

NEWS RELEASE



*Where the Sun Rises
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HAYWOOD COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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VISITOR SPENDING IN COUNTY INCREASES 5 PERCENT TO \$116.64 MILLION IN 2007

Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism on Haywood County and North Carolina Reveals Continued Growth

HAYWOOD COUNTY, N.C. (August 18, 2008)—Scotty Medford Ellis, executive director of the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority, announced today that domestic visitor spending for 2007 increased 5 percent in Haywood County to a record \$116.64 million, according to statistics released by the N.C. Commerce Department's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development.

“These figures confirm some other key indicators we track, like occupancy tax collections, that point to a strong, steady growth of the tourism industry in Haywood County,” Ellis said. “We’re extremely pleased with this progress, and we will continue our efforts to draw visitors here, through the focused strategies of our multimedia marketing plan.”

Visitor expenditures directly generated more than 1,400 jobs and nearly \$24 million in payroll income within Haywood County in 2007. The tourism industry in Haywood County during 2007 generated a total of \$10.84 million in tax revenues (up from \$10.6 million in 2006). This represents a \$192.10 tax saving to each county resident. State tax revenue totaled \$5.83 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income. Some \$5 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.

“This industry is an important economic stimulator for Haywood County,” Ellis said. “It provides jobs for people living in the county and brings in money to the businesses here.

“And the numbers from this study are significant: Travel and tourism, and the spending associated with it, continue to grow here and across our state even as the economy in general has slowed appreciably,” Ellis added. “That’s great news.”

Domestic and international visitors to and within North Carolina spent a record \$17.1 billion in 2007 (a 7.4-percent increase from 2006). Domestic traveler expenditures reached \$16.5 billion, up 7.2 percent from 2006, while total direct international travelers’ expenditures increased to \$607 million, a 13.2 percent jump from the previous year.

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Visitor expenditures directly generated 198,900 jobs and nearly \$4.2 billion in payroll income within North Carolina in 2007. Employment increased 2.2 percent and payroll jumped 4.3 percent from 2006. Visitor spending in the state also directly generated close to \$2.7 billion in tax revenue for federal, state and local governments in 2007, up 4.6 percent from 2006.

Ninety-four of the state's 100 counties saw increases in visitor spending in 2007. Haywood County ranked 30 in travel impact among the 100 counties in North Carolina.

“The various attractions—natural and manmade—make this a great place to vacation, and we have a great supply of diverse accommodations for overnight visitors to choose from,” Ellis said. “We expect our marketing of these assets to return even better results in 2008.”

The visitor spending figures come from an annual study commissioned by the Tourism Division and conducted by the Travel Industry Association. The study uses sales and tax revenue data plus employment figures to determine the overall impact of visitor spending in North Carolina.

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