

For Immediate Release
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Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau Reports Significant Increase in Occupancy and Prepared Food & Beverage Tax Collections in July

Raleigh, NC – In a report released today, the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau announced a significant increase in Occupancy, Occupancy Collections and Prepared Food and Beverage Collections in July.

In July, Wake County's hotels had an occupancy rate of 64.8 percent, an 8.8 percent increase over July 2009. Year to date, occupancy is 58.2 percent, compared to 56.2 percent for the previous year to date; an increase of 3.6 percent as reported by Smith Travel Research, an independent research company serving the hospitality industry.

Occupancy tax collections totaled \$1.2 million in July, an 11.2 percent increase over July 2009. Year to date, Wake County has experienced a 3.1 percent increase in occupancy collections.

Much of the increase can be attributed to July being a record-breaking month of meetings, conventions and sports events in Wake County. In all, 12 major meetings and conventions, as well as 10 national sports events brought more than 41,000 attendees to the area, collectively producing an estimated economic impact of \$20 million.

July welcomed the largest convention that the Raleigh area has hosted to date when Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. held its 76th International Grand Conclave with 15,000 attendees and an estimated economic impact of \$7.2 million. Other notable events included:

- National Agents Alliance 2010 Leadership Conference (July 8-11); Total Visitors: 2,500; Estimated Economic Impact: \$1.3 million
- PONY Softball 12U and 14U Fastpitch Nationals (July 16-23); Total Visitors 3,500; Estimated Economic Impact: \$1.3 million
- Jehovah's Witness Annual Convention (July 29-31); Total Visitors 10,000; Estimated Economic Impact: \$3.5 million

Occupancy rates weren't the only figures which saw an increase, Prepared Food and Beverage Collections totaled approximately \$1.5 million in July, a significant 2.3 percent increase over last July and .67 percent year to date.

“We are thrilled with the occupancy and collection numbers,” stated Denny Edwards, president and CEO of the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau. “July was a huge month for the Raleigh area, not only to prove that we are ready to successfully host a large number of groups and attendees, but that they are a positive economic driver, bring millions of dollars into the local economy.”

**Conventions, meetings and sports events mentioned in the release are only those associated with GRCVB Sales and Sports Marketing. Individual venues and accommodations also host meetings and events and do not factor into the above figures for number of meetings, conventions and sporting events held in Wake County.*

The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, as the official destination marketing organization of Raleigh and Wake County, accelerates sustainable economic growth and development by increasing visitor and convention business.