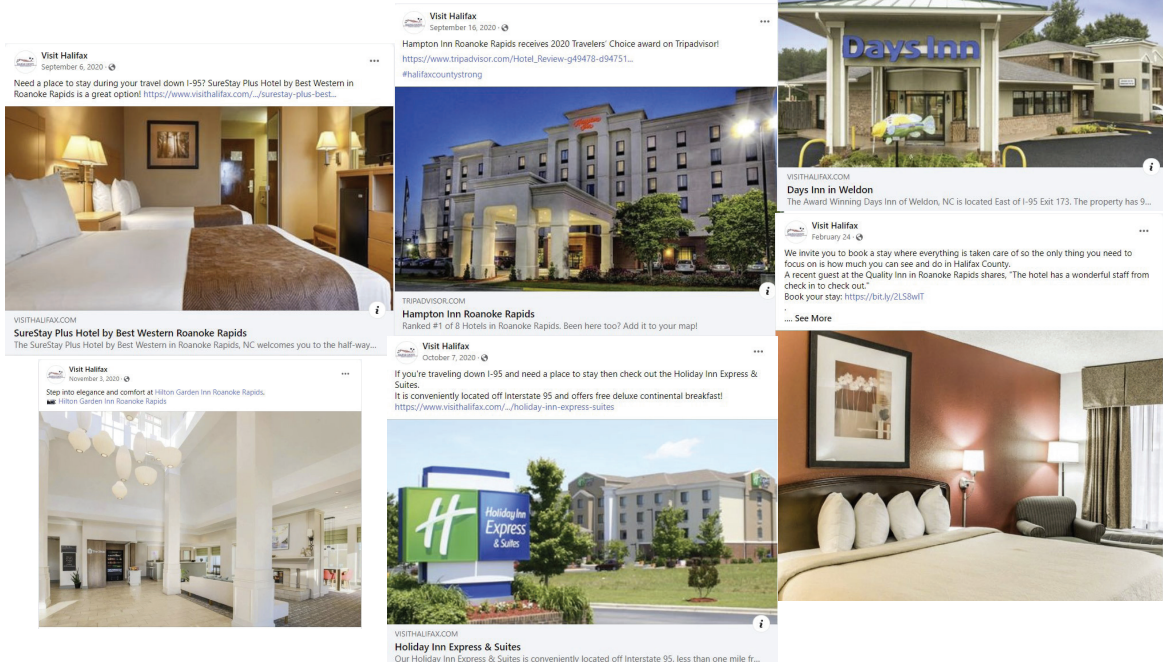
~ Carl Burke, Historic Site Manager of the Historic Halifax State Historic Site

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Our social media focused on "Halifax County Strong" and our safe adventures and events as they resumed operations.



One of our goals was to enhance the visibility of our lodging partners. Our goal was to promote one of our lodging partners each month on our social media channels.



# DESTINATION **MARKETING** ORGANIZATION

Social media continues to be a priority in marketing our destination. Being able to share engaging Halifax County experiences with our **13,473** 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. Our most viewed platform continues

to be Facebook with **1,471,541** impressions, **97,460** engagements and **11,987** clicks to our posted links.



**48.2 % increased engagements**



**72.4% increased engagements**

Have you tried **The Grub Hub**, Roanoke Rapids' newest establishment for all the yum?  
Dishing up hot dogs any way you like 'em, grilled to perfection paninis, hot and cold sandwiches, and comfort sides (we're talking fried green tomatoes, fried corn, and nachos).  
Run, don't walk to 1300B Roanoke Ave.  
... See More



Facebook Top Posts

It's been said they have the very best barbecue in North Carolina, and did somebody say sweet potato pie? 🍌 Don't miss out on **Grandpa's Kitchen** in Littleton, NC. 🍷: **Grandpa's Kitchen**



Enjoy a behind the scenes look at **Aunt Ruby's Peanuts**, the most delicious nuts that ship anywhere in the US! Be sure to order in time for the holidays. 🥜  
📺: FOX 50



Our State Magazine Series



Our State Magazine 2-Page Spread

## Four Great Ways to Enjoy the Outdoors in Halifax County

Hike and paddle, see incredible wildlife, and bike through history — plus visit a historic spot on the Roanoke River for a post-adventure drink.

by Jodi Helmer



Our State Magazine Sponsored Story

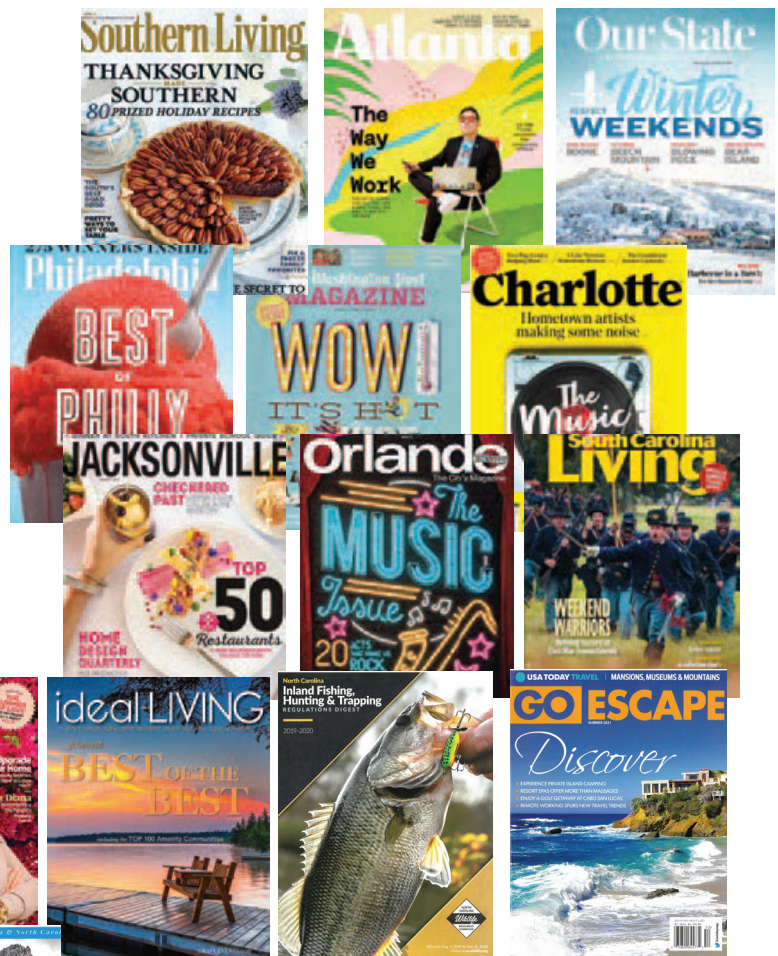
Billboards speak to our largest audience, Interstate-95. The HCCVB's permanent and temporary placed billboards reached over **132 million** impressions last year.



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,

we placed ads in *Garden & Gun*, *Southern Living*, *Atlanta Magazine*, *Our State*, *ideal-LIVING*, *AARP*, *Philadelphia Magazine*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, *Charlotte Magazine*, *Jacksonville Magazine*, *Orlando Magazine*, *South Carolina Living* and *TOWN Magazine*. This partnership expanded our reach tremendously.

*Our State Magazine*, *USA Today*, *NC Inland Fishing, Hunting & Trapping Guide*, and *Travel Taste & Tour* continue to offer a productive way to reach new visitors.



The HCCVB Print Promotions reached over **14,102,082** Combined Readers

# PROJECTS & PARTNERSHIPS



"African-American History is American History. If people see themselves in the history of an historic place they are very likely to want to visit."

~Sandra Bryant, Treasurer HCCVB Board of Directors



Halifax 2026 - We began the planning process of welcoming the Nation to Halifax in 2026 with the historic site's support groups.



Interchange development, I-95 Exit 173 Site in Weldon



## Tourism Legislation

- Roanoke River Paddle Trail \$1,025,000 (shared by Roanoke and Dan rivers)
- Purchase of Andrew Jackson School \$150,000 Grant Funds for the establishment of a museum to supplement the Freedom Trail \$50,000 and Halifax Underground Railroad \$50,000
- New Position at Historic Halifax
- \$5.2 million to complete William R Davie house and to renovate Historic Halifax Visitors Center
- Main Street assistance for Enfield, Roanoke Rapids, and Weldon

# SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorship dollars help make events happen in our county. That is good for visitors and good for our local economies and non-profits!



Halifax County Harvest Days  
 Enfield's Fishing Creek Paddle  
 Fourth of July Fireworks Celebrations  
 Twilight Festival Roanoke Rapids  
 Sylvan Heights Birds, Brews, & BBQ  
 National EMS Bike Ride  
 Harriett Tubman Exhibit  
 Joy in the Park  
 Roanoke Canal Half Marathon & 8k  
 301 Endless Yard Sale  
 RRHS 100th Anniversary Celebration



These dollars support projects and...  
 Roanoke Canal Museum Operations  
 Roanoke Canal Trail Maintenance  
 Roanoke Valley Veterans Museum  
 VisitNC Farms App  
 Car Charging Stations  
 Underground Railroad Trail  
 Town of Scotland Neck Banners  
 Town of Hobgood Banners



Roanoke Rapids Youth Baseball Association  
 Cal Ripken Babe Ruth Baseball State Tournaments  
 Roanoke Rapids Parks & Recreation Tennis Courts

## Attraction Visitation

Medoc Mountain State Park
163,000
Sylvan Heights Bird Park
50,040
Roanoke Canal Museum & Trail
37,421
Historic Halifax
21,180



Dog Run: 37,926 - 122 daily average

# CONTACT

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## Visitors Bureau Staff



Lori Medlin, President/CEO



Susan Wilhelm, Manager of Administration



Donna Bolio, Visitor Center Coordinator



Rich Lithgow, Director of Technology

"The Roanoke Rapids Theatre staff, including myself, did participate in the "Count on Me NC" training classes. The guidance provided gave us a clear understanding of the safety precautions that needed to be taken at our facility during the crisis. While we have been unable to have live performances in our auditorium since early 2020, we did manage to put on several successful outdoor concerts utilizing the safeguards recommended in the "Count on Me NC" initiative.

Thanks again for the leadership the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau displayed during this trying time. Your efforts helped us navigate everything from safety protocols to economic disaster assistance. Keep up the good work!"

*~Beau Petty, Roanoke Rapids Theatre*

260 Premier Boulevard, Roanoke Rapids  
(252) 535-1687  
info@visithalifax.com

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