

AUSTIN, Texas —The U.S. Travel Association honored [Visit North Carolina](#) on Tuesday with a Mercury Award for “Firsts That Last,” a marketing campaign that documents real-life travelers on their first visit to the state to experience a first in their lives. The award was presented at the association’s Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations in Austin.

Visit NC competed against Pure Michigan and Travel Oregon in the finals for best branded and integrated marketing campaigns by larger state organizations.

Anchored on VisitNC.com, [“Firsts That Last”](#) was carried across advertising, digital media, print and social platforms. Judges commended the campaign as “authentic, insightful and emotional” with a rich diversity of people and experiences. “The ‘Firsts That Last’ theme branded the campaign perfectly and compelled even the judges to want to go explore the destination,” they said.

Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit NC, said he was gratified by the recognition of the campaign, which was created by Luquire George Andrews of Charlotte, Visit NC’s agency of record.

“It took a leap of faith to forgo a script in favor of reality,” Tuttell said. “But the short films that resulted capture so much of what we love about North Carolina and the power of travel to enrich people’s lives. Given the public’s response and the industry recognition, we are thrilled to be working on behalf of a state that offers so much for people to discover, not only about our destinations but also about themselves.”

About Visit North Carolina:

Visit North Carolina is part of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. Established in 2014, the EDPNC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that oversees the state's efforts in business and job recruitment and retention, international trade, and tourism, film and sports development. The mission of Visit North Carolina is to unify and lead the state in developing North Carolina as a major destination for leisure travel, group tours, meetings and conventions, sports events and film production. For more information on planning a trip to North Carolina, go to [VisitNC.com](#).

Tourism remains one of the state's most vital industries with economic activity and employment generated in each of the state's 100 counties. In 2018, domestic travelers to North Carolina spent \$25.3 billion, which accounts for 230,560 jobs for North Carolinians. State and local tax revenues, as a result of visitor spending, topped \$2 billion in 2018. Tourism spending creates \$532 in annual household savings. North Carolina ranks sixth in total person-trip volume by state behind California, Florida, Texas, New York, and Pennsylvania.

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<https://media.visitnc.com/Visit-NC-Campaign-Wins-Top-Industry-Award>