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VISITATION NUMBERS RELEASED FOR WAKE COUNTY
10.34 Million Visitors Spend \$1.53 Billion in 2008

Raleigh, NC (July 20, 2009) – Two nationally respected travel and travel research organizations released 2008 numbers in terms of total visitation and visitor spending in Wake County. D.K. Shifflet and Associates calculated approximately **10.34 million** travelers visited Wake County in 2008 while the United States Travel Association (USTA) shows those visitors contributed more than **\$1.513 billion** into the local economy – an increase of 2.3 percent from \$1.48 billion in 2007.

Accordinging to D.K. Shifflet and Associates, the number of visitors to Wake County is 10.34 million with a current breakdown of 70% leisure and 30% business.

“The most significant change was the business to leisure ratios,” said Denny Edwards, president and CEO of the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau. “Due to the significant decline of the business transient client, we heavily marketed to the leisure visitor, as well as the meeting and sports markets, successfully filling the gap in overall visitation numbers.”

Visitor spending in the Capital City area generated more than \$114 million in state (\$71.3 million) and local (\$43.62 million) tax receipts last year, according to USTA, an increase of more than six percent.

Equally important, those revenues actually save residents taxes by generating tax revenues through their local spending, which in turn are used for education, school construction, water, sewer and other necessities. If these tax revenues were not generated by visitors, the local taxpayers would need to provide the revenue if the current level of service and amenities in Wake County were to be maintained.

More than 18,000 people are employed in the hospitality industry in Wake County representing an estimated \$504 million in payroll income. Nearly 190,000 jobs throughout North Carolina are attributed to tourism, an increase of two percent.

The word “visitor” represents more than just tourists. In addition to leisure visitors, it includes business travelers, convention delegates, day-trippers, families on weekend getaways, and people visiting the area for specific reasons ranging from shopping and dining to cultural and sporting events.

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. Through its website, www.visitRaleigh.com and other tools, the GRCVB assists local visitors in a variety of ways.