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2020 Visitor Spending in Orange County, NC Tops \$128 Million

Covid-19 Pandemic Impacts Spending Seeing More Than 47% Decrease From 2019

Chapel Hill, NC - (October 15, 2021)— Domestic and international visitors to and within Orange County spent \$128.4 million in 2020, a decrease of 47.7% from 2019. The data comes from an annual study commissioned and recently released by [Visit North Carolina](#), a unit of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

"The travel industry has been through terrorism, disease, and economic declines, including 9/11, SARS, bird flu, a financial crisis, MERS, and now COVID-19. The industry has always come out of each one stronger," said Anthony Carey, General Manager of The Siena Hotel and chair of the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Advisory Board.

"While COVID-19 has had the biggest impact on the travel industry, we know that people really want to be in Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough and we are seeing our demand increase now. The business and conference sector will be the last to recover but thanks to the people and leaders in Orange County, we are considered a safe, smart and beautiful place to visit," added Carey.

Tourism impact highlights for 2020 for Orange County

- The 2020 study includes both domestic and international tourism spending to and within Orange County. The \$128.4 million in visitors spending represents a tax savings of \$78.88 per county resident.
- The travel and tourism industry directly employs 1,455.
- Total payroll generated by the tourism industry in Orange County was \$44.6 million.
- State tax revenue generated in Orange County totaled \$6.3 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income. About \$5.3 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.

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. The study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics in collaboration with the U.S. Travel Association. Tourism Economics measures visitor spending in lodging, food and beverage, recreation, retail and transportation as well as labor income and tax revenues. Tourism Economics is a new data partner working with VisitNC. New to their methodology model for 2020 are international spending estimates as well as the sector spending details at

the county level. Previous studies included only domestic travel spending.

Statewide, visitor spending was down 32 percent to \$19.96 billion compared to 2019. Tourism employment fell 26 percent to 178,685. The losses were most acutely felt in urban areas.

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About the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau

As the official accredited destination marketing organization of Chapel Hill and Orange County, the mission of the Chapel Hill/Orange County 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. The Visitors Bureau is a department of Orange County, NC Government. For information:

www.VisitChapelHill.org