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**Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau wins two top state awards**

Chapel Hill, NC – (October 3, 2016) - The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau, a countywide organization, won two top 2016 awards from the Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina (DMANC) for its efforts to market the county as a visitor destination.

The Visitors Bureau won the Platinum Award for Best Advertising, the highest award for that category, for the ad campaign the agency created to counteract negative criticism from HB2.

“Your Community is Part of Our Community” advertisement reminds travelers that everyone is welcome in Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough. The advertisement was designed to address growing concerns from out-of-state travelers who oppose the HB2 law and say they’ve crossed North Carolina off their list of destinations.

The agency also won a Gold Award for Online Communications for its social marketing campaign, “Free Ticket Tuesday,” which gives more than 10,000 Facebook fans a chance to win free tickets to featured events on Tuesdays. The promotion has used Tar Heel football and basketball tickets, arts, symphony, and food festival tickets, as well as merchandise. The social media promotion was designed to increase engagement and push viewers to landing pages on the Bureau’s website to encourage them to explore the area and keep visiting friends and family in Orange County.

“We frequently update our social media accounts and web event calendar with visitor-related information, including news about local businesses and upcoming events. We also cross-promote events over our multiple platforms to ensure we’re reaching the largest audience possible,” said Tina Fuller, Visitors Bureau Website/Social Media Coordinator who accepted the awards on behalf of the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau at the NC Tourism Leadership Conference 2016 Awards Banquet on September 29 in Winston-Salem.

Visitors Bureau Board Chair, Rosemary Waldorf, said, “This award is yet again proof that we have a very successful Visitors Bureau. It is a very small office that accomplishes more than

many larger CVBs and is fully funded by occupancy tax proceeds.”

Waldorf said that the Visitors Bureau is a major reason why Orange County continues to see annual growth in visitor-related spending. “The latest report, released in August 2016, shows this industry generated \$184 million last year,” said Waldorf.

The Destination Marketing Achievement Awards were created to honor and showcase the best in marketing efforts by convention and visitors bureaus throughout the state. Out-of-state tourism marketing professionals and educators serve as judges for the awards competition. The CVB pays no fees to submit award entries for the competition.

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau, a division of Orange County NC government, is accredited by the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) of the Destination Marketing Association International in Washington DC. The mission of the Visitors Bureau is to develop and coordinate visitor services in Orange County and to implement marketing programs that will enhance the economic activity and quality of life in the community. For information: [www.VisitChapeHill.org](http://www.VisitChapeHill.org).

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