

CHAPEL HILL

HILLSBOROUGH & CARRBORO

ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

ANNUAL REPORT

IT'S ALL HAPPENING IN ORANGE COUNTY, NC

Where the charm of our destination converges with arts and culture, culinary delights, the great outdoors, sports and academics, and much more for an array of visitor experiences.



CHAPEL HILL

HILLSBOROUGH & CARRBORO

WHO WE ARE

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau is a department of Orange County, NC government and serves as the official accredited Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Chapel Hill and the communities of Orange County.

OUR MISSION

To market Orange County, NC in collaboration with community stakeholders; to attract and serve visitors; and to positively impact the local economy and quality of life.

OUR VISION

To establish and promote Orange County as a premier place to visit; and a conference destination.

ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

308 W. Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 245-4320
info@visitchapelhill.org

Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 5pm
Saturday, 10am - 3pm

WWW.VISITCHAPELHILL.ORG

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Front cover photo: Churton Street, Downtown Hillsborough by SP Murray

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VISITORS BUREAU STAFF

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

- MARK BELL, Chair, Town of Hillsborough
- MANISH ATMA, The Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro
- HEIDI WERNER DAWSON, Orange County Hotels
- KAREN DEHART, North Carolina High School Athletic Association
- LILI ENGELHARDT, At-Large
- LISA GANZZERMILLER, Orange County Hotels
- SHARON HILL, Orange County Economic Development Commission
- GRACE HOLTkamp, Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce
- EARL MCKEE, Board of Orange County Commissioners
- TANYA MOORE, University of North Carolina
- BEVERLY PAYNE, Alliance for Historic Hillsborough
- MAYOR DAMON SELLS, Town of Carrboro
- KAREN STEGMAN, Town of Chapel Hill
- SHANNAN CAMPBELL, Town of Hillsborough Economic Development, Ex-Officio
- ANITA SPRING COUNCIL, Town of Chapel Hill Economic Development, Ex-Officio
- JERI LYNN SCHULKE, Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership, Ex-Officio
- JON HARTMAN-BROWN, Town of Carrboro Economic Development, Ex-Officio

OTHERS WHO SERVED DURING THE 2022-23 TIMEFRAME

- MATT GLADDEK
- AUBREY WILLIAMS

ORANGE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (AS OF 6/30/23)

- JAMEZETTA BEDFORD, Chair
- EARL MCKEE, Vice-Chair
- AMY FOWLER
- SALLY GREENE
- JEAN HAMILTON
- PHYLLIS PORTIE-ASCOTT
- ANNA RICHARDS

VISITORS BUREAU STAFF (AS OF DECEMBER 2023)

- LAURIE PAOLICELLI, Executive Director
- HANNAH HEMPHILL, Business Officer
- MARLENE BARBERA, Sales Director
- PATTY GRIFFIN, Communications Director
- TINA FULLER, Website/Social Media Coordinator
- SUSAN RICE, Welcome Center Coordinator
- BOBBI WILKINS, Saturday Receptionist
- KATIE MURRAY, Director, Orange County Arts Commission - Orange County Manager's Office

LET CURIOSITY LEAD YOU HERE



A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Mark Bell, Chairman, Visitors Bureau Board

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. As the board chair for the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau during this fiscal year, I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for your dedication to sustainable growth in tourism in our communities.

Over the past year, it has been a pleasure to be part of an incredible team working tirelessly to facilitate the economic recovery of our area's tourism sector in the aftermath of the pandemic. Our 2022-2023 Business Plan laid the groundwork for identifying numerous sales and marketing opportunities

aimed at boosting visitor demand for Orange County, including renewed focus on promoting our exceptional hotels, versatile meeting spaces, and our strategic proximity to RDU.

Thanks to our collective efforts and the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau's budget of \$2.4 million for 2022-2023, we helped our area generate \$236 million in economic impacts for Orange County, a 21.3 percent increase from the previous year, according to a report by the N.C. Department of Commerce. This growth exceeded the state's average, which saw a

13.4 percent increase during the same period. Orange County proudly stands among the top 10 counties in the state for increases in visitor spending, alongside our neighboring Wake and Durham counties.

As we move forward, I want to extend my deepest thanks to our dedicated board members and invaluable partners. Together, we will continue to highlight and promote the exceptional assets of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough, ensuring that our region remains a vibrant and inviting destination for visitors.

**With heartfelt thanks and warm regards,
– Mark Bell –**

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ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRAVEL TO ORANGE COUNTY*

\$236.29
MILLION

Spent by domestic and international visitors to and within Orange County up 21.3% from 2021.

1,812
JOBS CREATED

Jobs created in Orange County directly attributable to travel and tourism.

\$64.9
MILLION PAYROLL

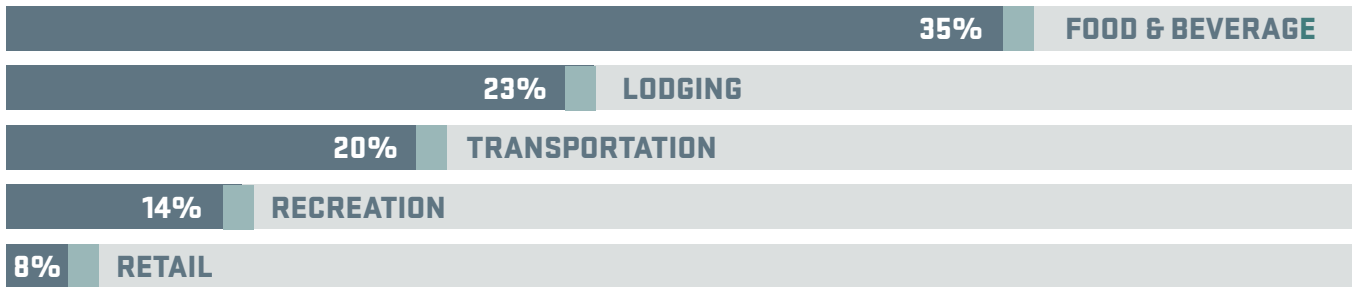
Travel generated payroll.

\$16.5
MILLION

TAX REVENUE GENERATED

State tax revenue generated \$9.1 million
Local tax revenue generated \$7.4 million

VISITOR SPENDING BY SECTOR



*Statistics are from the "Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2022," which was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY STATS

	2022 - 23	2021 - 22	% CHANGE
OCCUPANCY	60.5%	59.8%	1.2%
A.D.R.	\$163.20	\$143.13	14%
REVPAR	\$98.73	\$85.55	15.4%
SUPPLY	584,579	554,716	5.4%
DEMAND	353,840	330,814	7.0%
ROOM REV	\$57.28 MILLION	\$46.75 MILLION	22.5%

OCCUPANCY
PERCENTAGE OF ROOMS OCCUPIED

AVERAGE DAILY RATE
ROOM REVENUE DIVIDED BY ROOMS SOLD.

REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOMS
ROOM REVENUE DIVIDED BY ROOMS AVAILABLE.

SUPPLY (ROOMS AVAILABLE)
THE NUMBER OF ROOMS TIMES THE NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE PERIOD.

DEMAND (ROOMS SOLD)
NUMBER OF ROOMS SOLD OR RENTED
(EXCLUDES COMPLIMENTARY ROOMS.)

ROOM REV
TOTAL REVENUE GENERATED FROM THE SALE OR RENTAL OF ROOMS.

SALES ACTIVITIES

TOURISM PROMOTIONS DESIGNED FOR IMPACT

SALES NUMBERS

BOOKINGS BY MARKET

							
TOTAL BOOKINGS	ROOM NIGHTS	ESTIMATED SPENDING	LEADS GENERATED	BUSINESS CONFERENCE & MEETINGS	WEDDINGS	SPORTS	SOCIAL OR ACCOMMODATIONS ONLY
30	2,801	\$834,152	154	53%	27%	10%	10%

LEAD GENERATION

THE SALES DEPARTMENT WORKED TO RECEIVE LEADS THROUGH MEETINGS CAMPAIGN ON LINKEDIN AND BY ATTENDING AND MEETING IN-PERSON WITH VARIOUS MEETING PLANNERS AT MEETINGS CONFERENCES, GENERATING 154 LEADS, UP FROM 98 THE YEAR BEFORE.

ONLINE SALES PROMOTIONS

- Launched **Corporate/ Business Meetings Hotel Campaign** to generate impressions, website traffic and leads promoted through social, native creative, paid search and publisher direct.
- Promoted **Meetings Videos** on LinkedIn spotlighting reasons event planners would want to visit or book a conference in Orange County.
- Updated **"Meetings Venue Guide."**
- Updated RFP resource page on **"Meetings"** section of Bureau website www.visitchapelhill.org/meetings.

WORKING WITH AND PROMOTING DC HOTELS & MEETING SITES

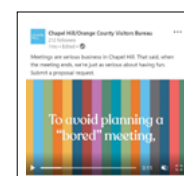
- Coordinated **"It's Fall Y'all Mix-n-Mingle"** event for UNC Meeting Planners at the Sheraton Chapel Hill Hotel in November 2022.
- Attended **"Meetings Today"** conference in Savannah, GA in December 2022.
- Attended and sponsored table at **Association Executives of North Carolina Spring Conference** in Raleigh, May 2023.

COMMUNITY PROMOTIONS

- Coordinated **2nd Annual Open House** at the Welcome Center in May 2023. This yearly event welcomes the community to our Franklin Street facility with local food, music, speeches and celebration.
- Coordinated the contents of the Bureau's new **Mural Map** in June 2023.
- Secured hotel rooms for artists, coordinated discounts at local hotels, determined **UPROAR** trolley route and distributed signage leading up to countywide arts event which ran from July 14 - August 12, 2023.

BUREAU'S RELATED MEMBERSHIPS

- Destinations International and Accreditation.
- US Travel.
- National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals.
- North Carolina Travel & Tourism Coalition.
- North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association.



PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

THE CHAPEL HILL/ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU TELLS THE STORY OF OUR DESTINATION TO GARNER POSITIVE PUBLICITY AND MEDIA EXPOSURE FOR THE COMMUNITY WHILE PROMOTING OUR TOURISM AMENITIES.

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Met directly with 42 travel writers, freelancers, and bloggers from local, regional and national outlets at media missions or visiting our destination.
- In 2022 attended VisitNC Media Mission in Research Triangle Park in October and participated in the SATW Virtual Media Mission in November. In 2023 attended Media Marketplace at VisitNC Tourism Conference in Asheville in March and the Public Relations Travel & Tourism Conference in Madison, WI in June.
- Sent 10 press releases.
- Directly assisted 136 journalists on their Orange County stories during the year.
- 276 Orange County editorial stories appeared.
- Helped coordinate May 2023 visit by Film Company to shoot for Chapel Hill episode on ESPN/ACC Network 3-Day Weekend series.
- Presentation on Orange County to 1-800-VisitNC Call Center at the Women's Correctional Facility in Raleigh in June 2023.

SAMPLE OF DESTINATION MEDIA STORIES

- OUR STATE MAGAZINE:** "A Local Guide to Chapel Hill" video featuring Marcus Ginyard.
- HEMISPHERES MAGAZINE:** for United Airlines America's Best College Towns Chapel Hill feature.
- NC TRIPPING.COM: website** "How to Explore Occoneechee Mountain."
- FAR & WIDE: website** Chapel Hill is the Best College Town.
- CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER:** Top 25 Hotel in the South is The Carolina Inn.
- FAMILY VACATIONEER: podcast** College Towns Chapel Hill Episode.
- TRIANGLE ON THE CHEAP: website** Day Trip-Visit Hillsborough NC and immerse yourself in history, art and nature.
- SOUTHERN LIVING:** Budget locations to visit in 2023 includes the Triangle.
- FOOD & WINE:** North Carolina's Triangle is the Perfect Destination for a Weekend of Eating.
- NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC:** True North Carolina Experiences Await Beyond Raleigh City Limits includes Chapel Hill.
- NORTH CAROLINA WEEKEND:** PBSNC story Rocks and Acid.
- PRIDE JOURNEYS:** Exploring LGBTQ Culture in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.
- LOCAL PALATE AND VISITORS BUREAU PARTNERSHIP:** Produced 7-story On the Road Chapel Hill City Guide highlighting food, events, outdoors, arts, accommodations, travel ideas and more in Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough.

NEW PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED

- 2022-23 VISITORS GUIDE** 64-page print brochure
- OFFICIAL ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS MAP** print brochure
- TOP 35 THINGS TO DO IN ORANGE COUNTY** PDF/digital
- RESTAURANTS OF ORANGE COUNTY** printed tear-off pad
- CARRBORO BROCHURE** print brochure
- THINGS FOR THE CURIOUS IN CHAPEL HILL** print brochure
- SPECIAL EVENT FLYERS/PROMOS**
 - WHAT'S OPEN MONTHLY FLYERS
 - MOOREFIELDS BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL POSTER
 - THANKSGIVING DINING
 - HOLIDAY DINING AND EVENTS



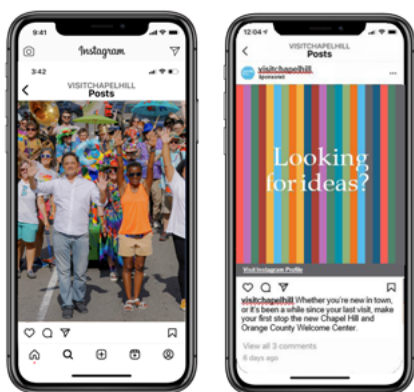
33,850
PIECES OF PRINTED MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

THE CHAPEL HILL/ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU MARKETING TEAM COMMUNICATES WITH ITS KEY AUDIENCES DIRECTLY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA, OUR WEBSITE, E-COMMUNICATIONS AND MORE.

PROMOTIONAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS:

- **LET CURIOSITY LEAD YOU HERE**
Leisure campaign which encourages overnight visitation and exploration.
- **LEISURE VISITOR CAMPAIGN**
pinterest carousel ads.
- **MEETINGS CAMPAIGN**
Focusing on meeting planners and bringing meetings/conferences to Orange County with advertising, video and meetings webpage.
- **FLI.PTO** promotion.
- **CELEBRATE PRIDE MONTH IN ORANGE COUNTY**
Facebook/Instagram Reel promoting local pride events and showcasing new welcome center Love Wins Mural. Provided Rainbow Ram for the Pride Parade/Dance Party/Food Truck event.



WELCOME CENTER:

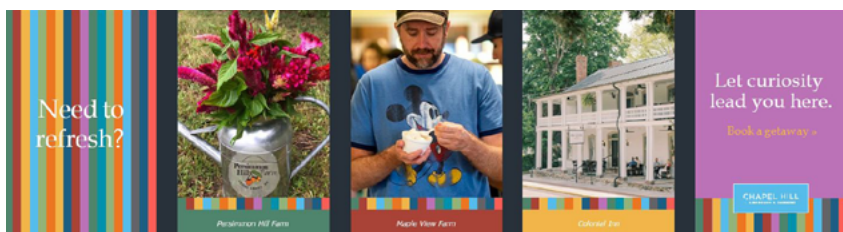
- New Map decal front entrance.
- Everyone's Welcome decal on building side.
- Welcome Center Restaurant Reference Cards with QR Codes.

WEBSITE: UPDATES/NEW DESIGNED PAGES:

- Updated Orange County's Black Community & Culture page.
- New page: Cozy Outdoor Dining Options.
- Updated LGBTQ Travel section.
- 28 Blogs published.
- Audioeye accessibility software added.
- Plans for new website redesign.

NEWSLETTERS:

- Distributed monthly to 5,763 stakeholders and subscribers as of June 30, 2023.
 - "ORANGE SLICES" weekly
 - "TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS" monthly
 - "CHECK IT OUT" monthly



PAID AD CAMPAIGN NUMBERS

REACH	976,866
PAGE ENGAGEMENTS	248,885
IMPRESSIONS	5,765,719
LANDING PAGE VIEWS	38,355
CLICKS	65,690
PAGE LIKES	774

WEBSITE NUMBERS

SESSIONS	562,985
PAGE VIEWS	858,779

SOCIAL MEDIA NUMBERS

FACEBOOK	ENGAGEMENT 148,958 (12,413 PER MONTH)
INSTAGRAM	
TWITTER	
PINTEREST	
YOUTUBE	VIEWS 5,070 (422.5 PER MONTH)
NC FARM APP/ ORANGE COUNTY	VIEWS 4,343 (361.9 PER MONTH)
LINKEDIN	FOLLOWERS 246

VISITORS NUMBERS

WALK-INS TO WELCOME CENTER, VISITOR CALLS, EMAILS, AND ADVERTISING INQUIRIES	ATTENDANCE AT MAJOR VISITOR ATTRACTIONS AND TOURS
4,905	1,977,750

VISITORS BUREAU IN THE COMMUNITY

THE CHAPEL HILL/ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU SERVES ALL AREAS OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, INVITING ALL TO EXPLORE AND ENJOY.

WELCOME CENTER

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau helped with the marketing and promotion efforts leading up to the Chelsea/Wrexham soccer competition held at UNC's Kenan Stadium in July 2023. The Chapel Hill match was the first of the 2023 FC Series, an international soccer exhibition that grew from Florida Citrus Sports' Florida Cup event. The Bureau made media appearances as well as produced a special welcome website page, posters, mascot stand-up cut outs and mascot head fans.



PHOTO: STEVEN PAUL WHITSITT

GET AROUND



March, the Bureau published a **2023 Chapel Hill/Orange County, NC Accessibility Guide**, the official accessibility guide to disability-friendly restaurants and hotels in Chapel Hill and Orange County. The guide was dedicated to Cresha and George Cianciolo.

DIVERSITY WEBSITE



Ongoing updates to our diversity website which was created as a tool and resource to help support, promote and connect BIPOC (Black Indigenous and People of Color) Business in the Orange County communities of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough, NC. WWW.CHAPELHILLDIVERSITY.COM

UPROAR



Bureau helped promote and market the Orange County Arts Commission **UPROAR** Festival of Public Arts leading up to the summer event with a planned Saturday trolley leaving from the Welcome Center, producing a trolley route map and helping promote the event through media, blogs and newsletters.

HOMETOWN TOURS



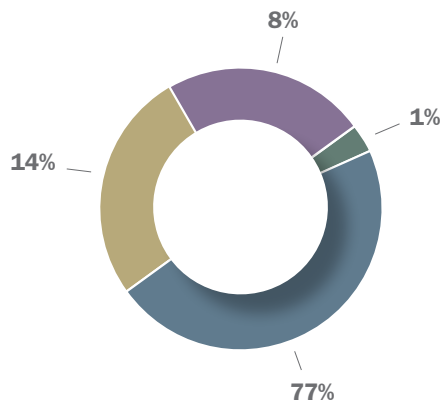
HOMETOWN AMBASSADOR GUIDED WALKING TOURS
Tours leave the Welcome Center on select Fridays at 3pm, Spring through Fall.

VISIT:
HEARTOFTHEHILLTOURS.COM

FINANCIALS

THE CHAPEL HILL/ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU IS FUNDED THROUGH THE ACCOMMODATIONS OCCUPANCY TAXES COLLECTED BY ORANGE COUNTY, NC. THE VISITORS BUREAU RECEIVES AN ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT WHICH HIGHLIGHTS OUR COUNTY'S INTERNAL CONTROL POLICIES AND PRUDENT USE OF FUNDS.

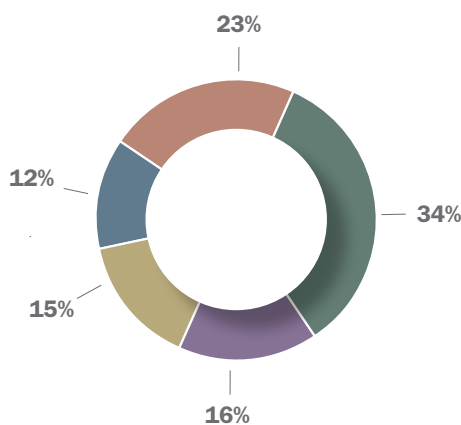
REVENUES



- 77% OCCUPANCY TAX
- 14% TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT
- 8% ARTS COMMISSION
- 1% INTEREST INCOME

OCCUPANCY TAX	\$1,928,970
TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT	\$348,658
ARTS COMMISSION	\$191,600
INTEREST INCOME	\$17,682
TOTAL REVENUES:	\$2,486,910

EXPENDITURES



- 34% SALES & MARKETING
- 16% ARTS COMMISSION OPERATIONS
- 15% OPERATIONS
- 0% CAPITAL
- 23% ADMINISTRATION/PERSONNEL SERVICES
- 12% FUND BALANCE RESERVES

SALES & MARKETING	\$834,885
ARTS COMMISSION OPERATIONS	\$389,136
OPERATIONS	\$373,395
CAPITAL	\$5,000
ADMINISTRATION/PERSONNEL	\$557,857
FUND BALANCE RESERVES	\$281,637
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$2,441,910



For a meal a century in the making,
let curiosity lead you here.



The eclectic food scene in Chapel Hill, Hillsborough, and Carrboro has delighted diners for decades. You'll find everything from a century-old, comfort food classic to unexpected international flavors. So, bring your appetite and let curiosity lead you here.