



Visitor Profile Study 2005-2006

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Quick Facts

Top 3 Images Visitors Have of Johnston County	Shopping Friendly Country/ Rural Atmosphere		
Top 3 Descriptors Visitors Use for Johnston County	Friendly Pleasant and Comfortable Nice		
Top 3 Sources of Information Visitors Use	Family/ Friends Billboards NC Welcome Center		
Planning time frame of visitors	Mean	27.8 days	
	Median	7 days	
	Range	0-365 days	
Travel Party Size and Composition	Adults	Mean	2.46
		Median	2
		Range	1-18
	Children	Mean	0.51
		Median	0
		Range	0-12
Length of Stay in Johnston County	Mean	1.58 days	
	Median	1 day	
	Range	0-14 days	
Total Expenditures While in Johnston County	Mean total expenses	\$245.68	
	Median total expenses	\$155.00	
	Range	\$4 – \$2000	
Plan to Revisit Johnston County	Yes	93.1	
	No	6.9	

Introduction

Beginning in August 2005 the Johnston County Visitors Bureau with the assistance of the Department of Recreation, Tourism and Hospitality Management at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), conducted a year long study of the visitors to the Johnston County area. Visitors were asked a variety of questions about their images of Johnston County, their travel behavior, and basic demographic information about themselves.

To conduct this study a visitor intercept methodology was utilized. Researchers from UNCG and staff at local attractions and lodging facilities approached visitors and asked the visitor if they would be willing to participate in the study by filling out a questionnaire (see Appendix). Of those visitors asked 233 agreed to take part in the study. The remainder of this report details their responses.

It is important, however, to understand the limitation to this study. The first and most important is that the respondents all volunteered for the study. The information in this report does not represent people who chose not to participate in this study. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that all visitors to Johnston County are representative in this study. The second limitation to this study is that intercepts were not done at all attractions, lodging facilities, or towns in Johnston County. This limits the study in that some areas may not be represented as well as others. With an understanding of the limitations, this study does highlight important information about the visitor to Johnston County and how they perceive the county

Results

Perceived Image and Attractiveness

The first series of questions asked related to the images and perceptions that the visitor had about Johnston County. The first question asked “What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Smithfield/Selma or Johnston County as a travel destination?”. The number one response was shopping (45.95% of respondents), followed by friendly (21.08% of respondents) and country/ rural atmosphere (20.54% of respondents) (see table 1)

Table 1: Images or characteristics that visitors had of Johnston County

Image	Number of Responses	% of responses	% of respondents
		n= 321	n= 185
Shopping	85	26.48%	45.95%
Friendly	39	12.15%	21.08%
Country/ Rural Atmosphere	38	11.84%	20.54%
Peaceful and Relaxing	22	6.85%	11.89%
Farm	20	6.23%	10.81%
Food	19	5.92%	10.27%
Convenient Location	18	5.61%	9.73%
Ava Gardner Museum	16	4.98%	8.65%
Scenic Country Side	12	3.74%	6.49%
Antiques	10	3.12%	5.41%
Historic	8	2.49%	4.32%
Hotels	6	1.87%	3.24%
AMJ	4	1.25%	2.16%
Warm	4	1.25%	2.16%
Clean	4	1.25%	2.16%
Family	3	0.93%	1.62%
Bill Boards	2	0.62%	1.08%
Business	2	0.62%	1.08%
Other	9	2.80%	4.86%

The next questions asked participants “How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience in Smithfield/Selma?” Almost half (48.33%) of the respondents said that the atmosphere in Johnston County is friendly, and 39.23% said they the atmosphere was pleasant and comfortable (see table 2).

Table 2: Respondents Description of the Atmosphere in Johnston County

Description	Number of Responses	% of responses	% of respondents
		n= 312	n= 209
Friendly	101	32.37%	48.33%
Pleasant and Comfortable	82	26.28%	39.23%
Nice	30	9.62%	14.35%
Laidback	30	9.62%	14.35%
Country	27	8.65%	12.92%

Warm	10	3.21%	4.78%
Busy	8	2.56%	3.83%
Clean	5	1.60%	2.39%
Other	19	6.09%	9.09%

The final question asked respondents to “list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that they know of in Johnston County.” The top two distinctive attractions were Shopping (55.24% of respondents) and the Ava Gardner Museum (50.35%). These were followed by the Farm Lifestyle, Antiques, Bentonville Battlegrounds, the American Music Jubilee, Food, Atkinson’s Mill, Winery, Train Station, and the Tobacco Farm Life Museum (see table 3).

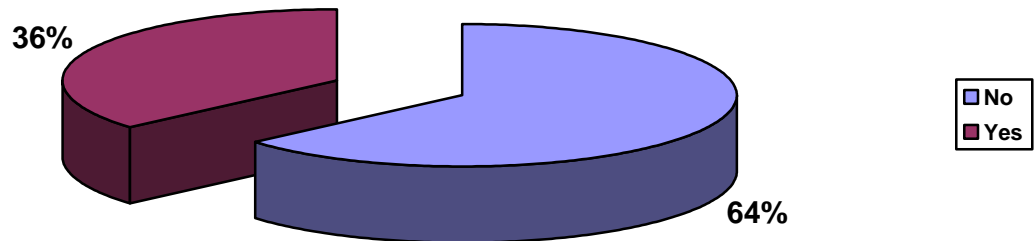
Table 3: Perceived Distinctive Tourist Attractions in Johnston County

Attraction	Number of Responses	% of responses n= 207	% of respondents n = 143
Shopping	79	38.16%	55.24%
Ava Gardner Museum	72	34.78%	50.35%
Farm Lifestyle	8	3.86%	5.59%
Antiques	7	3.38%	4.90%
Bentonville Battleground	7	3.38%	4.90%
American Music Jubilee	5	2.42%	3.50%
Food	5	2.42%	3.50%
Atkinson's Mill	4	1.93%	2.80%
Winery	3	1.45%	2.10%
Train Station	3	1.45%	2.10%
Tobacco Farm life Museum	3	1.45%	2.10%
Other	11	5.31%	7.69%

Travel Behavior

The next series of questions asked respondents about their travel behavior in Johnston County. The first questions asked “Is this your first visit to the Johnston County area?” The majority of the respondents (63.7%) indicated that this was not their first visit to the area. In informal conversations with the visitors, researchers found that most of the repeat visitors regularly visited the area (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Is this your first visit to Johnston County



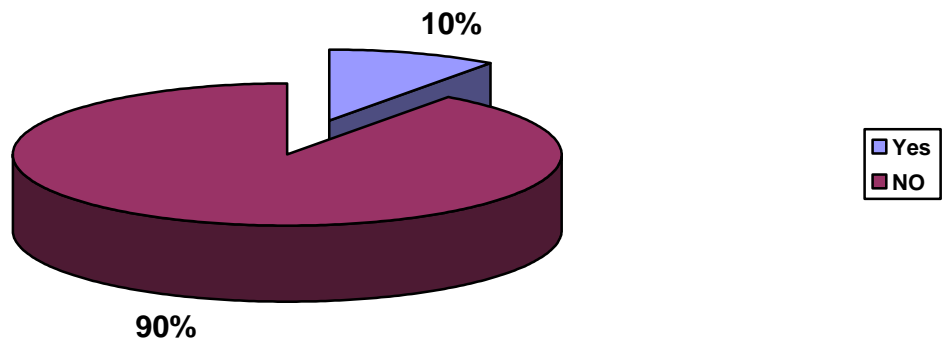
The second questions asked visitors “Where did you find out about Johnston County?” The main source of information for visitors was Family and Friends (35.6%) followed by Billboards (21.7%). These two main sources were followed by NC Welcome Centers, NC Travel Guide, AAA, Southern Living, and the Johnston County Visitors Guide (see table 4).

Table 4: Source of Information

Source	number of respondents	% of respondents
Family/ Friends	69	35.6%
Billboards	42	21.7%
NC Welcome Center	19	9.8%
NC Travel Guide	13	6.7%
AAA Publication	11	5.7%
Southern Living	11	5.7%
Johnston County Visitors Guide	8	4.1%
Other Website	8	4.1%
Newspaper	7	3.6%
Our State Magazine	5	2.6%
NC Civil War Traveler	4	2.1%
Johnston County Visitors Website	4	2.1%
Yellow Pages of NC	1	0.5%
Other	47	24.2%

The next question asked participants “Did you contact or visit the Visitor Information Center to get information about the Johnston County area?”. The majority (90.1%) indicated that they did not contact the Johnston County Visitors Bureau (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Did you contact or visit the Visitor Information Center to get information about the Johnston County area?



Participants were then asked “How far in advance did you begin planning this trip?” The average time frame for planning was a little less than 1 month (27.8 days). Responses ranged from 0 days to 1 year with the most common response being 1 week.

Participants were asked “How many people are in your traveling party?” The average number of adults was 2.46 and children .51. Travel party size ranged from 1-18 adults with the most common number of adults being 2, and children ranged from 0-12 with the most common number of children being 0.

Participants were then asked “How long do you plan to stay in Johnston County on this visit?” The average length of stay was 1.58 days. Responses ranged from 0 days to 14 days with the most common response being 1 day.

Respondents were then asked “Is Johnston County your final destination on this vacation/ trip?”. The distribution of responses were almost equal with 46.3% stating that Johnston County was their final destination and 53.7% indicating that it was not. Those for whom Johnston County was not their final destination 36.36% indicated that their final destination was somewhere in North Carolina and 19.48% indicated that it was somewhere in Florida (see table 5)

Table 5: Final Destination if not Johnston County

State	number of respondents	% of respondents
North Carolina	28	36.36%
Florida	15	19.48%
Virginia	8	10.39%
New York	7	9.09%
South Carolina	5	6.49%

New Jersey	4	5.19%
Washington, DC	3	3.90%
Pennsylvania	2	2.60%
Alabama	1	1.30%
Tennessee	1	1.30%
Canada	1	1.30%
Connecticut	1	1.30%
Ohio	1	1.30%

Participants were asked “What was the main reason for your trip to Smithfield/Johnston County?” Almost two-fifths (39.36%) of the respondents indicated that shopping was their main reason for visiting the area. This was followed by Just Passing Through and Visiting Family and Friends (see table 6)

Table 6: Main Reason for Visiting Johnston County

Reason	number of respondents	% of respondents
Shopping	74	39.36%
Just passing through	36	19.15%
Visit family/friends	33	17.55%
Weekend trip	12	6.38%
Business	11	5.85%
Vacation	8	4.26%
Visit an attraction	7	3.72%
Relocation	3	1.60%
Attend a Event	2	1.06%
Group tour	1	0.53%
Other	1	0.53%

Participants were asked to indicate the attractions that they have gone to or plan to go to in Johnston County during their visit. The top attraction was Shopping (29.03%) followed by Ava Gardner Museum (26.34) and the Tobacco Farm Life Museum (12.97) (see table7).

Table 7: Attractions Visited While in Johnston County

Attraction	number of responses	% of respondents
Shopping	54	29.03
Ava Gardner Museum	49	26.34
Tobacco Farm Life Museum	23	12.37
Bentonville Battleground	16	8.60
Atkinson’s Mill	15	8.06
American Music Jubilee	13	6.99
Johnston County Heritage Center	9	4.84
The Clayton Center	8	4.30

Golf (please specify course)	8	4.30
Clemmons Educational State Forest	5	2.67
Howell Woods	4	2.15
Other (please specify)	5	2.67

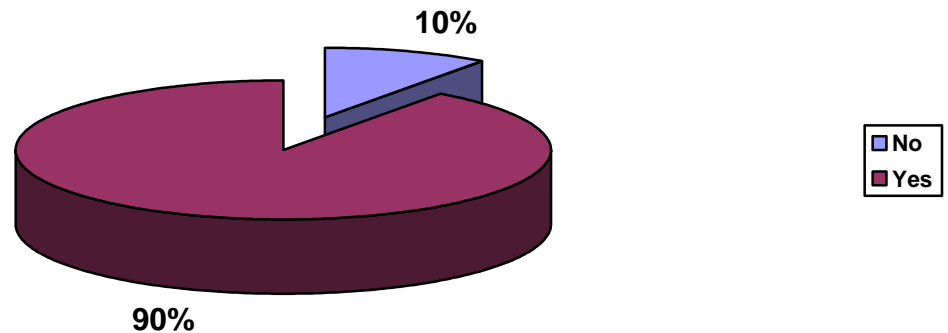
Participants were asked to estimate how much you have spent or plan to spend on the following while in Johnston County on this trip. The average total expense was \$245.68. Total expenses ranged from \$4 - \$2,000. The largest average expenditure was shopping followed by lodging (see table 8).

Table 8: Expenditures While in Johnston County

Hotel/Motel	Mean	\$49.72	Automobile Operations (gas, oil, repairs, etc.)	Mean	\$19.10
	Median	\$0		Median	\$0
	Range	\$0-\$400		Range	\$0-\$500
Restaurants	Mean	\$43.05	Food and supplies bought at stores	Mean	\$5.90
	Median	\$20		Median	\$0
	Range	\$0-\$600		Range	\$0-\$100
Shopping	Mean	\$114.89	Taxi	Mean	\$0.55
	Median	\$30		Median	\$0
	Range	\$0-\$1000		Range	\$0-\$80
Entertainment	Mean	\$9.81	Other	Mean	\$1.77
	Median	\$0		Median	\$0
	Range	\$0-\$200		Range	\$0-\$200

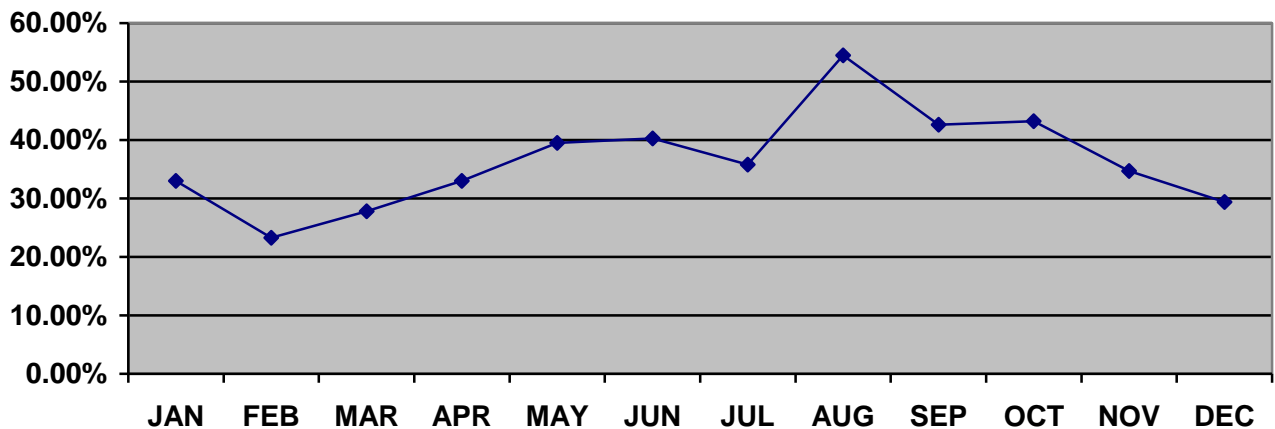
Respondents were asked if they plan to revisit Johnston County in the future. An overwhelming majority stated that they did plan to return (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Do you plan to re-visit Johnston County?



Participants were asked “How often have you traveled through North Carolina on I-95 in a year? The average response was 3.51. Responses ranged from 0-50, with 2 occurring most often. Respondents were then asked to indicate which months they traveled on I-95 (see figure 4). Results indicate the peak travel time on I-95 is August through October. It is important to note, however, that there is a constant stream of travel along the interstate indicating that Johnston County is a year round destination and not a seasonal destination.

Figure 4: Which Months respondents travel on I-95?



Demographics

Participants were asked if they had any friends or relatives living in Johnston County. More than three-fourths (78.5%) said no. The average age of the participants was 49.37. The age ranged from 18-89 with the most common aged reported being 51. Slightly over half (53.7%) of the respondents were female and 46.3% were male. A little over one fourth of the respondents (26.83%) reported that they were retired. The next most reported occupation was homemaker followed by student (see table 9)

Table 9: Occupation of Respondents?

Occupation	number of respondents	% of respondents
Retired	55	26.83%
Homemaker	19	9.27%
Student	18	8.78%
Service Industry	14	6.83%
Medical	11	5.37%
Engineer	10	4.88%
Self employed	10	4.88%
Middle Management	10	4.88%
Technician	9	4.39%
Sales	7	3.41%
Teacher	6	2.93%
Clerical	5	2.44%
Laborer	5	2.44%
Craftsperson	4	1.95%
Executive	4	1.95%
Research	2	0.98%
Professor	2	0.98%
Military	2	0.98%
Marketing	1	0.49%
Other	11	5.37%

Participants were asked “What is the last year of school that you completed?” The majority of respondents had at least a high school degree with many of the respondents having some form of secondary education such a college or technical schools (see table 10).

Table 10 Education Level of Respondents

Grade	number of respondents	% of respondents
8	1	0.50%
9	3	1.49%
10	7	3.47%

11	5	2.48%
12	52	25.74%
13	12	5.94%
14	30	14.85%
15	8	3.96%
16	37	18.32%
17	10	4.95%
18	18	8.91%
19	2	0.99%
20+	17	8.42%

Participants were asked what their total family income was for a year. A little over three-fifths (62.64%) of the respondents indicated that their total income was less than \$59,999 a year (see table 11)

Table 11: Income Level

Income	number of respondents	% of respondents
less than 20,000	11	6.32%
20,000 - 39,999	44	25.29%
40,000 - 49,999	22	12.64%
50,000 - 59,999	32	18.39%
60,000 - 69,999	0	0.00%
70,000 - 79,999	0	0.00%
80,000 - 99,999	29	16.67%
100,000 - 199,999	32	18.39%
200,000 +	4	2.30%

Participants were asked their state of origin. Slightly less than half of the respondents (42.23%) were from North Carolina. Following NC were Virginia, Florida, New York and Pennsylvania (see table 12). Of the states indicated as the origin state for the visitor 42.23% were found to be within the state of North Carolina, indicating that Johnston County is a strong draw for day trippers and short vacations within state. The remainder of the origin states can be viewed as those along the I-95 corridor and those not along the corridor. It was found that 42.74% of the respondents were from a state located on the I-95 corridor. As table 11 shows all of the top places origin are located in this area.

Table 12: State of Origin of Respondents

State	number of respondents	% of respondents
NC	87	42.23%
VA	23	11.17%
FL	18	8.74%
NY	15	7.28%
PA	14	6.80%

NJ	9	4.37%
MI	6	2.91%
International	5	2.43%
Canada	4	1.94%
TX	3	1.46%
DC	2	0.97%
LA	2	0.97%
MA	2	0.97%
OH	2	0.97%
SC	2	0.97%
TN	2	0.97%
AL	1	0.49%
CA	1	0.49%
DE	1	0.49%
GA	1	0.49%
IL	1	0.49%
IA	1	0.49%
MD	1	0.49%
MN	1	0.49%
MS	1	0.49%
WA	1	0.49%

Conclusion

Perceived Image and Attractiveness

Based on the results of the three questions that related to the visitor's perceived image and attractiveness of Johnston County it can be inferred that visitors to the county perceive the area as a shopping destination with the combination of Carolina Premium Outlets, JR Discount Outlet, Antiques, and other shopping options in the area. With the quantity and quality of shopping options in the area it is not surprising that this is one of the main images visitors have of the area. Also, the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development citing TIA indicated that shopping was one of the main visitor activities in North Carolina in 2005 (North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development 2005).

The next four images that visitors indicated (friendly, country/rural atmosphere, peaceful/relaxing, and farm) indicated that they enjoy the laidback lifestyle and are looking for this when they come to Johnston County. This laidback lifestyle includes the ideas of rural life which they perceive as not being as fast paced as city life or even other destinations. This could be considered a competitive advantage for the area.

Based on the results of the study most visitors have the image of Johnston County being a relaxing/ southern hospitality environment with outstanding shopping and interesting and unique cultural attractions (Ava Gardner Museum, American Music Jubilee, and Bentonville Battlegrounds).

There is a strong indication that this image along with marketing efforts by the Johnston County Visitors Bureau are working. The majority of the respondents (63.7%) were repeat visitors and 90% of all visitors indicated they plan to visit again. This shows that once someone visits the county and experiences the opportunities, attractions, and atmosphere in Johnston County they find it to be enjoyable and will return.

Based on the results of the source of information used it is obvious that word of mouth by previous visitors was one of the main sources of information used to find out about Johnston County. The second most important source of information comes from the Billboards that create awareness of the destination and then informs the visitor about some of the attractions the destination has to offer. The combination of billboards from the Johnston County Visitors Bureau, attractions, restaurants, and lodging facilities is a strong tool for attracting visitors to the area.

Appendix

Johnston County Visitor Study

The Johnston County Visitors Bureau in cooperation with The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is conducting a survey about the visitors to the Johnston County area. The results of this survey will assist the visitors' bureau to better understand and serve its visitors.

Only a small sample of people are being surveyed so your answers are extremely important. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, simply do not return the questionnaire. Your consent will be indicated by completing and returning the questionnaire. Your answers will be kept confidential. After completing the questionnaire please return it to the research assistant that you received it from.

If you have any questions about this study please feel free to contact Erick Byrd at 336/334-3041 or Donna Bailey Taylor at 919/989-8687. If you have concerns about your rights regarding this study, please contact Eric Allen at the Office of Research Services, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro at 336-256-1482.

Donna Bailey-Taylor
Executive Director
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Greensboro

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Assistant Professor
The University of North Carolina at

The following questions are about your current visit to Johnston County. Please read and answer each question carefully. Circle or write in the answers for the following questions.

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Smithfield/Selma or Johnston County as a travel destination?

2. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience in Smithfield/Selma?

3. Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions you know of in Johnston County.

4. Is this your first visit to the Johnston County area?

1 Yes

2 No

5. Where did you find out about Johnston County? (circle all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Johnston County Visitors Guide | 2 AAA Publication | 3 Southern Living |
| 4 NC Travel Guide | 5 Billboards | 6 Family/ Friends |
| 7 NC Welcome Center | 8 Our State Magazine | 9 NC Civil War Traveler |
| 10 Johnston County Visitors Website | 11 Yellow Pages of NC | 12 Other Website (please specify)
_____ |
| 13 Newspaper (please specify)
_____ | 14 Other (please specify)
_____ | |

6. Did you contact or visit the Visitor Information Center to get information about the Johnston County area?

- 1 Yes 2 No

7. How far in advance did you begin planning this trip?

_____days or _____weeks or _____months

8. How many people are in your traveling party?

of Adults _____ # of Children _____

9. How long do you plan to stay in Johnston County on this visit?

of days _____ # of nights _____

10. Is Johnston County your final destination on this vacation/ trip?

- 1 Yes 2 No if no what is your final destination? _____

11. Which of the following represents the main reason for your trip to Smithfield/Johnston County?

- 1 Visit family/friends 2 Business 3 Vacation

- | | | | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 4 | Weekend trip | 5 | Shopping | 6 | Just passing through |
| 7 | Relocation | 8 | Group tour | 9 | Attend a Event (please specify) |
| 10 | Visit an attraction (please specify) | 11 | Other (please specify) | <hr/> | |
| <hr/> | | <hr/> | | | |

12. Please circle all attractions you have gone to or plan to go to in Johnston County during this visit.

- | | | | | | |
|-------|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | American Music Jubilee | 2 | Atkinson's Mill | 3 | Ava Gardner Museum |
| 4 | Bentonville Battleground | 5 | The Clayton Center | 6 | Clemmons Educational State Forest |
| 7 | Howell Woods | 8 | Tobacco Farm Life Museum | 9 | Johnston County Heritage Center |
| 10 | Golf (please specify course) | 11 | Other (please specify) | <hr/> | |
| <hr/> | | <hr/> | | | |

13. Please estimate how much you have spent or plan to spend on the following while in Johnston County on this trip.

- | | | | |
|----------|---------------|----------|---|
| \$ _____ | Hotel/Motel | \$ _____ | Automobile Operations (gas, oil, repairs, etc.) |
| \$ _____ | Restaurants | \$ _____ | Food and supplies bought at stores |
| \$ _____ | Shopping | \$ _____ | Taxi |
| \$ _____ | Entertainment | \$ _____ | Other |

14. Do you plan to revisit Johnston County in the future?

- 1 Yes 2 No

15. How often have you travel through North Carolina on I-95 this year?

16. Which months do you usually travel on I-95? (circle all that apply)

- JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN
 JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

The last few questions are about you. Your answers will help us to better understand the visitors to Johnston County. Your answers will be treated as confidential.

17. Do you have any friends or relatives in Johnston County?

1 Yes 2 No

18. What is your age? years

19. What is your gender? Male Female

20. What is your occupation?

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|-----------|----|------------------------|
| 1 | Homemaker | 2 | Retired | 3 | Student |
| 4 | Engineer | 5 | Clerical | 6 | Laborer |
| 7 | Middle management | 8 | Marketer | 9 | Researcher |
| 10 | Craftsperson | 11 | Executive | 12 | Self employed |
| 13 | Teacher | 14 | Professor | 15 | Service |
| 16 | Technician | 17 | Sales | 18 | Other (please specify) |
-

21. What is the last year of school that you completed?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
Grade School								High School				College			Graduate School				

22. Which category is closest to your total family income?

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | less than \$20,000 | 2 | \$20,000 - 39,999 | 3 | \$40,000 - 49,999 |
| 4 | \$50,000 - 59,999 | 5 | \$80,000 - \$99,999 | 6 | \$100,000 - 199,999 |
| 7 | \$200,000+ | | | | |

23. What city and state are you from?

_____ city _____ state _____ zip