

State Spending by Domestic Visitors Jumps to \$23.99 Billion

RALEIGH, N.C. - Record visitor spending in 2017 was reflected with visitor spending increases in all 100 counties, N.C. Secretary of Commerce Anthony M. Copeland announced today. Visitor spending reached nearly \$5.4 billion in Mecklenburg, \$2.3 billion in Wake, \$1.4 billion in Guilford and \$1.1 in Buncombe and Dare counties. Rounding out the top 10 counties for visitor spending were Forsyth (\$898 million), Durham (\$814 million), New Hanover (\$578 million), Brunswick (\$563 million) and Cumberland (\$542 million). The data comes from an annual study commissioned by [Visit North Carolina](#), a unit of the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#).

Domestic visitors spent a record \$23.99 billion statewide in 2017, an increase of 4.2 percent from 2016. State tax receipts as a result of visitor spending topped \$1.2 billion in 2017, and local tax revenues directly resulting from visitor spending totaled \$738.6 million. Visitor expenditures directly supported 225,700 jobs and generated more than \$6.0 billion in payroll income across North Carolina.

"North Carolina is a welcoming state and destination for travelers from across the world, and tourism continues to help drive economic development statewide," said Secretary Copeland. "Tourism creates jobs and increases state and local tax revenues, growing North Carolina's economy across all 100 counties."

Visit NC Executive Director Wit Tuttell added: "The continued growth in visitor spending is great for communities across our entire state. North Carolina's continued position as the sixth most-visited state in the nation with more than 46 million visitors in 2017 reinforces its status as a premier tourism destination."

The visitor spending study commissioned by Visit North Carolina is conducted by the [U.S. Travel Association](#). The study uses sales and tax revenue data, employment figures and other industry and economic data to determine the overall impact of visitor spending in North Carolina. Highlights include:

- Mecklenburg County received \$5.38 billion in domestic travelers' expenditures to lead all of North Carolina's 100 counties. Wake County ranked second with \$2.27 billion, followed by Guilford County with \$1.41 billion, Buncombe with \$1.14 billion and Dare with \$1.13 billion in visitor spending.
- The largest percent increases in visitor spending were seen in Polk (8.3 percent), Hyde (8.2 percent), Henderson (7.1 percent), Pitt (6.6 percent) and Buncombe (6.6 percent) counties. Beaufort and Forsyth counties followed with a 6.4 and 6.1 percent increase respectively. Rounding out the top 10 in largest increases were Alamance (6.0 percent), Bertie (5.9 percent) and Pamlico (5.7 percent).
- Positive spending growth was seen throughout the state's economic development regions. The Western (5.1 percent) and Piedmont Triad (4.9 percent) regions experienced the strongest growth, yet all eight regions had spending growth of 3 percent or more from 2016 to 2017.
- Mecklenburg County had the largest number of direct tourism employees (52,250) and the largest payroll (\$1.9 billion). Four other counties had more than 10,000 direct tourism employees: Wake (23,420), Guilford (13,950), Dare (13,370) and Buncombe (11,790).

- 90 percent of the state's counties saw direct tourism employment growth in 2017. Counties with the largest year-over-year increases in direct tourism employment were Polk (6.9 percent), Hyde (6.8 percent), Henderson (4.8 percent), Alamance (4.6 percent), Pitt (4.6 percent), Bertie (4.5 percent) and Buncombe (4.4 percent).

Full tables can be accessed at partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies. For more information about the travel impact numbers, contact Visit North Carolina.

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