

The Outer Banks®

OF NORTH CAROLINA
outerbanks.org

A Travel Industry Publication From The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau

Winter 2012

Outer Banks Event Site - 10 Year Plan

So what could you do with 10 acres of beautiful Nags Head sound front property? Take in a lot of outstanding sunsets, that's for sure. Maybe invite some friends over for a party. Put up a tent. Get some fresh local seafood. Have a cook-out. A really big cook-out. Bring in a few bands. Or maybe instead of all that, just show some movies outdoors and enjoy the evening. Hey, that sounds like fun. Why not have movies every Friday night for a couple of months? Heck, with 10 acres, you could have a carnival!

There's a lot you can do with a beautiful sound front property, especially if you tap into the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of the people who live on the Outer Banks.

Over the last year or so, the Outer Banks Event Site (formerly known as Windmill Point) has hosted the Town of Nags Head 50th Anniversary carnival, the Children's Museum fall movie series and the inaugural Outer Banks Seafood Festival. Each of these events gave a glimpse into what was possible for the site, along

with pointing out a few things that could be improved.

Having events on the site is a natural for the Tourism Board and Visitors Bureau, especially since event development is so closely related to its mission of driving overnight visitation during less than peak months. Events do more than just generate off-season business, though. Importantly, they bring visitors and locals together and celebrate the Outer Banks. Events also offer fund-

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Outer Banks Seafood Festival Video

The Outer Banks Seafood Festival exceeded the expectations of even the most optimistic event organizer. Attendance was estimated at upwards of 8,000 attendees, which presented challenges, but a lot of learning and ideas for improving the Festival heading into next year. The Outer Banks Seafood Festival committee, its partners and sponsors were grateful to the community for its support. The event seemed to make a big impression on patrons, with the beautiful weather, the rich and diverse seafood plates, the stories under the Outer Banks Catch tent and the toe tappin' to a day of live



Please feel free to pass along and share with your own friends and fans. For questions, please contact Aaron Tuell, Public Relations Manager at 252.473.2138 or email tuell@outerbanks.org You can link to this video and others at the Bureau's official YouTube channel [TheOuterBanksNC](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTheOuterBanksNC) or use this link: <http://bit.ly/QUd2g9>

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VISION STATEMENT

The Board envisions a premier travel destination and year-round tourism economy that enhances the quality of life for visitors and residents while celebrating and sustaining the Outer Banks' vibrant natural, historic, and cultural offerings.

ABOUT THE BUREAU

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau is the lead marketing and promotional agency for the destination and is funded by 1% of the occupancy tax and 1% of the prepared meals tax collected in Dare County.

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Curt DeYoung, Facilities Manager

Dana Grimstead, Events and Marketing Assistant

The Business of Tourism is published by the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, written and edited by Aaron Tuell. We welcome information pertaining to Dare County's tourism industry. Please send news or changes of address to:

One Visitors Center Circle

Manteo, NC 27954

phone: 252-473-2138

fax: 252-473-5777

e-mail: tuell@outerbanks.org

Letter from the Chairman



*Ralph Buxton, Chairman
Dare County Tourism Board*

I am very pleased to report on the accomplishments of the Outer Banks Visitor Bureau and its Board of Directors for 2012.

The Tourism Board did strategic planning this year: reviewing our mission and bylaws, and setting strategic goals which are shared below. We also established a Vision Statement: "The Board envisions a premier travel destination and year-round tourism economy that enhances the quality of life for visitors and residents while celebrating and sustaining the Outer Banks' vibrant natural, historic, and cultural offerings".

As part of a special Hatteras initiative we dedicated extra resources to help Hatteras Island tourism industry recover from last fall's Hurricane Irene. These efforts are continuing as the community continues to wrestle with the problems of access created by Hurricane Sandy. We recognize that Hatteras Island is a very important component of Dare County's tourism economy, and indeed, it is the heart of the Outer Banks promotional brand. The effects of lost access to Hatteras Island and its beaches reverberate through out our county's economy and must be addressed both short and long term.

The Bureau has set the goal of actively seeking and promoting new events. Staff held a number of very well attended clinics to educate interested parties in how to obtain Visitor Bureau funded grants. The result included a number of new events including the very successful Outer Banks Seafood Festival. Even more exciting events are in the planning pipeline. The goal is to have a substantial event each month and work towards a weekly calendar of events.

A very thorough review of the potential uses of the Windmill Point property in Nags Head was completed, and the Board has committed to using the property for an Outer Banks Event Site for at least the next 10 years. The Bureau can now start planning the needed infrastructure improvements.

The Tourism Board recognizes that while we may disagree with the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife on some policies effecting Hatteras Island, we must keep good lines of communication and build strategic partnerships around common goals. We will work with all stakeholders for the betterment of Dare County's overnight visitation. We want to work with the Chamber of Commerce to encourage more businesses and restaurants to be able to be open year-round, particularly with special events and promotions. We are continuing our efforts to demonstrate the high economic "Value of Tourism" to local, state, and national audiences.

Chairman continues on Page 5

Report from the Executive Director

Dear Travel Partners,

There's a quote from Winston Churchill that has stuck with me, "Change is the price of survival." Certainly, our destination is no stranger to change, both natural and man-made.

Change is also a constant for the travel industry. For instance, within the last year, the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau launched a redesigned website and the first-ever mobile version of the site. A few short months later, 20% of the site traffic was coming from mobile devices.

Our other online communities also show a rapidly changing landscape. The Outer Banks Facebook site has surpassed 330,000 followers. Twitter nears 12,000 and our email database has tripled in a year's time. Meanwhile, the Visitors Bureau has added Flickr, Pinterest, Goggle+ and Instagram accounts. Like you, we must weigh each of these new opportunities against the time and dollars required to manage them. Our goal is to recognize the advantages of being an "early adopter" without chasing fads or adding something just because it's new.

While we continue to pursue new media opportunities, the more traditional outlets, like television and print, also offer chances to innovate and stand out as a destination. One recent example was the Visitors Bureau sponsorship of the Food Network program *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives*. Our involvement resulted in 6 OBX locations being featured, plus a Nags Head Thanksgiving Day special. The last two years, in fall, we purchased television in Raleigh and the Tidewater area. This spring, we'll expand the television buy, purchasing commercials in VA, PA and DC through an effort with Comcast.

Events are another area where change can help local tourism not only survive but thrive. With significant investment and the blood, sweat and tears of many, the 1st Outer Banks Seafood Festival took flight. The Festival also gave us a clear path forward for improving and utilizing the property as an Event Site over the next 10 years.

We are assisting a dedicated group in Hatteras Village as they prepare to host the 1st Hatteras Storytelling Festival (the first weekend in May, 2013). It's shaping up to be a great event; hope to see you there!



*Lee Nettles, Executive Director
Outer Banks Visitors Bureau*

Although much attention has been given to the development, funding and promotion of new events, the Tourism Board recently created a grant to help existing events, too. A couple of months ago the Board awarded the first Established Event Developer grants to Outer Banks Sporting Events and the Outer Banks Restaurant Association to help these proven tourism generators continue to grow.

The one thing that is certain about travel marketing is that it will continue to change. To some, Winston Churchill's quote might seem unsettling or daunting, but the Visitors Bureau welcomes his words and the challenge that comes with them. Living on barrier islands prepares us well for change!

On a personal note, I'd like to thank the outgoing Tourism Board members for their leadership, support and dedication to the Bureau and to our community. And thanks also to you, our industry partners, for your hard work. Please let me know if we can do anything to assist your efforts.

Lee Nettles
Executive Director
Outer Banks Visitors Bureau

Extreme Volleyball Coming to OBX in 2013

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau is finalizing negotiations with Extreme Volleyball Professionals to bring an exciting new sports event to the OBX next August.

The EVP Tour is a national circuit of young adult and upcoming volleyball stars with competitions in similar size markets in the Midwest and Eastern United States. Outer Banks Visitors Bureau staff originated the sales lead during a sports events conference known as TEAMS. Tourism Sales Manager Lorrie Love is always looking for new

opportunities to showcase the beautiful landscape and unique beachside settings for traditional and non-traditional sports and outdoor recreational pursuits that pull groups from out of the area.

There will be opportunities for local sponsorships to bring attention to your business or group. More information on this event to follow shortly!



2013 School Schedules

District	Spring Break	End of Year
Alexandria, VA	March 25- 29	June 20
Arlington, VA	March 25-29	June 20
Baltimore, MD	March 29- April 7	June 18
Chesapeake, VA	April 1-5	June 13
Chevy Chase, MD	March 25-29	June 14
Columbus, MD	March 29- Apr 7	May 30
Durham, NC	April 1 - 5	June 7
Fairfax, VA	April 14 - 18	June 20
Hampton, VA	April 1 - 5	June 13
Newark, NJ	April 2 - 6	June 25
Norfolk, VA	April 1 - 5	June 12
Philadelphia, PA	Mar 25 - 29	June 21
Pittsburgh, PA	Mar 25 - 29	June 13
Portsmouth, VA	Apr 1 - 5	June 13
Raleigh, NC	April 1 - 5	June 10
Richmond, VA	Apr 1 - 5	June 14
Trenton, NJ	Mar 29 - April 5	June 24
VA Beach, VA	April 1 - 5	June 20
Washington, DC	April 1 - 5	June 20

eGuide Readers (formerly Downloads)

Month	12/13	11/12	10/11
July	6,979	6,617	9,743
August	5,951	5,151	8,727
September	2,785	2,225	6,023
October	1,389	1,600	2,859
November	930	1,201	1,792
December		1,320	1,475
January		3,976	4,405
February		5,652	4,315
March		6,215	5,163
April		6,778	4,334
May		7,758	4,983
June		8,108	6,224
<i>YTD Totals</i>	<i>18,034</i>	<i>16,794</i>	<i>29,144</i>
TOTALS	18,034	73,395	60,043

Event Site continued from Page 1

raising opportunities for local non-profits, which in turn helps those organizations prosper and continue their fine work in the community. There's a ripple effect of benefit that comes from events.

What if instead of just three events, the site were to be dedicated solely to events for the next 10 years? Then dollars could be invested to do things like improve the grounds and address supporting infrastructure, such as, covered areas, lighting and electrical service, restrooms and site design for enhanced pedestrian and traffic flow.

This was some of the thinking that led to the Tourism Board's recent decision to concentrate its efforts

on an Event Site and a 10-year window rather than to pursue other development options.

The 10-year Event Site decision culminated a rigorous process for the Tourism Board. Much consideration and debate was given to the question of how best to deliver on the mandate of year-round overnight visitation, while also being sensitive to the needs of the community. Other options, like the hotel and conference center, promised overnight visitation and new market segments, but they came at a price, both financial and otherwise.

Maybe years from now, a future Tourism Board and the community will decide the timing and need for

a hotel and a conference center are right. But for now, it makes better sense to take care of the "bird in hand" and build on previous success. We invite you to work with us, and together answer the question of "what's possible," one great Outer Banks event at a time.

If you've got an idea you believe will appeal to residents and visitors, lay it on us! Call Outer Banks Events Manager, Lorrie Love, at 252-473-2138 for help with planning, promotion and possibly even funding of your event. Sunsets also provided!

Chairman continued from Page 2

The Board recognizes the importance of technology in developing effective advertising and promotion. Indeed, the Bureau has excelled in using new technology to provide a competitive advantage in promoting our destination. For example, we now have a mobile website; 300,000 Facebook friends; 160,000 eBlast subscribers; and 11,000 Flickr followers. We aim to maintain our edge in this fast changing world of the digital age.

Our staff is very successful in getting media exposure in national magazines and newspapers, television, and the internet. Top that with active tour bus promotion, numerous sports events offerings, and four expertly manned visitor centers, and you have a coastal promotion second to none. We are fortunate to have an outstanding staff that takes great pride in their work and continues to think outside the box to develop new contacts and media outlets.

It has been a great pleasure and honor to work with the Visitor Bureau staff and Tourism Board this past year. As I leave the Board after four years of service, I feel very confident in the leadership that is in place and the exciting future opportunities for our tourism economy.

Ralph Buxton
Chairman
Dare County Tourism Board

outerbanks.org Internet Activity

outerbanks.org Internet Activity												
Inquiry Fulfillment			Unique Visitors (Absolute)				Visits (User Sessions)			Page Views		
MONTH	12/13	11/12	10/11	12/13	11/12	10/11	12/13	11/12	10/11	12/13	11/12	10/11
July	16,602	18,794	21,475	284,587	275,413	250,371	372,907	355,681	323,420	1,459,121	1,748,978	1,465,587
August	22,331	15,170	25,382	226,865	270,772	228,534	295,402	361,053	288,677	1,102,670	1,659,596	1,178,976
September	17,898	19,822	25,146	152,310	129,637	152,931	193,547	172,573	191,757	636,980	664,951	727,479
October	13,198	31,990	21,646	109,098	100,058	87,248	137,103	128,230	109,508	421,186	489,522	424,356
November	14,235	30,746	13,899	85,450	81,530	62,758	103,992	102,040	77,153	312,871	351,630	289,949
December		13,329	4,998		78,458	51,277		98,287	62,356		368,850	278,242
January		17,225	13,618		133,256	119,169		170,694	151,215		651,221	808,877
February		28,919	20,777		137,965	133,662		172,558	167,300		638,470	887,478
March		39,558	33,360		165,699	170,231		212,236	215,381		760,107	1,150,821
April		44,573	35,355		176,197	165,435		228,928	208,685		819,646	1,072,587
May		54,320	37,221		241,332	218,524		311,940	276,280		1,201,926	1,400,588
June		38,072	35,026		275,536	274,430		359,260	351,547		1,404,280	1,741,284
Year to Date	84,264	116,017	107,548	858,310	857,410	781,842	1,102,951	1,119,577	990,515	3,932,828	4,914,677	4,086,347
Total	84,264	352,013	287,903	858,310	2,065,853	1,914,570	1,102,951	2,673,480	2,423,279	3,932,828	10,759,177	11,426,224

In January 2011, Google Analytics replaced Urchin for website tracking. User Sessions is now called Visits.

Gross Occupancy by Class									
Vacation Rental Homes				Hotel/Motel			Cottage Courts		
MONTH	2012	2011	2010	2012	2011	2010	2012	2011	2010
January	3,024,434	3,474,206	3,477,044	1,131,377	1,006,701	884,850	76,078	68,657	65,355
February	1,910,908	1,588,185	1,413,961	1,131,307	1,130,152	866,825	73,574	63,916	40,287
March	2,826,596	1,968,641	1,426,746	2,247,260	1,703,998	1,881,160	171,375	122,208	84,824
April	8,703,332	7,683,428	6,008,385	4,334,738	3,989,460	3,929,006	288,356	293,817	243,332
May	16,630,269	15,533,680	13,944,097	5,823,106	6,182,404	5,517,006	515,312	485,843	535,806
June	59,324,183	49,741,594	49,291,715	9,185,928	8,293,465	8,078,814	1,066,304	932,815	837,422
July	95,883,352	94,563,458	86,537,110	11,845,553	11,967,859	11,816,598	1,527,797	1,580,909	1,384,122
August	75,396,648	78,909,645	80,413,679	9,884,242	8,944,456	10,096,402	1,288,837	1,107,528	1,220,880
September	31,422,894	29,888,400	27,814,950	6,878,120	5,483,326	5,483,536	616,445	438,948	466,718
October	11,657,939	12,605,453	12,245,549	3,687,069	3,720,593	3,901,887	331,938	368,809	338,795
November		4,655,384	4,913,329		1,789,977	1,732,780		189,901	179,993
December		1,737,073	1,383,324		1,029,752	730,071		66,011	165,914
Year to Date	306,780,555	295,956,690	282,623,236	56,148,700	52,422,414	52,456,084	5,956,016	5,463,450	5,217,541
Totals	306,780,555	302,349,147	288,919,889	56,148,700	55,242,143	54,918,935	5,956,016	5,719,362	5,563,448

music. The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau captured some of that positive energy with a video recapping the day's events and priming everybody for the Seafood Festival's return in 2013.

The video was produced by Bureau staff and will be shared via social media so that people who had a great

time or are looking to come next year can link and share with their own audiences. From the neat bird's eye view of the site, filmed using Air Raid Aerials "Octocopter", we can show other groups what types of activities the site can hold, its proximity to the Roanoke Sound and Atlantic Ocean and other logistics to consider.

You can practically smell the crab cakes cooking! To view the video, please visit the Bureau's YouTube channel **TheOuterBanksNC** or type this link: <http://bit.ly/QUd2g9> into your web browser

Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Gross Meals Summary

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
January	5,908,401	5,149,079	4,946,077	5,553,193	5,315,203	5,652,092
February	6,001,197	5,600,305	5,306,714	5,878,828	5,901,277	5,864,520
March	9,324,697	8,342,477	7,944,634	7,371,099	9,906,602	8,368,675
April	15,272,146	13,937,220	12,643,388	12,570,914	10,696,837	13,018,031
May	20,033,102	17,884,885	17,420,030	17,237,550	17,902,993	17,030,910
June	30,676,562	28,170,717	25,929,735	25,850,095	26,110,903	26,398,208
July	36,914,627	36,454,367	35,295,259	32,687,202	33,163,197	32,620,688
August	33,521,889	27,024,599	31,515,361	31,285,408	32,095,228	31,213,494
September	22,057,864	19,239,630	18,678,839	19,444,780	17,335,174	19,572,423
October	13,282,164	13,084,800	13,295,890	12,630,255	12,192,193	12,942,026
November		8,587,922	8,822,724	8,298,475	8,044,142	9,001,275
December		7,391,106	5,983,306	6,123,554	6,457,727	7,449,495
Year to Date	192,992,649	174,888,079	172,975,927	170,509,324	170,619,607	172,681,067
Total	192,992,649	190,867,107	187,781,957	184,931,353	185,121,476	189,131,837

Gross Occupancy by Class

	Bed and Breakfasts			Campgrounds			Time Shares			Totals		
	2012	2011	2010	2012	2011	2010	2012	2011	2010	2012	2011	2010
Jan	25,893	21,014	42,657	22,069	55,780	20,954	9,383	2,407	3,446	4,289,234	4,628,765	4,494,306
Feb	55,881	30,638	38,729	29,432	60,029	23,072	12,721	5,197	3,128	3,213,823	2,878,117	2,386,002
Mar	76,104	156,535	88,309	106,917	125,528	89,272	22,429	13,246	1,978	5,450,681	4,090,156	3,572,289
Apr	203,144	209,481	161,884	212,212	282,296	229,152	51,725	30,639	21,965	13,793,507	12,489,121	10,593,724
May	263,884	286,926	262,983	475,510	486,979	479,237	40,888	35,183	29,983	23,748,969	23,011,015	20,819,112
June	324,477	320,837	231,505	903,870	871,358	867,967	109,216	81,561	79,207	70,913,978	60,241,630	59,386,630
July	400,639	413,944	399,950	1,251,002	1,493,221	1,500,079	182,723	188,338	145,606	111,091,066	110,207,729	101,783,465
Aug	390,578	244,708	330,402	864,730	693,221	879,107	128,858	143,828	144,211	87,953,893	90,043,386	93,084,681
Sept	194,298	174,824	161,958	395,134	<13,383>	321,440	61,302	51,113	33,674	39,568,193	36,023,228	34,282,276
Oct	148,653	171,544	219,863	211,070	41,776	261,792	25,885	26,733	32,233	16,062,554	16,934,908	17,000,119
Nov		79,856	87,059		61,416	136,529		18,720	12,355		6,795,253	7,062,045
Dec		91,818	53,707		9,927	41,169		12,079	7,163		2,946,610	2,381,348
YTD	2,083,551	2,030,451	1,938,240	4,471,946	4,096,803	4,672,072	645,130	578,245	495,431	376,085,898	360,548,055	347,402,604
Totals	2,083,551	1,858,907	2,079,006	4,471,946	4,168,147	4,849,770	645,130	608,994	514,949	376,085,898	370,289,918	356,845,997

“OBX Marks The Spot” Campaign Video Online

The “OBX Marks the Spot” campaign added a powerful asset with video shot in September of 2012. The video was produced by the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau and features actual visitors describing their favorite spots on the OBX and what they love about the Outer Banks. The video is an extension of the established “OBX Marks the Spot” campaign currently found in the Bureau’s print advertising. Further to the main video which is approximately three minutes long, two :30 second videos and one :15 second video were also produced. The :30 and :15 second videos served as pre-roll creative beginning in November of 2012 and will continue to be utilized in 2013.

Pre-roll refers to the video advertisement that plays before another video on the internet. So for example, say you are on a website and see a video you want to watch. Most likely, there will be a quick

advertisement before your video starts, this is known as pre-roll. We are currently using TubeMogul and ValueClick as the vendors for our online pre-roll.

New rich media units are currently being developed that will further develop the “OBX Marks the Spot” creative for online marketing. The

three minute video will be featured in these new units. The video will also be used throughout the year on OuterBanks.org and in our email marketing. The video encourages use of outerbanks.org where they can plan their next vacation and order a free 2013 Outer Banks Official Travel Guide.



*This screenshot illustrates how the red X “Marks The Spot” for this family featured in our new video. It’s a subtle touch you’ll find woven into the personal accounts of what visitors love about the OBX. It’s available to see on our YouTube channel **TheOuterBanksNC**.*

Other Notes

The 2013 Outer Banks Official Travel Guide is now available for local businesses to distribute to guests and customers. The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau is printing 425,000 of the perennially popular travel planning resource. The primary fulfillment piece for the Bureau, potential visitors and local travel partners can order their free guide and accompanying Outer Banks Getaway Card by going online at outerbanks.org or emailing our visitor services at information@outerbanks.org.

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Outer Banks Visitors Bureau staff have created a running list of restaurants that are open in the off-season which we will update regularly. A key finding of a recent visitor poll was the frustration guests felt at not knowing what was open in winter, and the need to provide guests with easy access to a list of eateries serving the public in non-peak times from Duck to Hatteras, Roanoke Island and mainland Dare. You can find a downloadable list on our homepage at outerbanks.org headlined “Open on the OBX.”

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You may recall the Tourism By The Numbers mailing that every resident in Dare County received, originated by the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau with the intent of showing how we as local residents can benefit from tourism at the community and personal level. We think it would be a useful document to show value in investing in the OBX, and have ordered extras for industry partners to mail to their clients directly. They are available for Dare County businesses by request. Email information@outerbanks.org or call 252.473.2138

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