

Riding the Wave of Growth in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

New Developments Planned in 2015 and Beyond in the Myrtle Beach Area

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina continues to rank as one of the fastest-growing family and vacation destinations in the nation attracting more than 17.2 million visitors annually. Last year, the destination welcomed new non-stop air service and additional attractions for visitors. Given the accessibility and multitude of attractions for families, the Myrtle Beach area received several new accolades including being recognized as the most popular travel destination of 2014 by *TripAdvisor*, one of the top 10 best beaches for families by *Family Vacation Critic* and the best golf destination by *USA Today*. A wave of growth continues in 2015 with the long-awaited opening of a large indoor sports center adjacent to the Myrtle Beach Convention Center, new kid-friendly attractions and multiple new hotel developments for the first time in more than five years. The following is the latest compilation of new tourism developments and happenings in the region.

Airline, Airport and Technology

Myrtle Beach International Airport Improvements

With the completion of the new \$300 million passenger terminal in early 2013, the Myrtle Beach International Airport continues to make improvements and renovations to the facility costing an additional \$20 million. The former airport terminal concourse has started to undergo a renovation that will service as a fully functional airline and passenger handling area opening up two additional gates in late 2015. The renovation will be complete with amenities, circulation space and improving the outside façade to blend-in with the look of the new terminal. In addition to these improvements, additional parking spaces will be available and the runway will be resurfaced. The target date for the project completion is Dec. 31, 2015. For more information, visit www.flymyrtlebeach.com.

Porter and WestJet Resume Seasonal Service

Canada-based carriers Porter Airlines and WestJet Airlines are resuming seasonal non-stop air service to Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR) in 2015. Porter will begin service from Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (YTZ) to MYR on Feb. 12 to May 18. February flights will be two days a week; March and April will be four days a week; and, late April/May will be two days a week. WestJet will resume service from Toronto Pearson Airport (YYZ) to MYR on Mar. 5 to Oct. 22. Flights will be two days a week on Thursdays and Sundays. For complete flight schedules and additional information, visit www.flyporter.com and www.WestJet.com.

Allegiant Resumes and Expands Seasonal Air Service

Allegiant Air will return to Myrtle Beach International Airport with expanded seasonal service offerings this year. Allegiant Air is offering more flights from Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport beginning April 10 through August 17, an additional eight weeks of service. Flights will be offered on Monday and Friday during April and May and will be Monday, Friday and Saturday during peak summer months. For more information, visit www.allegiantair.com.

Spirit Resumes Seasonal Air Service

Spirit Airlines will begin flights out of Cleveland Hopkins Airport with seasonal non-stop service to Myrtle Beach. Flights will start on April 16 and continue daily through the summer months. For more information, visit www.spirit.com.



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Attractions, Museums, Amenities

Dinosaurs: The Exhibition

A new dinosaur attraction opened at the Broadway at the Beach complex in March 2015. This interactive educational experience features 25 animatronic dinosaurs, some life size, and they will move and roar exciting visitors of all ages. The exhibition features programs, such as “Dig a Dino” where kids can find real Dinosaur fossils, a Dino Movie Room and a T-Rex Fun House. This is the only place in the world where visitors can sit on top of a life-sized T-Rex or Triceratops and ride their way through a ‘Jurassic Park’ of adventure. The attraction is located between Jimmy Buffett’s Margaritaville and Ripley’s Aquarium. Tickets are \$14.95 for adults and \$9.95 for kids. For more information, visit www.dinosaursmb.com.

Myrtle Beach Sports Center

The Myrtle Beach area has a new 100,000-square-foot indoor sports facility that is helping expand sports tourism. The \$12.4 million facility opened in March 2015 adjacent to the Myrtle Beach Convention Center. The complex has eight basketball courts, 16 volleyball courts, a café and retail area, and large multi-screen video wall. The MBSC has 2,000 seats and is configurable for numerous indoor sports. For more information, please visit www.myrtlebeachsportscenter.com.

North Myrtle Beach Bowling Center

The North Myrtle Beach Bowling Center on Highway 17 is recently under new ownership and a major renovation is underway with a new urban look and feel. The newly renamed *710 Myrtle Beach* has an updated floor plan to accommodate new entertainment offerings, a modernized menu featuring gourmet burgers, sandwiches and sharable appetizers, local draft and bottled craft beer and – of course – state of the art bowling. A reopening took place in April 2015. For more details, visit their Twitter page @710MyrtleBeach.

Dining

Croissants Bistro & Bakery Cookbook

The first cookbook ever to be published by a restaurant in Myrtle Beach was published by Gibbs/Smith Publishing in spring 2015. Titled “Bonjour Y’all: Heidi’s Fusion Cooking on the South Carolina Coast” the cookbook is authored by Heidi Vukov, owner of Croissants Bistro and Bakery in Myrtle Beach. The recipes are modeled after the restaurant’s unique fusion of traditional Lowcountry cuisine with French cooking. For more information, visit www.croissants.net.

Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach Expansion & New Restaurant

As part of Horry Georgetown Technical College, The Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach is planning a major expansion of its program. A brand new 30,000-square-foot building is planned within the Market Common district of Myrtle Beach on the corner of Pampas Drive and Crabtree Lane. This \$15 million center will include a 100-seat restaurant with a local focus, bringing in seasonal products from local farms and fisherman, also adding an international flair. Construction is planned to begin in March 2015 to be completed by summer 2016. For more information, visit http://www.hgtc.edu/academics/academic_programs/Culinary_Arts.html.



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Duplin Winery of North Carolina

Duplin Winery of North Carolina, the largest winery in the South, completed construction on a unique 15,000-square-foot wine tasting station in North Myrtle Beach. This is their first location outside of North Carolina. The facility accommodates more than 200 guests for guided wine tastings, making it the largest wine tasting facility in the Myrtle Beach area. The location includes more than 5,000-square-feet of retail space featuring Duplin wines, specialty drinks, foods and merchandise. Located adjacent to Barefoot Landing and Alligator Adventure on Highway 17, it opened for business in spring 2015. For more information, visit www.duplinwinery.com.

Mr. Fish Seafood Market Moves, New Offerings

Mr. Fish Seafood Market will be moving closer to the Mr. Fish restaurant at 6307 North Kings Highway in Myrtle Beach. The new space, which is three times larger than the former location, will allow for additional offerings such as cooking demonstrations, wine and beer tastings and expanded product offerings including a grab and go concept. Guests will also be able to watch fish cutters working in the cutting room. For more information, visit <http://mrfish.com/seafood-market>.

Nacho Hippo

Nacho Hippo is one of local Divine Dining Groups newest restaurants along the Myrtle Beach area. A third location opened in 2015 at 850 North Beach Blvd. in North Myrtle Beach and is approximately 4,745-square-feet. The restaurant specializes in unique nacho combinations, quesadillas, burritos and fresh squeezed margaritas open daily for lunch, dinner and late-night. For more information, visit www.nachohippo.com.

Tupelo Honey Café Comes to Myrtle Beach

Tupelo Honey Café, an Asheville, North Carolina based restaurant serving “made-from-scratch” southern food, opened a new location at the popular Market Common shopping district in early 2015. The 8,000-square-foot eatery has 270 seats and a full bar complete with outdoor seating in addition to onsite mixologists creating custom cocktails. The restaurant focuses on its made-from-scratch, farm-fresh dishes and works with area farms to find the freshest ingredients. They also have a unique selection of craft and local beers. For more information, visit <https://tupelohoneycafe.com>.

Entertainment

Thunder and Light: New Show at Calvin Gilmore Theatre

All That!, the nationally renowned clogging group formally on NBC's *America's Got Talent*, has added a new exclusive show to The Carolina Opry's live entertainment options. Directed by Jeffrey Gilmore, the show includes exclusive, original choreography by All That!, interviews and background on the group, and the same multi-colored 5-laser show that toured with Pink Floyd and Madonna. The live production previewed in September 2014 and began regular shows on January 17, 2015. For more information, visit www.thecarolinaopry.com/myrtle-beach-shows/thunderandlight.

New Performing Art Series at Calvin Gilmore Theatre

The Calvin Gilmore Theatre is planning a new performing arts series that will evolve into eight or 10 performances by visiting artists available as a series pass or for the individual performance. To kick off the series, the theatre welcomes Garrison Keillor for 'An Evening with Garrison Keillor.' The show by the renowned writer, actor and radio personality will include hilarious anecdotes about growing up in the American Midwest, the people of Lake Wobegon and late-life fatherhood. 2015 also marks the 30th anniversary of The Carolina Opry Christmas Special. Plans will be announced later in the year of special offerings surrounding the anniversary. For more information, visit www.thecarolinaopry.com.



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Events

Carolina Country Music Festival

The first-ever Carolina Country Music Festival (CCMF) came to Myrtle Beach on June 5-7, 2015. The inaugural CCMF was an outdoor country music festival that took place on the boardwalk in downtown Myrtle Beach. The three-day event hosted 35 of the industry's biggest stars, including national recording artists Eric Church, Lady Antebellum, Big & Rich and Hunter Hayes. The 2016 edition will take place June 9-12 and features previously announced headliners Tim McGraw and Keith Urban. More information and tickets can be purchased at www.CarolinaCountryMusicFest.com.

Lodging

Buchanan Motels

Virginia based Buchanan Motels will begin construction on a new hotel, yet to be named, in January 2015. The hotel, located on 17th Avenue in Myrtle Beach, is planned to be 23 floors and include 530 units. The hotel will sit across the street from an indoor water park and parking garage. The construction is expected to be complete by 2017.

Hilton Grand Vacations Club

Construction is underway on a new Hilton Grand Vacations Club timeshare resort at the former location of Beach View Apartments in downtown Myrtle Beach on Ocean Boulevard and 22nd Avenue North. Crystal Blue Investment Group is bringing this new hotel to the beach; the project is estimated to cost \$41.5 million. The hotel will be 22 stories with 220 units. The project was completed in July 2015 and is the first new lodging establishment to be built in Myrtle Beach since 2009. For more information, visit www.hiltongrandvacations.com.

Homewood Suites Oceanfront Resort & Conference Center

The new Homewood Suites Oceanfront Resort & Conference Center is planned at 1805 S. Ocean Blvd., the first and only Homewood Suites in the 399 chain that is an oceanfront property. The \$25 million Homewood hotel is expected to open during the spring 2016. The Homewood will share pools and other amenities with the Hampton Inn Oceanfront next door and will be the one and only, dually branded oceanfront resort hotel for the Hilton in the world. The property will have 100 suites including a mix of two bedroom, one bedroom and studios all with kitchens and private balconies. Homewood is also building a 300-seat conference center, three pools, a fire pit, fitness center, a Pilates-aerobics room for women only, an on-site chapel, and a bistro serving sandwiches and snacks. For more information, visit <http://homewoodsuites3.hilton.com>.

Springmaid Beach Resort to Become DoubleTree Resort by Hilton

Springmaid Beach Resort located on the south end of Ocean Boulevard in Myrtle Beach was recently sold to a California-based investment partnership and major changes are planned. The resort, which opened in 1948, will continue to operate as the Springmaid Beach Resort and will be managed by Hilton Worldwide until it is fully renovated and repositioned as a DoubleTree Resort by Hilton. The renovation will take approximately a year and a half to complete. The resort underwent a \$9 million renovation in 2012 and a \$19 million overhaul from 2000 to 2002. The property includes a 500-room hotel, conference center, camping facility and pier. For more information, visit www.springmaidbeach.com.

Shopping

Coastal North Town Center

The newest shopping center in North Myrtle Beach is continuing to attract new stores and openings. This 360,000-square-foot complex opened flagship stores in 2014 including the area's first Hobby Lobby and Publix in the area. In addition to stores such as TJ Maxx and Dicks Sporting Goods which are already open, additional stores are planned to open in 2015 including Ulta Beauty, Chipotle, Which Which, Ross Dress for Less, Rack Room Shoes, and PetSmart. The complex will eventually have 10 restaurant options for visitors.



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H&M at Coastal Grand Mall

Coastal Grand Mall, the second largest shopping mall in the state, welcomed the Myrtle Beach area's first H&M clothing store in August 2015. Current retailers began store renovations starting in January 2015 with freshened, modern looks while others are moving to new locations. For more information, visit www.coastalgrand.com.

The Shoppes at Magnolia Row

The Shoppes at Magnolia Row, a planned upscale retail/office complex located at 44th Avenue North and Kings Highway in Myrtle Beach, has started construction in fall 2014. This 36,000-square-foot project, opening in fall 2015, will include restaurants and retail space on the first floor and office space on the second floor. For more information, visit www.traddcommercial.com.

The Myrtle Beach area, popularly known as the Grand Strand, stretches from Little River to Pawleys Island, comprising 12 distinct cities along the South Carolina coast. Home to 60 miles of sandy beaches, an assortment of entertainment and family attractions, Southern hospitality and world-class golf, the Myrtle Beach area presents the quintessential vacation experience.

For additional information on the Myrtle Beach area, visit www.visitmyrtlebeach.com or call (888) Myrtle-1.