



## Travel Partner News- Summer 2015

In this edition of the CVB's Navigator eNewsletter...

1. Room Occupancy Tax Collections
2. Industry Guest Blog
3. PR Department Tradeshow
4. STS Top 20 Event Nominations
5. WCC Hosts the NC Conference United Methodist Church Annual Conference
6. CVB Sales Staff to Attend Tradeshow
7. CVB Announces Realignment of Sales Department; Promotions, New Sales Employees & Staff News
8. Megan McCarthy Joins CVB Marketing Department as Senior Marketing Manager
9. Satellite Visitor Information Centers Open for the Season
10. Wilmington Convention Center Calendar

### 1. Room Occupancy Tax Collections

April 2015 New Hanover County gross ROT collections (1st 3%) were up 5.15% as compared to the same month of the prior year. Fiscal year-to-date (July 2014–April 2015), New Hanover County gross ROT collections (1st 3%) are up 11.21%. Calendar year-to-date (January 2015–April 2015) New Hanover County gross ROT collections (1st 3%) are up 9.27%.

### 2. Industry Guest Blog

In conjunction with National Travel & Tourism Week in May, the CVB launched an industry guest blog series that will feature destination articles written by local experts. May's guest blog was written by George Edwards, Executive Director of the Historic Wilmington Foundation, to commemorate National Preservation Month. The June blog was written by Rebecca Taylor, Director of the Federal Point History Center, and spotlights the History of the Carolina Beach Boardwalk. Visitors to the destination website can read the blogs in the online press rooms of the featured destination.

### 3. PR Department Tradeshow

- Eastern Chapter of the Society of American Travel Writers, Annual Meeting in Portsmouth, VA: On May 13-15, 2015, the CVB's Communications/PR Director participated in the 3-day SATW conference, which afforded multiple opportunities for the CVB's PR Director to meet one-on-one with freelance journalists and travel bloggers, including a well-attended Media Marketplace. Following the conference, two of the journalists in attendance spent three days exploring and writing about Wilmington and its beaches on their way back home to Florida.
- PRSA Travel & Tourism Annual Conference & Media Marketplace: On June 14-17, 2015, the Wilmington and Beaches CVB Communications/PR Director attended the PRSA Travel & Tourism section Annual Conference & Media Marketplace in Lexington, KY. This event offers educational sessions and the opportunity to promote Wilmington & Beaches during a media event attended by top-tier media, freelance journalists and travel bloggers based in the host city's region.

### 4. STS Top 20 Event Nominations

Nomination forms for the Southeastern Tourism Society's Top 20 Events for January, February, March 2016 must be received by STS no later than **July 17, 2015**. To nominate your event for STS Top 20 consideration, event organizers need to complete the online questionnaire. Beginning May 1, 2015, STS will no longer accept paper or email submission entries. However, online entries can be submitted via this link: [http://southeasttourism.org/static/img/pdfs/Top20\\_Online\\_Submission1.pdf](http://southeasttourism.org/static/img/pdfs/Top20_Online_Submission1.pdf).

### 5. WCC Hosts the United Methodist Church Annual Conference

The North Carolina Conference, United Methodist Church, hosted their 2015 annual conference at the Wilmington Convention Center, June 10-13. Attendees stayed at more than a dozen hotels in New Hanover County. One of the largest WCC events to date, NCC UMC attendees included more than 2,000 clergy and lay people from each of the UMC churches in Eastern North Carolina. The conference schedule allowed attendees the opportunity to dine at downtown restaurants for several meals. The Wilmington and

Beaches CVB reached out in advance to downtown restaurateurs to prepare them for the influx of business expected during this conference. Attendees also explored the destination during their free time.

#### **6. CVB Sales Staff to Attend Tradeshows & Events**

- **June 4:** CVB staff attended AENC's Durham Bulls night, which provided the opportunity to meet with Association Planners from North Carolina and to form new relationships.
- **June 11-14:** CVB staff attended Collaborate Marketplace in Orlando, FL. The annual education conference and appointment-only trade show is a highly respected event that brings together the most active planners, suppliers and experts in Corporate, Incentive and Citywide meetings and events. The business marketplace is where RFPs are placed, dates are secured and relationships are developed for future business.
- **June 18:** CVB staff attended a game at the Hasentree Golf Club with the Triangle Business Golf Association – consisting of members from associations and corporations from the state of North Carolina.
- **July 7:** CVB staff will attend the Georgia Chapter of Meeting Professionals International networking in Atlanta, GA. The group consists of Corporate and Association Meeting Planners.
- **July 11-13:** CVB staff will attend the AENC Annual meeting in Durham with Association Meeting Planners from North Carolina,
- **July 13-14:** CVB staff will attend MPI Carolinas Chapter Bi-Monthly Chapter meeting in Durham with Corporate and Association Meeting Planners.
- **July 30-31:** CVB staff will attend tournament at River Landing with the Triangle Business Golf Association with members from associations and corporations from the state of North Carolina.
- **August 2-7:** CVB staff will attend Southeast Tourism Society - Marketing College, Dahunega, Georgia. During the week, students experience a broad-based curriculum of courses designed to teach marketing techniques from all facets of the tourism industry. Marketing College professors are working, experienced professionals from across the U.S. who bring expertise, and real-world knowledge and experience to the classroom.
- **August 26-29:** CVB staff will attend Connect Sports Marketplace, an annual education conference and appointment-only tradeshow. This respected event brings together the most active sports planners and rights holders, suppliers and experts in sports events. The business marketplace is where RFPs are placed, dates are secured and relationships are developed for future business. Education focuses on trending topics, business advice and networking with industry professionals.

#### **7. CVB Announces Realignment of Sales Department; Promotions, New Sales Employees & Staff News**

The CVB recently realigned its sales and services department to allow the sales team to recruit more convention and group business, county-wide. Please note the following title and staff changes:

**\*John W. Sneed II**, CHSP, has been promoted to Vice-President of Sales & Services. Sneed previously served as the Convention and Visitors Bureau's [CVB] Convention Sales Director, a position he held since joining the bureau in 2009. With numerous industry accolades and more than 21 years of experience in the hospitality and tourism industries, Sneed was chosen to oversee all sales and services functions at the CVB, including three sales managers and one visitor services manager.

**\*Molly Johnson**, CMP, joins the Wilmington and Beaches CVB as a Senior Sales Manager covering the State Association and Corporate markets. She brings 24 years of experience in the hospitality industry ranging from operations to sales. Recent experience includes 18 years in sales positions at the Hilton Wilmington Riverside and the Blockade Runner Resort in Wrightsville Beach.

**\*Amy Higgins** joins the Wilmington and Beaches CVB as a Senior Sales Manager covering the National/Regional Association and Government markets, as well as Military/Military Reunions and Fraternal groups. Amy's background in sales includes both CVB and hotel sales experience, including past positions at the Durham and Greater Raleigh CVBs, the Little Rock CVB, and most recently at the Oklahoma City CVB. Hotel experience includes sales and catering positions with Sheraton, Radisson and Holiday Inn properties.

**\*Karen Warren** has been promoted to the CVB's reclassified position of Visitor Services Manager. In this role Karen will oversee all group and leisure visitor services, to include conventions, groups and visitor information centers. Karen joined the CVB in 1996 as a visitor information center specialist and was promoted in 1998 to manage the CVB's visitor information centers.

**\*Bree Nidds**, who joined the CVB last fall as Sales Manager for the Sports market, has added the growing Religious market to her duties. Bree was also recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Sports Association.

#### **8. Megan McCarthy Joins CVB Marketing Department as Senior Marketing Manager**

**Megan McCarthy** joins the CVB's marketing team as Senior Marketing Manager. Megan most recently served as a social media communications analyst for Hilton Worldwide in Dallas, Texas. She graduated from Salisbury University in Maryland and has a B.A. in Communications with a concentration in Marketing, Advertising & Public Relations. Megan's parents live in Leland and she fell in love with Wilmington and our beaches during frequent visits.

### 9. Satellite Visitor Information Centers Open for the Season

**Riverfront Booth** opened April 1<sup>st</sup> and will remain open through October 31<sup>st</sup>. Hours are: April, May, September and October 9am-4:30pm daily and June, July and August they are open 9:30am-5pm daily.

**Pleasure Island Visitor Center** will extend its hours beginning April 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>. They will open on Saturday 9am-4pm and Sunday 1pm-4pm. They are open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm throughout the year.

**Wrightsville Beach Visitor Center** has opened daily from April 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>. Hours will be Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 10am-2pm, Thursday 10am-3pm, Friday, Saturday 9am-3pm and Sunday 1pm-4pm.

### 10. Wilmington Convention Center Calendar

Event/Organization	Date
NPC Gold's Classic	June 06
NC Conference United Methodist Church	June 10-13
GWBJ Power Breakfast Series	June 16
National Career Fair	June 30
Summer Bridal Expo	July 12
EyeCon One Tree Hill	August 07

Is there something you'd like to see covered here? Let us know; please send your questions and comments to [communications@wilmingtonandbeaches.com](mailto:communications@wilmingtonandbeaches.com). Should you have difficulty with the Newsletter, contact Michelle Starling at 910-332-8758, or at [communications@wilmingtonandbeaches.com](mailto:communications@wilmingtonandbeaches.com).

---

Wilmington, N.C., Historic River District & Island Beaches (Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach)