
2016-2017 Marketing Plan

**Prepared by
Currituck County Department
of Travel & Tourism**

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Letter from the Director

Dear Tourism Partners:

It is with pleasure that the Currituck County Department of Travel & Tourism presents the annual report and marketing plan for 2016-2017. I am excited to be working with an exceptionally talented, skilled and knowledgeable staff at our three sites: the Welcome Center in Moyock; the Visitor's Center in Corolla; and Historic Corolla Park. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities awaiting Currituck County and its tourism industry in the coming year, and we have some new programming and marketing strategies that will continue to build on Currituck's positioning as a top tourism site on the East Coast.

The biggest step forward for the Department is re-engineering its online strategy in the coming year. With approximately 68% of online traffic originating on mobile devices, we are taking advantage of new programs and software to capture this market while utilizing inbound marketing and content management technology to generate more organic searches and visitor conversions.

Instrumental in the growth of the Department of Travel & Tourism, Ciniva continues to be an active partner and will continue to manage our Google Pay-Per-Clicks, email blasts, blogs and other social media and ad displays. Steve Van Leeuwen and his talented team continue their commitment to a strong and successful Currituck tourism industry. We appreciate their responsiveness and willingness to approach challenges with new ideas and strategies as we know that a current campaign can, and will, take a detour with something as simple as a major snowstorm(s) in our prime markets, affecting bookings in unexpected ways. Ciniva recently completed and launched a redesign of the VisitCurrituck.com website in April, and I know you will find the latest statistics on website traffic to be eye-opening.

Facebook continues to be a major source of attracting visitors to our Corolla sands. The Currituck OBX page currently has over 250,000 followers, coming back again and again to see images of our beaches and horses. The Whalehead site now boasts over 10,000 followers since we began management of the page a year ago.

While our beaches will and continue to be the main draw for visitors from all over the world, the tourism department began to spotlight and market, on a small scale, destinations on the Currituck's mainland in 2015-2016. Along with our amazing beaches, wild Spanish Mustangs and historic assets, Currituck can boast of some pretty incredible sites that do not include sand:

- The Currituck County Rural Center (or the CCRC) is becoming an increasingly popular site for equestrian events and shows and boasts an indoor arena and several short-term boarding stalls. Twenty-one RV hook-ups are currently being installed as an added amenity along with fully stocked fishing ponds, a superb kayak/canoe launch, a family picnic and playground area and educational boardwalk. The CCRC also played host this fall to the Currituck Heritage Festival and the first Kansas City Barbeque Society's Currituck cook-off followed by a rodeo. The CCRC is a county jewel that is now being discovered by residents and tourists alike.



- The Currituck County Mainland also enjoys the new soccer fields located at the Community Park in Barco. Tournaments are already playing on these state of the art fields, and the baseball fields, “Currituck’s Fields of Dreams,” are scheduled to be open for play in the fall of 2017. Jason Weeks and his staff are beginning to actively pursue travel teams, and the potential for visitation and sales tax revenue is great. Jason is working with Elizabeth City and its hoteliers to bring in bigger regional tournaments using hotel rooms located in Pasquotank until such time as Currituck attracts its own hotel(s).
- Located on Knott’s Island, Mackay’s Island Wildlife Refuge is a haven for birders, kayakers, hikers, fishermen/women, hunters and nature seekers. Knott’s Island is assessable via car or ferry, and once there, visitors can enjoy the Wildlife Refuge, Martin’s Vineyard and other local sites.
- Historic Jarvisburg Colored School (HJCS) on the mainland is now open for tours on Wednesdays along with tours by appointment. The Visitor Support Center is open and renovation to the building continues with new storm windows installed and plans for renovation work inside the building this winter. New benches were recently built and delivered to HJCS as a boy scout project. Built in the 1800s on land given by an African-American for the express purpose of educating African-American children, this school is unique and apart from the Rosenwald schools built by the government. This site has already garnered national attention since opening the doors in September of 2014.
- Paul Robinson, of Currituck BBQ, recently moved, and has begun restoration on a historic Rosenwald school located in Currituck County. Falling to ruins, Paul has saved this building which will now be enjoyed by residents, visitors and history buffs.
- Currituck continues to be on the bucket list of hunters around the world with its long tradition of waterfowl hunting. We have placed a few strategic ads in hunting publications just to keep us “top of mind” with those hunters seeking a unique and historic hunting excursion.
- The Mainland boasts 5 golf courses along its corridor: Eagle Creek, the Carolina Club, The Pointe, Holly Ridge and Kilmarlic. The Pointe, the Carolina Club and Kilmarlic regularly make the lists of top golfing destinations and play host to tournaments, group outings, individual play and weddings.
- And as most of you know, Currituck is the site of a new waterpark scheduled to open Memorial Day 2017. This attraction states that it will draw up to 5,000 visitors a day through its doors during season, which equates to a sales tax windfall for Currituck. This attraction should be a major economic catalyst for business growth in the lower end of the County, and has the best potential to lure in that elusive “hotel” on the Mainland shores.



One of the marketing strategies for both Corolla and the mainland accomplished in 2015-2016 was the acquisition of several new billboards that will help us continue to brand our beach assets and create awareness of mainland tourism opportunities. You will see that billboards going south focus on Corolla attractions (and possibly converting some Dare County tourists to Corolla day-trippers), while billboards going north spotlight mainland assets with the intention of “converting” tourists to visit these unique venues on subsequent outings.

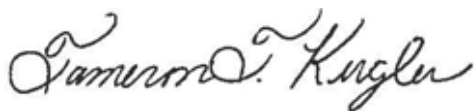
We continue to invest in videography to grow our library of Currituck events, tourist attractions and the voice of Currituck “locals.” Clips from our video are used online, on television and on cable to introduce potential visitors to the beauty and vitality of our community and its residents. Work has also begun on a documentary of the Historic Jarvisburg Colored School to capture the stories and traditions of its former students.

Other events and projects in the preliminary planning stages or nearing completion include:

- Planning for the 350 anniversary of Currituck County which included in the original grant Dare County, Camden County, Pasquotank County and Hyde County
- A recreation of Betsy Dowdy’s ride for the 350th celebration
- The new restroom/dressing room facility at Historic Corolla Park
- Continuation of the path at Whalehead to connect the bridge to the boat launch
- Planning for a new boat facility/museum to house and interpret Currituck’s restored historic boats at Historic Corolla Park

In the following pages, you will see our marketing strategy for the upcoming 2017 season. We look forward to a great year and, as a valued partner in Currituck’s tourism industry, your comments, insights and suggestions are always appreciated. Together, we will continue to strengthen and grow Currituck’s tourism economy. We’ve got it going on, Y’all!

With warm regards,



Tameron T. Kugler, Director



Tourism Development Authority

As of November 10, 2016

- **David Griggs**, Chairman, District 2
- **Paul O'Neal**, At-Large
- **Paul Beaumont**, District 4
- **Mike Hall**, At-Large
- **Mike Payment**, District 3
- **Vance Aydlett**, District 1
- **Marion Gilbert**, District 5

In 2004, the North Carolina General Assembly passed new legislation allowing the Currituck County Board of Commissioners to raise the county's current occupancy tax from 4% to 6%. Section 3 of the act amends Chapter 209, 1987 N.C. Sess. Laws, as amended by 1991 N.C. Sess. Laws Ch. 155 and S.L. 1999-155, to require the Currituck County Board of Commissioners in adopting the additional tax, to adopt a resolution creating a Tourism Development Authority (TDA) responsible for expenditures of room occupancy tax proceeds.

The TDA consists of the seven elected Commissioners and the County Manager and the County's designated travel and tourism representative (as an ex-officio, non-voting members).

Currituck County has collected an occupancy tax from visitors since 1987. Over the years, tax revenues have assisted communities with the many governing aspects related to a growing tourism industry. These have included adding additional fire, emergency medical, life guard, and law enforcement personnel.

In addition, occupancy tax has funded tourism promotion and advertising and restoration of the historic Whalehead Club. A goal of the occupancy tax legislation was to minimize the effects of tourism on local taxation.

In an effort to seek input from local tourism business leaders, the Board of Commissioners voted to also establish a Tourism Advisory Board. This appointed board includes a broad cross-section of the County's tourism-related businesses.



Currituck County Tourism Advisory Board

Directory

As of November 10, 2016

- **Leslie Daughtry**, Chair (appointed by At-Large seat – Paul O’Neal)
Resort Realty, Director of Corporate Development
- **Jay Bender** (appointed by District 1 seat - Vance Aydlett)
Owner, Corolla Outback Adventures
- **Wanda Beasley** (appointed by District 2 seat – David Griggs)
Owner, BJ’s Carolina Café, Creative Catering by Wanda
- **Janice Farr** (appointed by District 5 seat - Marion Gilbert)
Senior Vice-President, Sun Realty
- **Ted Jagucki**, Vice-Chairman (appointed by District 3 seat – Mike Payment)
Owner, OBX Popcorn Shoppe
- **Mike Martine** (appointed by At-Large seat – Mike Hall)
Eye Candy Digital Video
- **Daniel Pennington** (appointed by District 4 seat – Paul Beaumont)
Owner, Pass the Salt Café

Tourism Development Authority Appointee:

- **S. Paul O’Neal**, Commissioner

Ex-officio Staff Members:

- **Dan Scanlon**, County Manager
- **Tameron Kugler**, Director, Department of Travel & Tourism



Currituck County Department Of Travel & Tourism Staff

- Director of Travel & Tourism – **Tameron Kugler**

Oversees daily operations of the Travel & Tourism Department and Historic Corolla Park; is responsible for the administration, management, and operation functions of the department and Historic Corolla Park. Develops and manages the annual operating budgets of both the Tourism Department and Historic Corolla Park. Supervises the development and implementation of the annual marketing and communications plans.

- Site Manager/Curator – **Jill Landen**

Responsible for the daily operations of the Whalehead and Historic Corolla Park. Responsible for acquisitions, maintenance and cataloging of all historical artifacts owned by the County or on loan by private individuals. Other duties as assigned by the Director.

- Creative Director – **Dan Clowdsley**

Develops, designs, edits, and produces materials for publication, marketing promotions, and media outreach, both printed and online. Works with outside print agencies and publications. Other duties as assigned by the Director.

- Marketing Director – **Stuart Chamberlain**

Develops the annual marketing plan as well as managing and scheduling advertising campaigns (print and online) and marketing materials. Responsible for maintaining and updating the Travel & Tourism website and the Whalehead Wedding website. Works with outside agencies to design and implement new features for the websites and is responsible for research and analysis of e-marketing opportunities as well as providing statistical analysis of website and marketing programs. Other duties as assigned by the Director.



- Public Relations Coordinator – **Michele Ellis**

Provides public relations and customer service to visitors, residents, and businesses. Assists in the development of information and public relations programs (including FAM tours), promotes attributes of the area, and maintains a database of County resources/businesses. Tracks visitor, wedding and travel show inquiries and assists with fulfillments of mail, phone and online inquiries (including other pertinent data). Other duties as assigned by the Director.

- Sales & Marketing Associate – **Kaye Beasley**

Maintains and updates Travel & Tourism and Historic Corolla Park (Whalehead) social media sites, including photography and video to use on these sites. Responsible for the retail sales operations (ordering, pricing and oversight) at the county visitor centers. Other duties as assigned by the Director.

- Promotions & Events Coordinator – **Kola Lynch, Kemberly Sawyer**

Due to the extensive area that we operate, the tourism department has two coordinators. With the Director, they develop and implements events and programs that promote tourism in Currituck County both on the mainland and on the Currituck Outer Banks. They work with the local community, businesses and organizations to help promote events. In addition, Kola Lynch is responsible for the Event Assistance Program and Kemberly Sawyer is responsible for weddings at the Whalehead. Other duties as assigned by the Director.

- Supervisor of Visitor Centers – **Greg Schwarga** (Tourism), (Historic Corolla Park)

Supervises, trains and schedules temporary staff at assigned facilities. Oversees office administration (including responsibility for office machinery, systems and vehicles) and reviews all contracts before handing off to the Director. Enters and tracks Purchases Orders, Iran Divestment forms, Certificates of Insurance, E-Verify forms and other duties as assigned by the Director. Promotes attributes of the area and maintains publications and other advertising media at the Tourism and Park center. Historic Corolla Park Supervisor is responsible for ordering, pricing and maintaining retail center at the Whalehead as well as scheduling group tours. Other duties as assigned by the Director.

- Visitor Relations Coordinator – **Nancy Garris**

Provides customer service to visitors at the Currituck Outer Banks Visitor's Center and schedules and trains temporary staff at the Center. Promotes the attributes of the area and maintains publications and other advertising media at the center. Other duties as assigned by the Director.



The 2015-2016 Season: Economic Impact & Sales Tax Revenue

According to the U.S. Travel Association, 1 in 9 jobs depend on travel and tourism, and the Southeast also enjoys the largest percentage of tourism travel at 30%. The tourism industry continues to be Currituck County's main economic driver.

According to statistics from our Welcome Center in Moyock and our Visitors Center in Corolla, we continue to see a high volume of visitors stopping to get information (Moyock: 121,370 Visitors - Corolla: 72,000 Visitors). Our Moyock center also offers an opportunity for the Moyock team to convert those visitors going to Dare County into day trippers at our many attractions on the Currituck Outer Banks.

Below is information showing tourism's impact on the County's economy during the 2015-2016 season. Currituck County continues to grow from year to year in occupancy and sales tax collections, but the 2016 season was an unpredictable one for many destinations across North Carolina.

Currituck County, North Carolina 2015 Tourism Economic Impact Fact Sheet

Yearly 2015 Tourist Activity in Currituck

- Generated \$146.93 million per year in direct tourist spending
- Produced \$28.18 million per year in worker income & paychecks
- Created \$6.79 million per year in local county tax revenues
- Created \$6.31 million per year in state tax revenue
- Generated \$13.1 million per year in combined state & local taxes
- Generated 1,580 jobs per year
- 2014 Tourist spending increased by 1.9% over 2014

Source: [1]

On an Average Day in 2015

Tourist Spending in Currituck County:

- Generated \$35,890 in combined state and local tax revenues
- Created \$18,603 in local county revenues
- Created \$17,288 in state tax revenues
- Generated \$77,205 in worker paychecks

Source: [1], [2]

2015 Tourism Tax Relief for Currituck Residents & Households

As a result of taxes generated by tourist spending in Currituck County

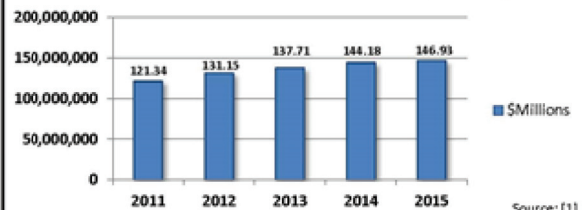
- Each resident* of Currituck County pays \$518.58 less in local and state taxes – up \$17.34 from 2014.
- Each household unit** pays \$860 less in local & state taxes

* 2015 population estimated at 25,263

**2015 household units estimated at 25,263

Source: [1], [2], [3]

5 Year Trend of Annual Tourist Spending



Source: [1]



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Sources:

- [1] Prepared for Visit NC by the Research Department of the US Travel Association for Visit NC using the Travel Economic Impact Model (TEIM)
- [2] Additional analysis prepared by Tameron Kugler, Director, Currituck County Department of Travel & Tourism
- [3] U.S. Census Bureau, Number of Household Units in North Carolina Counties, 2015; www.census.gov



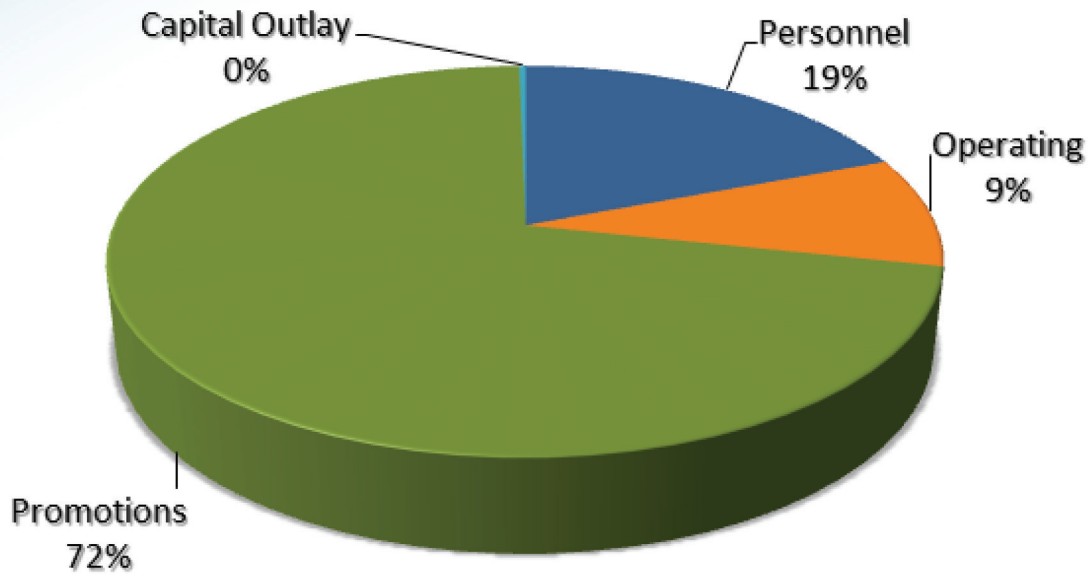
Increase in Sales Tax Revenue

Sales tax revenue has steadily increased since taking a dip during the 2010 season as this chart shows.



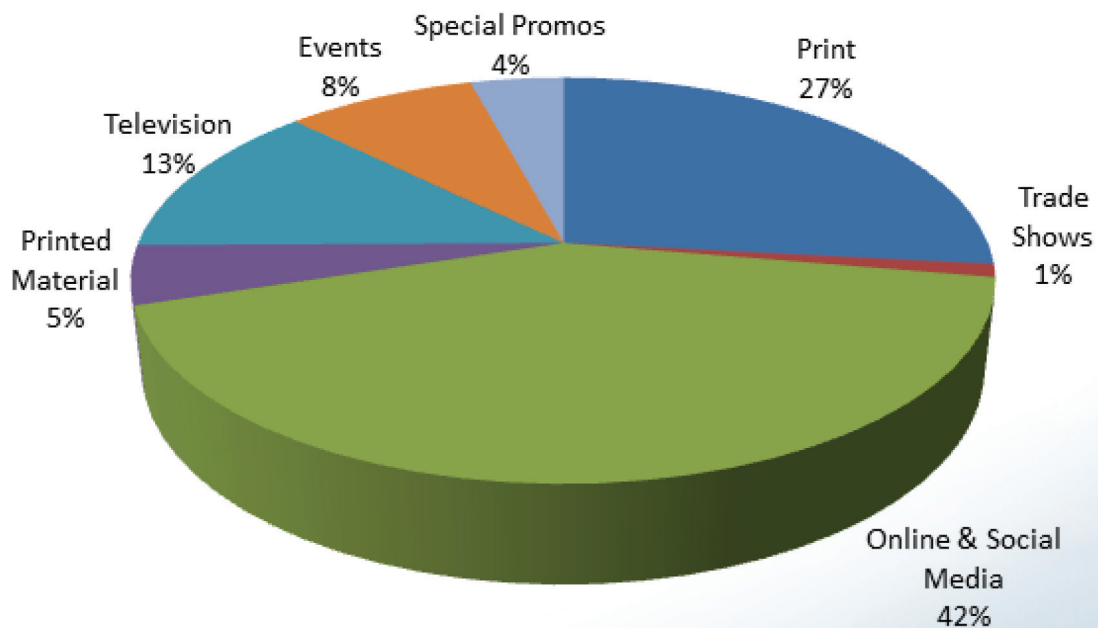
2016-2017 Budget Percentages

Following is a breakdown of the expenditures for the Travel & Tourism budget of \$3,307,840.00.



Percentages of Promotions Budget

This chart shows the percentage of dollars spent in different advertising platforms.



Breakdown Of Budget in Dollars

Online & Social Media:	\$1,059,938
Print:	\$450,600
Print Materials (Brochures, etc.):	\$11,3000
Television:	\$266,000
Events:	\$90,000
Special Promotions:	\$334,550
Travel Shows:	\$24,162

Marketing Objectives

The marketing objectives of the tourism department is many fold:

- Increase Occupancy Tax by bringing more visitors to Currituck County to spend their vacation dollars (equating in more sales tax revenue for Currituck)
- Generate more downstream clicks to partners so our visitors are spending their dollars in County
- Expand Facebook reach to over 1 million and over 350,000 likes to increase awareness of Currituck Outer Banks as a wonderful vacation destination
- Continue to brand Currituck as a family friendly destination



Marketing Plan Strategies & Tactics

In the past, the main focus of the marketing plan was to look back at paid media and analyze the results. We are taking a slightly different approach this year to produce more quality leads and to develop long term relationships with our visitors to keep them coming back year after year. Many of the same metrics are still used with a few new programs:

Target Audience

Adults 34-64 • HHI \$110,000 or higher • Skewing heavily female

Primary Audience

- Family groups that want to reconnect with each other and with nature on the Outer Banks; intend to travel in the next 3-12 months
- Targeted niche subcategories include: Nature Lovers, Weddings, Foodies, Adventure Seekers & Family Groups

Secondary Audience

- Engaged Couples – those interested in a destination wedding
- Hunters/Sportsman – those interested in waterfowl hunting in the area

Geographic Focus

- Primarily the Mid-Atlantic Northeast Regions
- Core Feeder Markets include: Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio
- Opportunity Feeder Markets: West Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee
- Pull more regionally for event marketing and day trippers

Create Niche Categories of travel interests to better segment potential visitors.

- Nature Lovers, Foodies, Weddings, Family Time and Adventure Seekers
- Further categorize the above topics by the 4 seasons



Use new video assets to deliver iconic coastal imagery and create a personal connection by using locals to tell stories about the area (Discover Our Currituck).

- Integrate Video throughout the website, in rich media ads, content teasers and social media
- Create 15 and 30 sec spots that go along with the 5 key interest categories & 4 seasons

Create a consistent year round presence with paid advertising and increase digital presence during peak holiday times.

- Run strategic ad campaigns during Thanksgiving, Christmas and other major holidays to take advantage of families spending time together and potentially planning their next reunion or vacation

Take advantage of unfavorable weather events (i.e. snowstorms) to remind people to “Think Warm” and plan their summer vacation early

Stay ahead of the curve by continuously researching industry trends and new technology.

- i.e. Arrivalist, Flagspree and UGoTour

Change creative based on the season to reflect current area conditions and travel habits.

- Use video whenever possible
- Continue to curate and create new photography assets for use in both print and digital advertising

Continue to refine and improve the VisitCurrituck.com website in order to keep up with the increased demand from mobile devices.

- 69% of all web traffic is from a mobile device (a 32% increase over last year) Utilize print media more effectively by matching up messaging and imagery with digital ads and website design

Rely more heavily on email marketing.

- Database of 100,000 double opt in subscribers
- 2 emails per month
- Include brief questionnaires to help further segment our list into niche categories



Promote business locally via publications and programs including:

- VisitCurrituck.com website
- Currituck County Shopping & Dining Guide
- Currituck Outer Banks Newspaper
- Brochure co-op program
- Brochure distribution racks
- VisitNC.com website
- Currituck Outer Banks Visitor's Guide
- Currituck Outer Banks Wedding Planner
- MORE Card discount card program
- Visitor and Welcome Centers
- Television advertising spots
- NC Coast Host website

Content Development & Scheduling

Embrace the idea of storytelling through our content:

- Rely on local residents, business owners and longtime vacationers to help tell the Currituck story and engage with our current audience
- Inspire future visitors with stories that will create an emotional response
- Continue to add to our visual library by scheduling quarterly or bi-annual photo shoots to consistently keep our image fresh

Meet visitor expectations with ad content that matches landing page content:

- Use visual cues that will entice a click and create landing pages that will capture interest for further engagement

Stick to content schedule below:

- Videos & Photography by internal and local assets
 - Testimonials
 - Event Related Imagery
 - Family fun on the beach
 - Discover Our Currituck
 - Summer Related Imagery
 - Bird Watching
 - Wedding Imagery
- Blogs/Internal Pages/Landing Pages
 - Horses, Lighthouse
 - Weddings and Reunions
 - How to Rent a Vacation Home
 - Food/Wine/Beer,
 - Discover Our Currituck
 - Carova
 - Ghost Stories
 - Pirate Stories
 - Hidden Treasures



ADVERTISING

Digital

Online advertising efforts will be twofold. We will continue to gear efforts towards generating awareness of our destination by reaching our target markets, primarily the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern United States. At the same time we will test some new markets that have started to show increased interest in our area within the last few years. These markets include:

Georgia • Michigan • Illinois • Florida • Tennessee • West Virginia

Efforts will be geared towards driving visitation to the newly redesigned responsive website, which provides a robust user experience on all devices and platforms, including desktop, mobile and smartphone.

A portion of our digital advertising budget will be invested in pay-per-click, display ads, text ads, and remarketing campaigns through the Google Search and Display Network. In addition to the paid ads, we will be continuously creating relevant content to keep the website fresh and hopefully draw more organic traffic, thus cutting down our PPC costs.

Ad Space	July '16	Aug '16	Sep '16	Oct '16	Nov '16	Dec '16	Jan '17	Feb '17	Mar '17	Apr '17	May '17	June '17
OurState.com												
Compass Media												
CBS Baltimore												
Programatic Campaign												
Content Activation												
TravelGuidesFree.com												
Virginia Living												
Madden Media												
OuterBanksThisWeek.com												
Northern Va Magazine												
Wavy.com												
WTKR.com												
Email Marketing												
Silicon Travel												
OuterBanksVoice.com												
OBX.com												
Facebook												
Pinterest												
Instagram												
Youtube												
Google												
Bing/Yahoo												



Print

In the past, the strategy for print advertising has always been to get in as many publications as we can, regardless of the ad size. We have now reached a point where our brand is highly recognized and we no longer need to use the spaghetti model to see what sticks. This year, the plan is to cut down the total number of publications in which we advertise, and increase the size and frequency in those publications. For example, instead of running 4 1/6th page ads in Coastal Living, we will run 2 full page ads to gain more exposure. Some other notable publications in which we are looking to advertise include:

Southern Living • The Local Palate • Garden & Gun • VisitNC Travel Guide

Outside of publications that pursue the family travel segment, we will also run print ads in some niche publications that focus on golf, weddings, nature and heritage travel.

Ad Space	July '16	Aug '16	Sep '16	Oct '16	Nov '16	Dec '16	Jan '17	Feb '17	Mar '17	Apr '17	May '17	June '17
Our State Magazine												
Duck/Corolla Guide												
North Beach Sun												
Boomer Magazine												
Carolina Publishing												
Local Palate												
Compass Media												
Garden & Gun												
Good Housekeeping	Flexible placement based on market conditions and availability											
American Waterfowler												
NC Travel Guide												
Atlanta Magazine												
Northern VA Magazine												
Sunny Day Guide												
Southern Living												
The Coast												
OuterBanks Magazine												
Flower Magazine												
Women's Day	Flexible placement based on market conditions and availability											
USA Today Travel Guide												
Modern Woman												
Country Living	Flexible placement based on market conditions and availability											
Resort Maps												
Redbook	Flexible placement based on market conditions and availability											
Better Homes & Gardens	Flexible placement based on market conditions and availability											



Social Media

Social media advertising via Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Twitter will also be utilized more heavily than they have in the past, because their ad models are starting to show more promise.

Video ads will continue to be used as a part of the digital campaign. The Department recently purchased higher end digital video equipment with the intention of getting more video assets to use in various advertising campaigns.

An increased focus on mobile ads will round out our digital strategy and we have seen a 56% increase in mobile traffic since just last year.

Television/Video

Video content will be a priority yet again, mainly in response to the growth of mobile device usage, increase demand by travel consumers for online video, and the growth of our target demographic on social media.

Videos will be utilized for advertising and posting on social channels such as Youtube and Facebook, and will also play a key role on the website.

Television commercials produced by the Tourism Department air in target market states such as Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and New York. These commercials entice potential visitors to choose Currituck for their next vacation.

Travel Shows/Wedding Shows

Tourism staff attended The New York Times Travel Expo, AAA Great Vacations Expo and the Travel & Adventure Expo in January 2016. February 2016 we shined at the Boston Globe Travel Expo and followed up by the Travel & Adventure Expo in Philadelphia, PA in March 2016. The leads that were collected from each of the shows attended by the Tourism staff totaled 6,800. They also participated in multiple local and regional travel and wedding shows. We would like to thank each business that made a donation for our giveaway for each show, this contributed to our travel show season being a great success.



Email Marketing

With over 100,000 double opt-in subscribers, we will rely more heavily on email marketing to entice potential visitors with seasonal updates and exciting news on upcoming events. We will send out 2 emails per month and include a brief questionnaire in each email to help segment our lists based on interests or travel habits. This will allow us to further dial in our messaging to make sure we are providing our database with relevant information.

Publications Produced/Distributed by CCTT

The following printed publications will be updated and re-issued during the 2015/2016 fiscal year. These publications are mainly used to fulfill leads, handout at trade shows and display in the Welcome Centers to provide additional information to the traveling public.

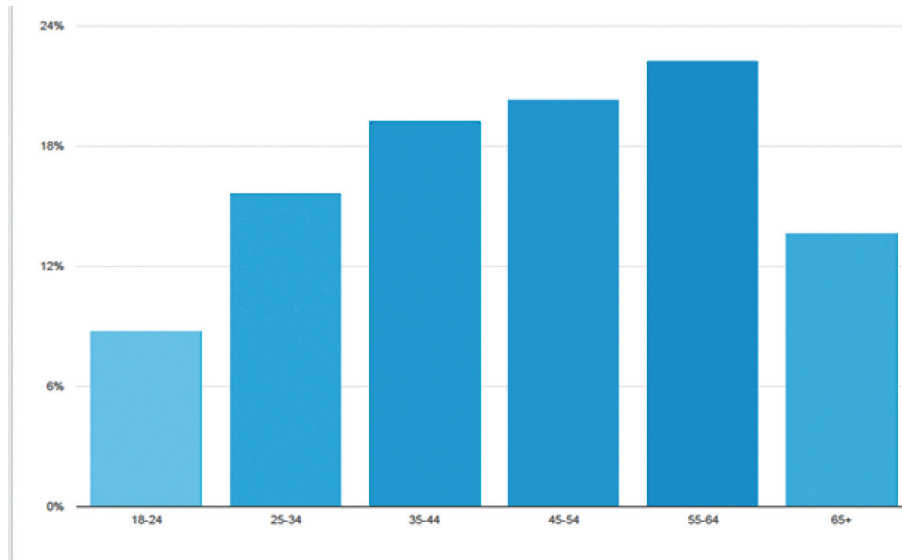
- Visitor's Guide
- Shopping & Dining Guide
- Wedding Planning Guide
- Historic Corolla Park Guide
- MORE Card
- Beach Driving (Brochure – distributed to local property management companies)
- Beach Safety (Brochure – distributed to local property management companies)
- Golf Brochure
- Vineyards Brochure
- Reunions Guide
- Farm Market Guide
- Knotts Island Brochure
- Whalehead in Historic Corolla Guide



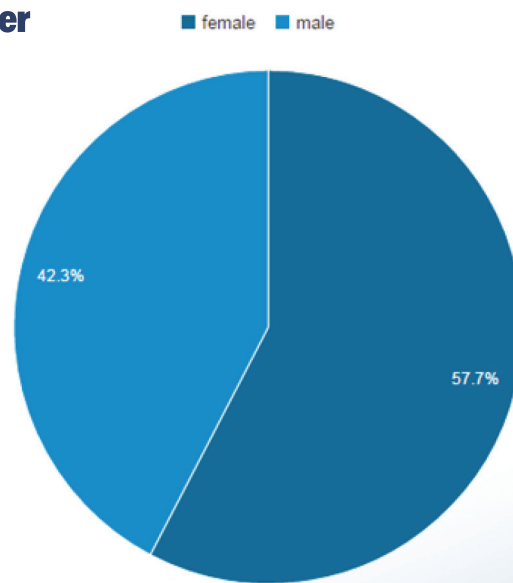
Website Highlights

A new website was launched in April 2016 to keep up with the ever changing trends and user habits in the digital world. The navigation was stripped down to make it easier for users to find information. An interactive header was added that allows users to choose 1 of 5 possible travel interests, length of stay and season they would like to visit. The website will then offer suggestions based on the user's wants/needs.

Website Demographics – Age



Demographics – Gender



	1,264,645 % of Total 96.03% (1,316,901)	1,264,645 % of Total 96.03% (1,316,901)
1. North Carolina	227,079	17.96%
2. Virginia	185,909	14.70%
3. Pennsylvania	106,640	8.43%
4. New York	106,421	8.42%
5. Ohio	56,385	4.46%
6. District of Columbia	54,277	4.29%
7. Florida	52,118	4.12%
8. Georgia	49,447	3.91%
9. Maryland	43,725	3.46%
10. New Jersey	42,786	3.38%

Page ?	Pageviews ?	Unique Pageviews ?	Avg. Time on Page ?
	2,740,408 % of Total 100.00% (2,740,408)	2,197,359 % of Total 100.00% (2,197,359)	00:02:03 Avg for View: 00:02:03 (0.00%)
1. /default.aspx	294,681 (10.75%)	237,947 (10.83%)	00:02:00
2. /maps-info/Visitor-Guide/default.aspx	215,669 (7.87%)	184,371 (8.39%)	00:04:02
3. /maps-info/visitor-guide/default.aspx	140,507 (5.13%)	116,735 (5.31%)	00:03:13
4. /visitor-guides/default.aspx	77,921 (2.84%)	70,920 (3.23%)	00:04:07
5. /rentals-lodging/vacation-rentals/default.aspx	55,890 (2.04%)	37,365 (1.70%)	00:01:08
6. /maps-info/maps/default.aspx	52,072 (1.90%)	36,300 (1.65%)	00:01:07
7. /Things-to-Do/Attractions/whalehead-historic-c-orolla-nc/default.aspx	39,219 (1.43%)	30,213 (1.37%)	00:02:40
8. /deals/rentals-lodging/default.aspx	37,517 (1.37%)	27,846 (1.27%)	00:01:08
9. /things-to-do/attractions/whalehead-in-historic-c-orolla/default.aspx	36,329 (1.33%)	32,012 (1.46%)	00:05:00
10. /things-to-do/default.aspx	29,418 (1.07%)	20,559 (0.94%)	00:01:28



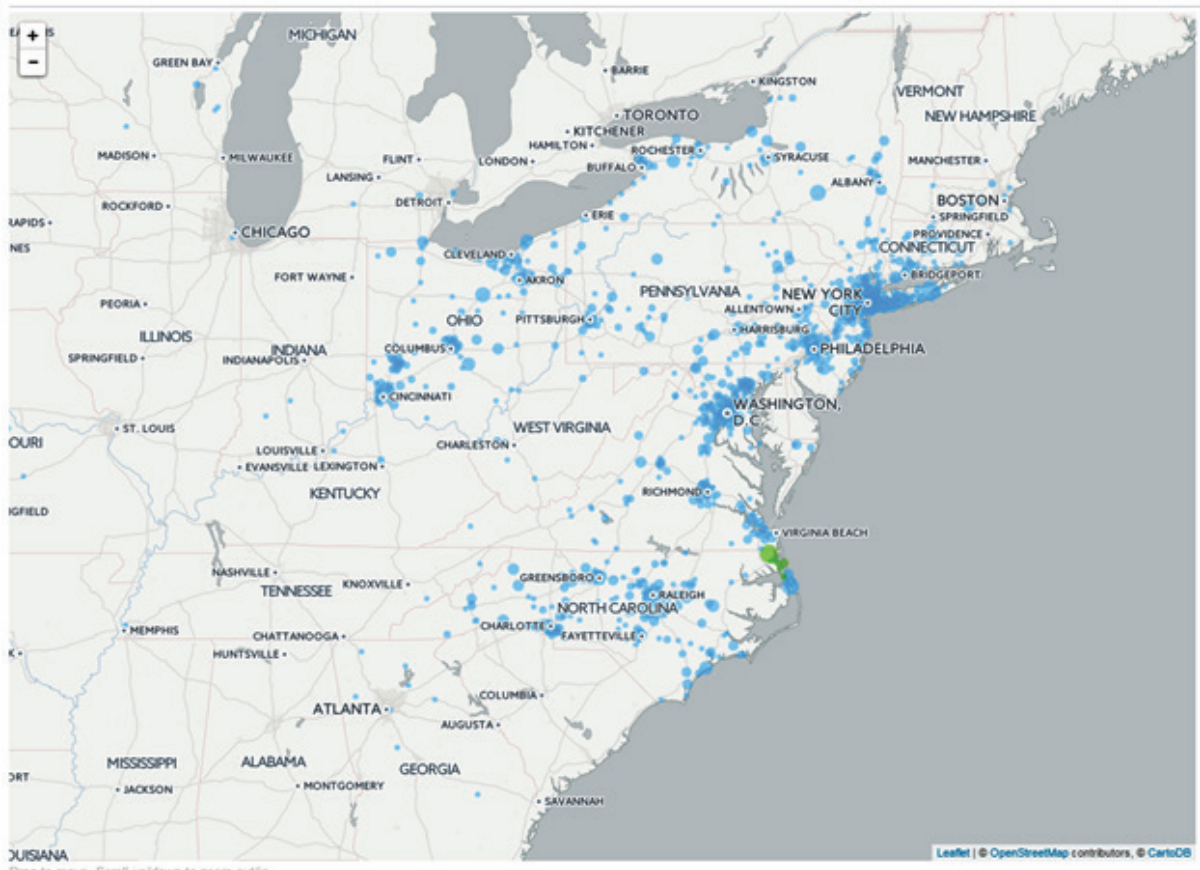
Device Category [?]	Sessions [?] ↓	% New Sessions [?]	New Users [?]
		1,316,901 % of Total: 100.00% (1,316,901)	83.57% Avg for View: 83.52% (0.07%)
1. mobile	597,426 (45.37%)	83.63%	499,646 (45.40%)
2. desktop	499,912 (37.96%)	85.39%	426,853 (38.79%)
3. tablet	219,563 (16.67%)	79.27%	174,049 (15.81%)



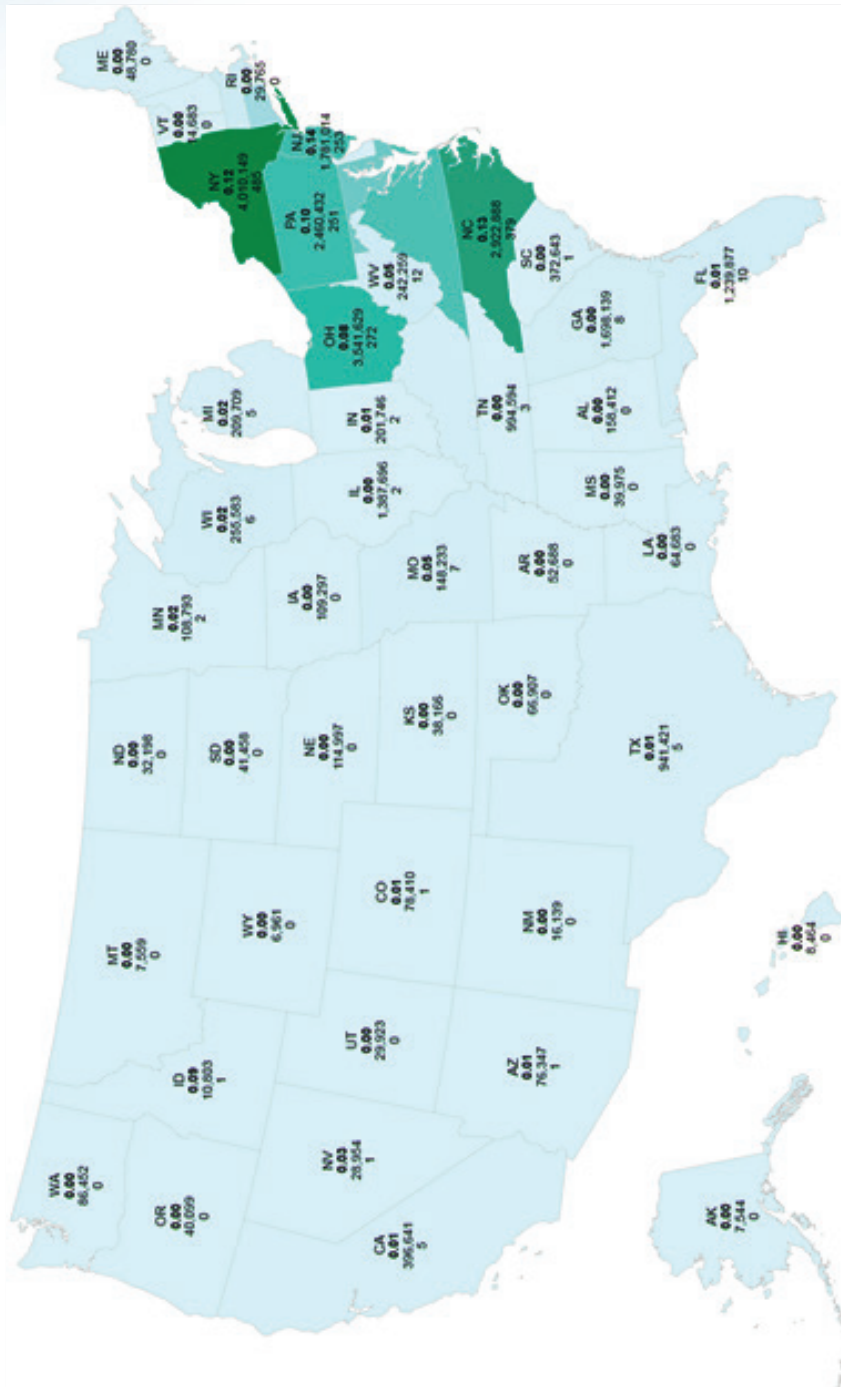
New Digital Metric Tool - Arrivalist

Arrivalist provides patent-pending marketing technology that anonymously measures changes in a user's location via their mobile devices after various types of media exposure. They triangulate advertising exposure with location-aware digital devices to provide the first true measurement of destination advertising ROI.

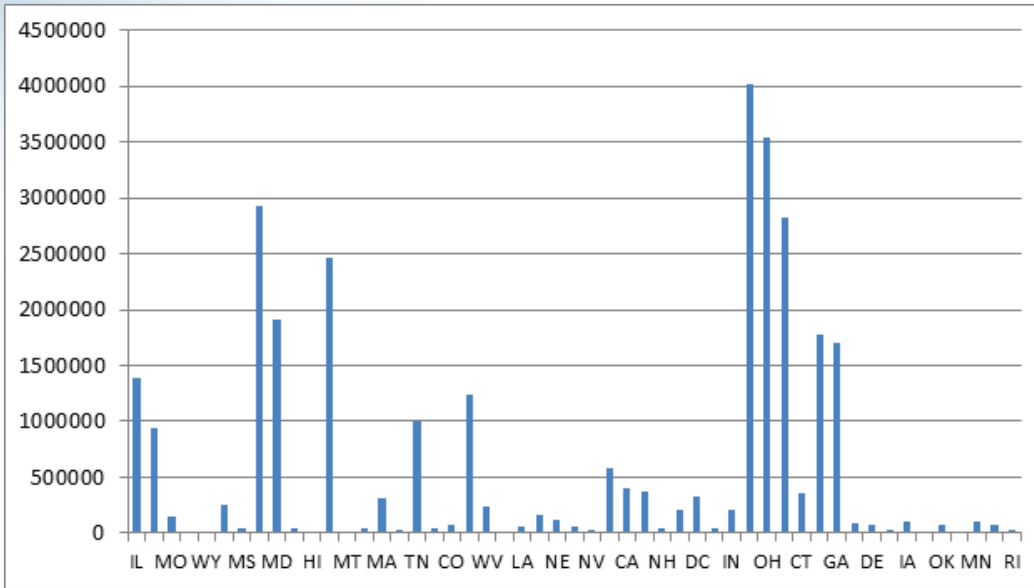
Arrivals by Origin



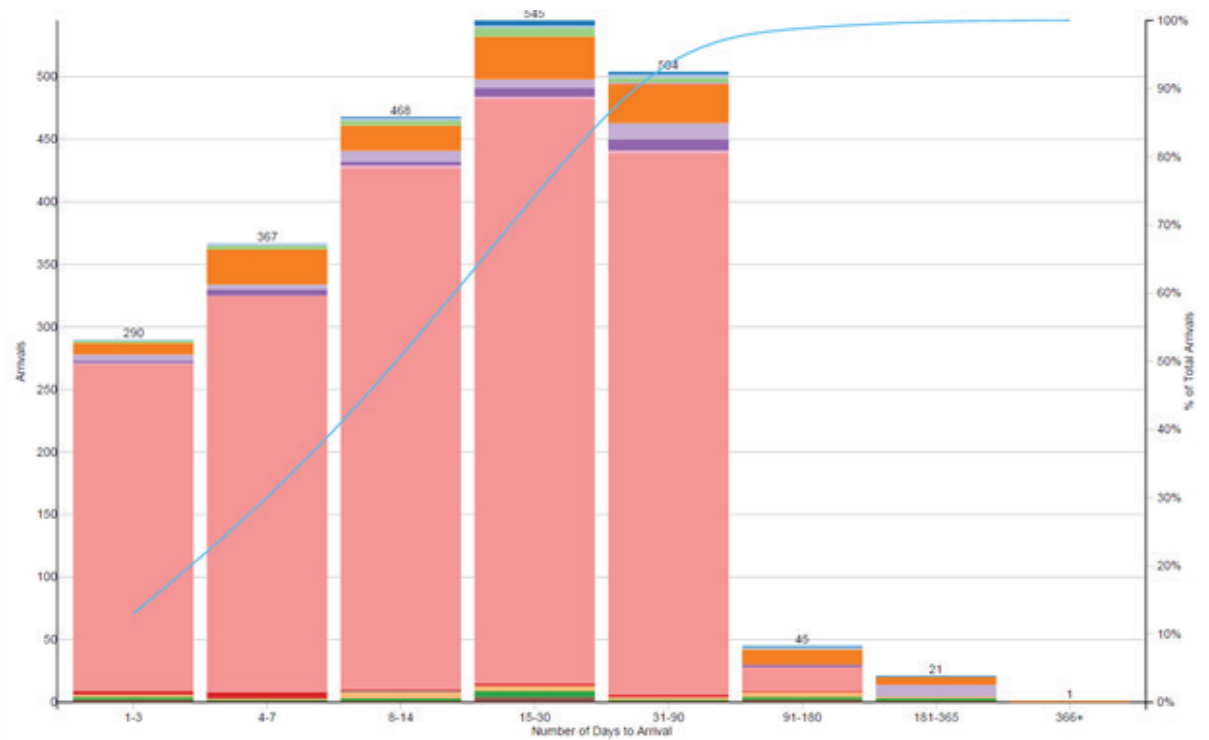
Arrivals by State



Ad Exposures by State



Days to Arrival



Creative Strategies

The creative strategy for The Currituck Outer Banks and Mainland is born of, and evolves with, the greater marketing strategy as it is refined, year over year, through research and hard-won experience. In terms of both visual and contextual messaging, our marketing strategy requires that we make a positive distinction as to what our destination has to offer in our creative branding efforts, both physically and intangibly, to the people who constitute our target market, as compared to the offerings of our competitive set. Through consistent integration of our branding across all forms of media, the consistent use of compelling photography, visual elements, typography, color and messaging, our goal is to establish that which makes us distinct in the hearts and minds of our potential and repeat visitors, and breed top-of-mind awareness in terms of their travel planning. In short, we are primarily a beach community and a rural community, and there are many of both for potential visitors to choose from. What makes our destination so unique is that we have is a beach with wild horses on it, a remote beach inaccessible by paved roads, non-commercial appeal, genuine southern hospitality and so much more. It is not enough to simply inform our target audience of these unique offerings. From a branding standpoint, we must distill that which makes us unique into cohesive, consistently branded messaging that offers potential visitors not just awareness of these unique offerings, but more so a genuine glimpse of the authentic, inter-personal and emotionally compelling experiences the sum of our unique offerings represent.

Social Media Highlights

The social media strategy has focused heavily on Facebook. In FY 2016, over 100,000 visits were generated from Facebook alone. Staff strives to be engaging and responsive by posting relevant content on a consistent basis.

- Post twice daily – read and respond to comments within 24 hours
- 252,000 likes (as of 8/22/2016)
- Weekly Total Reach is above 675,000

Public Relations

The Tourism Department hosted a group of Golf Tour Operators this summer. The individuals came from all over, places such as Italy, Poland, China as well as the USA. We had a total of 8 in the group. While they were in town we took them to see such sights as our Wild Spanish Mustang (Corolla Outback Adventure Tour), The Currituck Beach Lighthouse, Whalehead, Kilmarlic Golf Course, The Pointe Golf Course, Currituck Club Golf Course and had some of our delicious BBQ from Currituck BBQ.

We also had a few writers that were visiting our area on their own and we made sure we provided them with some tickets and tours of our local attractions. Laura Harders is from the DC area and she is a Lifestyle & Consumer Finance Blogger, she was here with her family, they were able to take a horse tour thanks to Jay Bender (Corolla Outback Adventure tour) and tickets to the Currituck Beach Lighthouse as well as the Whalehead. Len Ziehm, from the Chicago area came to visit our lovely area and we were also able to get him on a horse tour (Corolla Outback Adventure) and the Whalehead and the Currituck Beach Lighthouse.



Len is affiliated with Chicagoland Golf and Chicago District Golfer.

Annual Events

Events have proven to be a great way to attract visitors to the area throughout the year. Five signature events aim to offer a unique experience to visitors during their stay.

- Memorial Day Beach Blast – May
- Under the Oaks Art Festival – June
- Independence Day Celebration – July 4th
- Currituck Heritage Day – September
- Christmas in Corolla – December

These signature events are complimented by smaller, weekly events such as the Whalehead Wednesday Wine Tasting, Kid Day at the Park and Friday Cornhole Tournaments to name a few. These events attract thousands of people throughout the year and many attendees make a point to plan their vacations around them.

Event Assistance

The purpose of the Event Marketing Assistance Program is to assist Currituck County community groups, non-profit organizations, and tourism-related businesses in promoting and marketing tourism and culturally-related events and activities. The program does not provide direct financial assistance in event promotion, but has Tourism Department staff working with approved event organizers in seeking paid and free advertising (public service announcements) in such outlets as websites (social networks), newspapers, television stations, radio stations and other media. The advertisers are then paid directly by the tourism department.

Events (collectively) will also be promoted by the tourism department through paid advertisements based on available funds, event size, and other factors.

In order to be approved for this program, events must be held in Currituck County, and the majority of the attendees must be from outside of the County. Primary consideration will be given to projects that enhance the long-term growth of the tourism industry and have the greatest potential for positive economic impact on the local economy.



Historic Corolla Park

The Tourism Department was given the task of operating Historic Corolla Park (HCP) and the Whalehead house museum in April of 2015. Aply led by the curator/site manager, Jill Landen, the Park and Whalehead came in under budget in FY 2015-2016 in the amount of \$104,500 and made \$176,900 in income from tours, weddings, special events and retail merchandise. These sales consequently generated \$11,300 in sales tax revenue.

Will Sawyer and his team were also instrumental in getting the grounds and the buildings in tiptop shape and did so with great care, including:

- New Roof for the Gazebo
- Fill, ground and tree maintenance
- Whalehead repairs
- Board replacements at boat launch and boat slips at the basin
- Overseeing the replacement of a major section of bulkhead
- Insect prevention and power-washing

The marketing and creative directors have taken on the task of re-marketing Historic Corolla Park as the hub of Corolla and a destination in and of itself. Whereas previous marketing concentrated on promoting the Wildlife Education Center, the Park grounds and the Whalehead as separate destinations, we are now marketing these as assets within the larger destination of Historic Corolla Park. A new brochure was created this year to start this process.

Historic Corolla Park is also well-known as a wedding venue. It was decided that we would leave the wedding planning to our wedding planners and other vendors who know this industry and concentrate strictly on renting the grounds for weddings and events. This decision is putting money back into our businesses that provide knowledge, goods and services to the lucrative wedding industry on the Outer Banks.

A new Whalehead brochure, wedding packet and advertising for our wedding industry has been created in the last year along with a new website: www.whaleheadwedding.com. In addition, a new restroom/dressing room facility is beginning construction this fall to support visitors, weddings and other events. We anticipate that this amenity, along with print, trade shows and online marketing, will assist in increasing venue bookings and will provide much needed restrooms and that side of the Park.

We have seen HCP become a much more popular and visited site in the last year. Whalehead, alone, hosted over 18,000 general and special interest tours in the last fiscal year, up 3,000 visitors from a high of 15,000 a few years ago. HCP has also become the venue for the very popular Mustang Music Festival held every October and produced by Bearded Face Productions.

Many more upgrades, new facilities and projects are currently being planned for our beautiful Historic Corolla Park.



Wayfinding And The Greenway

Wayfinding has been an ongoing issue in Corolla. The Currituck County Planning Department took the lead in commissioning a new wayfinding sign package for Corolla that has become a big boon to our visitors and was installed in 2015. Using a highly visible teal color and some elements of Currituck Outer Banks branding, these signs assist visitors in finding parking, beach accesses, restrooms, shopping and dining and destinations such as the Whalehead and the Currituck Beach Lighthouse. The new HCP entrance and event signs were also designed using teal in order to create unified signage in Corolla and, thus, giving the visitor visual cues when searching for information. In addition, new mapping and beach regulations signage was created at the beach accesses using Currituck Outer Banks branding elements to create a cohesive marketing effort.

The first phase of the new Greenway multi-use path in Corolla has also been completed and has proven to be very popular with Corolla visitors and full-time residents. This beautiful path provides a safe alternative to pedestrians and bikers wanting to stay off of the busy, and sometimes dangerous, Rt. 12. The next phase of the Greenway will begin construction soon.



TOURISM LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The Currituck County Department of Travel & Tourism received two state awards from the Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina (DMANC in 2014-15). These awards were:

- Platinum - Online Communications
- Platinum - Advertising

In 2015-2016, the department received an award from DMANC for its newly launched website:

- Gold - Online Communications

Learn More

For additional information on the Tourism Department's marketing strategies, visit the Business Resources section of VisitCurrituck.com (located at the bottom of the homepage). From there you can download reports and research, the Randall Travel Marketing Comprehensive Tourism Research & Strategic Plan, event assistance applications and much more.



**Prepared by
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