



*Johnston
County*
VISITORS BUREAU

WHAT TOURISM DOES FOR BENSON

SECTION 01

MINI ANNUAL REPORT

THE STAFF AND BOARD OF THE JOHNSTON COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE A BRIEF REVIEW OF OUR MARKETING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST YEAR FOR THE TOWN OF BENSON

Our mission is to attract and serve visitors to Johnston County to make an economic impact in our destinations. In 2016, visitors to Johnston County spent \$232.49 million staying in our hotels, visiting attractions, enjoying restaurants, shopping, as well as attending meetings, festivals and special events.

That's money that supports local small businesses!



In 2017, the JCVB team developed a campaign to promote the new Benson Dog Park, including a 4 x 9 rack card with the Downtown Benson QR code for local businesses.

Close Right
Ashby Brame, JVCB Marketing & PR Manager, worked two years to land the *Our State Magazine* article for Broadslab Distillery.

FAM TRIPS AND MEDIA PLACEMENTS

We love to show off our destinations in Johnston County and we did that for Benson several times:

- All (9) NC Welcome Center Managers toured the county and stops included Broadslab and GALOT
- Hosting travel writers to share what's happening in Benson: North American Travel Journalist Assn. (12), Travel Media Showcase (4), VisitNC Canadian Fam (5), all toured Broadslab Distillery
- Jeremy Norris traveled to New York for the Visit NC Media mission as the featured guest for the "Firsts that Last" campaign.
- *Our State Magazine*, "The Shine that Saved the Family Farm" and "A Story About Mules and Mule Days"
- *AAA Go Magazine*, Meadow Lights Event Listing
- *Trips to Discover*, "Five Most Amazing Christmas Towns in NC"



NC Welcome Center Managers from across the state spend the day touring Johnston County with Sarah Campbell, visiting area attractions including a stop at GALOT and Broadslab Distillery.

HOSTED MEETING PLANNERS & PROVIDED GROUP SERVICES

- JCVB hosted the Society of Government Meeting Planners at The Barn at Broadslab to showcase the meeting space to planners
- Support with services for the GALOT race weekends and Benson 5K with welcome bags
- JCVB staff organizes the 301 Endless Yard Sale which has a great impact on local businesses in Benson

SECTION 02

ADVERTISING & PUBLICITY

BEING A DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF OUR WORKPLAN IS MARKETING - HERE'S SOME OF WHAT WE DO FOR BENSON.

- The Beer, Wine, Shine Trail has a new App and our partners along the trail in Benson include Broadslab Distillery and Gregory Vineyards
- Facebook live posts from Morgan's on Main for the 301 Endless Yard Sale
- Submitted the Benson Mule Days to Southeast Tourism Society Top 20 -- which was selected in September 2017 as a Top 20 Event
- Social media support for Benson Mule Days, Shine and Shop, State Singing Convention, First Fridays, Benson Wifi Cord Cutting, Benson Has Talent on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- JCVB designed and installed the new Benson Dog Park billboard campaign
- Homepage headers on johnstoncountync.org: Mule Days, Meadow Lights, Broadslab Distillery, and Benson First Fridays
- Top JCVB website listings for Benson and surrounding area: The Barn at Broadslab (5th), Benson Parks & Recreation (8th), Gregory Vineyards (9th) and Preston Woodall House B&B (19th)



- Run 5k rack card to promote Benson Harvest Race (and others in the county - has been very well received)
- New Benson Dog Park billboard campaign with give new and creative billboard vinyls were designed and installed
- BLOGS featuring Benson: “Racing in JoCo - 2018 GALOT Schedule”, “Benson Man in Reality Competition Show”, “Mad Mule Pro Mod”, “A Brisk Run in Benson & Sweet Potato Smoothie”, “C.A. Homestead Candles: Hand Poured in Benson”, “Benson Northlake Christmas Tree Farm”
- Ads for wedding planners, “Weddings with a Southern Accent” in *Southern Bride* featured The Barn at Broadslab.
- *Our State Magazine* Sweepstakes: “Spend the Day with Jeremy Norris”, package with the new Hampton Inn Benson produced 3,921 entries
- Photo shoot at Meadow Lights by local photographer Ken Tart



Above
Ashby Brame, JCVB PR Manager
kisses a mule for a Facebook
live segment during Benson
Mule Days.

Right
Sample design of one of the five
billboards in place to promote
Benson’s new Dog Park with fun,
and memorable sayings.



SECTION 03

GRANTS

JCVB HAS A MATCHING MARKETING GRANT FOR FESTIVALS AND EVENTS WITH A BUDGET OF \$20,000. THE CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM HAS SUPPORTED BENSON AS WELL IN 2018.

- JCVB is a Benson Chamber sponsor at the \$1,000 level and supports Benson Mule Days with a \$1,500 for the Benson Mule Days festival
- Other \$500 Matching Marketing Grants for Benson Events: Benson 4th of July, Classic Antique Tractor Show, State Annual Singing Convention, and Benson Foundation of the Arts. Total event grants awarded: \$3,500
- The Benson Dog Park was completed with a \$18,500 Capital Grant and the Benson Foundation for the Arts Received \$12,000 for improvements to the W. J. Barefoot Auditorium

OTHER STUFF

- Donna Bailey-Taylor serves on the Clayton Piano Festival board and Preston Woodall House has hosted the event for the past two years. JCVB supports the festival with marketing materials, PR and social promotion
- JCVB has on staff Jamaal Porter, a photographer who keeps the bureau stocked with fresh photos from Benson
- Top 25 pages on johnstoncountync.org website: Benson Mule Days Event, 3,820 visits, Top Blog, 2018 GALOT Schedule, 2,484 visits



Left
 Jeremy Norris of Broadslab Distillery was chosen to be featured in the Visit NC National Advertising Campaign, "Firsts That Last".

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AND ENGAGE
 IN THE MARKETING PROGRAMS IN FY
 2018-19, THE JCVB MARKETING PLAN IS
 AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
 WWW.JOHNSTONCOUNTYNC.ORG**

PARTNER SUPPORT

JOHNSTON COUNTY HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

Members of the tourism industry can become members of the Hospitality Association for an annual fee of \$50.00. JCVB hosts educational seminars, networking opportunities and a community service project that benefits the Social Services, Angel Tree.



HOSPITALITY HEROES PROGRAM

Available to all staff of tourism industry businesses is an online, FREE, hospitality training course. The program introduces new hires to National, State, and Local tourism facts, reviews the programs and workplan of the JCVB and a customer service module.



2018-18 WEBSITE HITS

The official website for Johnston County Tourism provides listings for all tourism related businesses and events to showcase the county. The new CMS site was launched in July 2017 with Simpleview, Inc. Listing hits generated were 1,890,360 and Coupon Hits were 48,260.



STAFF AND BOARD

JOHNSTON COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU STAFF

DONNA BAILEY-TAYLOR, PRESIDENT/CEO
ANGEL PHILLIPS, OFFICE MANAGER/VISITOR CENTER
ERIC DEAN, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER/WEBMASTER
ASHBY BRAME, MARKETING & PR MANAGER
SARAH CAMPBELL, SPORTS & LEISURE SALES MANAGER
TAYLOR LEE, PART-TIME SALES AND MARKETING ASSISTANT

JOHNSTON COUNTY TOURISM AUTHORITY

SCOTTY HENLEY, CHAIRPERSON
RICK CHILDREY, VICE-CHAIRPERSON
LYNN DANIELS, SECRETARY
ERNIE BRAME, SPECIAL PROJECT COMMITTEE CHAIR
RICK HEILMAN, MARKETING COMMITTEE CHAIR
MATT ZAPP, SPORTS COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE
CHERYL LANE
PAUL BOUCHER
RANDY CAPPS
KEITH BRINSON
CHAD McLAMB, EX-OFFICIO FINANCE

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