

Chapel Hill
WITH CARRBORO & HILLSBOROUGH
The Feeling Never Leaves You



2008–2009

Annual Report

2009–2010

Strategic Plan Overview

CHAPEL HILL / ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

CHAPEL HILL • CARRBORO • HILLSBOROUGH
NORTH CAROLINA

STAFF

Laurie Paolicelli
Executive Director

Linda Ekeland
Sales Director

Patty Griffin
Communications Director

Dale Chodorow
Publications Coordinator

Tina Fuller
Administrator

Susan Rice
Visitor Services

Katelyn Rosemond
Part-time Visitor Services



Laurie Paolicelli, Executive Director; Jim Ward, Visitors Bureau Board of Directors; Carol and Roger Stancil; Lee Pavao, Board Emeritus, Visitors Bureau tour the Ernie Williamson Athletic Center, a top draw for visitors.

© Copyright January 2010, Chapel Hill/
Orange County Visitors Bureau

BOARD *of* DIRECTORS 2008–2009

Director

Mark Sherburne
Chair, Jan–Jun 2009

Lee Pavao
Chair, July–Dec 2008

Barry Jacobs

Jim Ward

Bob Ward

Linda Convisor

Rick Strunk

Jim Parker

Jon Wilner

Creston Woods

Frances Dancy

David Gephart

Greg Overbeck

Dwight Bassett

James Harris

Brad Broadwell

Jim Norton

Representing

Orange County Lodging Association

Chapel Hill/Carrboro Chamber of Commerce

Board of County Commissioners

Town of Chapel Hill

Orange County Economic Development Commission

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

North Carolina High School Athletic Association

Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce

Town of Carrboro

Orange County Lodging Association

Town Board of Hillsborough

Alliance for Historic Hillsborough

Chapel Hill/Carrboro Chamber of Commerce

Economic Development Officer, Chapel Hill

Economic Development Director, Carrboro

Economic Development Director, Orange County

Executive Director, Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership



PROGRAMS *and* RESULTS *from* 2008–2009



The **Touch Downtown campaign** brought together athletics, town economic boosters and tourism resources to ask Carolina fans and visiting friends of the other team to come early and stay late.

Securing **national publicity** on our towns' livability awards, business growth, special events and year-round hospitality brought Orange County added attention.

Collaboration efforts with the **High School Athletic Association** provided families with discount restaurant offers and helped spread the word about local hotels.

Funding a **Ladies Night Out campaign** in Hillsborough reminded Virginia, Triad and Triangle visitors of the happening holiday events in Hillsborough.

Hotel developers were assisted with stats, county information, public relations and occupancy history, making their research on the area both quick and easy.

The **Visitors Guide, Meeting Planner's Guide and Maps** were used by tens of thousands of visitors.

Conferences and events were booked into local hotels from all sectors of the meetings industry.

Supporting arts and heritage, the Visitors Bureau provided marketing assistance to organizers of downtown Chapel Hill arts gallery, FRANK.



Shopping at the Ladies Night Out Event in November 2008. Photo by Vanessa Shortley, News of Orange.



Hillsborough Mayor Tom Stevens reads Hillsborough children's book to students at Cameron Park Elementary School in March 2009.

and promote their February 2009 NC Comedy Arts Festival across the state.

A **publishing partnership** was formed with a local author and illustrator of children's books. The partnership has generated two books, both used by the Visitors Bureau to tell the younger generation about Orange County.

A marketing partnership with Carrboro's **DSI Comedy Theater** helped to generate hotel rooms locally



IMPACT *of* TOURISM *on* ORANGE COUNTY *in* 2008

- Domestic tourism generated an economic impact of \$152.22 million in 2008. This was a 3.2 percent increase over 2007.
- Orange County ranked 24th in travel impact among the state's 100 counties.
- More than 1,775 jobs in Orange County were directly attributable to travel and tourism.
- Travel generated in Orange County a \$29.93 million payroll.
- State and local tax revenues from travel to Orange County amounted to \$11.23 million. This represents an \$87 tax saving to each county resident

Source: "2008 Economic Impact of Travel On North Carolina Counties" study conducted by the U.S Travel Association for the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development.

Partnering with heritage leaders in Hillsborough, the Visitors Bureau funded and began research on the feasibility of a **genealogical repository** for Hillsborough.

More than eleven thousand **visitors** were serviced directly through the walk-in Visitors Center on Franklin Street; 110,000 visited www.visitchapelhill.org website and nearly 5,700 visitor information packets were sent from e-mail inquiries and calls to our toll free information line.



The Visitors Center began flying the **OTHER TEAM'S flag** this year. In addition to flying the Carolina flag at the Visitors Center, the agency took the opportunity to remind visiting friends and family of the other teams, that Orange County welcomes all jerseys.

Supporting local events that draw new visitors, the Visitors Bureau helped bring the **literary festival** to life. The event took place at UNC and festival leaders reported twelve thousand visitors in attendance.

Arts events are a priority, so the Visitors Bureau continued to let visitors know of arts happenings in Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Hillsborough through a **new online arts calendar** on the Carolina Culture Zone website at www.carolinaculturezone.org.

New advertising programs brought news of Orange County towns to readers of *Southern Living*, *Our State*, *AAA Go*, and *Charlotte Magazine* and dozens of newspapers throughout North Carolina and Virginia.

A new campaign targeted **meeting planners** through publications such as *Meetings South*, *Association News*, *Small Market Meetings*, *Carolina Meeting Guide*, *AENC Guide* and *MPI-Carolina Blitz*, reminding decision makers that Chapel Hill is loaded with fun before, during and AFTER the meeting.



FAN MAIL

“WE ARE SO GRATEFUL to your agency for all your hard work and guidance as we booked hotel rooms and created town partnerships for our festival in Orange County. We simply wouldn't have known where to begin. We anticipate bringing several hundred people to town and we will make every effort to keep them here, thanks to the CH/OCVB!”

—Jeannine Simmons, Institute of Arts and Humanity, University of North Carolina.

TRAVEL *and* TOURISM MARKETING

On-Line Marketing

- Social Marketing programs included Twitter, Facebook, Ning, website blogs, AAA blogs and video post cards on YouTube.



Heritage Tourism Electronic Postcards

- In partnership with local preservationist, Ernie Dollar, the Visitors Bureau produced a series of electronic postcards that were posted on a YouTube site, giving viewers a 90 second snapshot of more than one dozen historic sites in Orange County.

Publications and Distribution and Fulfillment

- A Food Guide, Visitors Guide, Map, Top 10 Things to Do and See for Summer Campers and their Families, Blue Monday Flier and Carolina Basketball Museum rack card were printed for tens of thousands of visitors.

Summer advertising program

- Targeting North Carolina and Virginia, the Visitors Bureau placed ads in newspapers and online promotions targeting state visitors who want a memorable vacation stop.
- “Get 3 towns for the price of 1” heralded the unique features in each town through an advertising program.
- A direct e-mail campaign targeted UNC summer camp program directors highlighting the adventures open all summer long in Orange County.

E-newsletter and E-marketing

- A monthly e-newsletter is sent to more than 1,500 visitors, travel agents and friends of Orange County tourism

National travel media and stories placed

- Editors, travel media and freelance writers were hosted on a getting-to-know the towns-trip to Orange County so that they could return home and write about the area in national and international newspapers and magazines.

Merchandising the brand on tee-shirts, cups, teddy bears and bags

- You read the book, saw the DVD, why not wear the name on a tee shirt? Specialty caps, shirts and Teddy Bears reminded all of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough



Extraordinary Ventures

- The Visitors Bureau teamed with Mark Roth of Extraordinary Ventures to promote the meeting facility to UNC and state meeting planners. The Bureau’s sales director, Linda Ekeland, serves on the board and works to book the facility.



UNC March Madness event held at Extraordinary Ventures in March 2009.

“THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO to bring new and returning guests to our county. The Visitors Bureau’s work on the International Gay and Lesbian Travel agent event was executed beautifully. And your work to publish first class visitor guides and promote Carrboro and all of Orange County has helped build the economy in such a favorable way. Thank you.”

—NC Senator Ellie Kinnaird

Herald Sun Partnership

- The visitor's bureau serves as events information contributor for an annotated weekly column on "What's Happening in Orange County."

University of North Carolina Partnership

- The visitor's bureau supports through marketing sponsorships: The Literary Festival, CHAT festival, UNC Athletics.

Town of Chapel Hill Partnership

- FRANK Arts Collective, Wayfinding Signage Committee, Touch Downtown promotion, Brochures, Merchandise, Videos, Freedom Rider's Legacy project.

Town of Hillsborough Partnership

- Ladies Night Out marketing partner, Hillsborough holiday events partner, Hog Day promotions partner, Hillsborough Spring Garden Tour promotions partner, Genealogical Center future's study partner, business media partner.

Town of Carrboro Partnership

- DSI Comedy Festival marketing partner, distributor of Walk Carrboro maps, continuing pitches to national media on Carrboro-travel stories, external sales arm for Century Center, public relations pitches on Carrboro Film Fest and Carrboro Music Festival. Producer of 90-second video postcard on Carr Mill Mall. Photographer, videographer and writer of Carrboro media materials.



February 2009
NC Comedy Arts
Festival. Photo by
DSI Comedy Theater.

SALES PROMOTIONS

Visitors Bureau developed and participated in numerous direct sales promotions in 2008–09 including MINT, Hot Leads, tradeshow, inbound FAMS and promotions, advertising in trade journals targeting meeting planners and producing promotion materials including the meeting planning guide and numerous post cards and targeted publications. The Sales Department serves as a point of contact for Weddings, Reunions, Bar Mitzvahs and other Events; develops proposals; and hosts site inspections. A Partnership began with the Hyland Group, a Washington, D.C.-based destination sales firm that specializes in helping towns and cities across the globe increase sales. Hyland's Chicago and Washington offices are working on a one-year retainer to generate greater awareness of Chapel Hill's conference facilities. The group solicits Associations' meeting planners, especially those with a UNC affiliation.



December 2008
Familiarization Tour stops
at The Siena Hotel.

Highlights

- Participated in Meeting Professional International (MPI), Carolina Chapter Education Conferences in Charlotte, Raleigh, Greenville, and Myrtle Beach, SC. Association Executives of North Carolina Annual Winter Tradeshow and bi-monthly educational and networking events in Raleigh.
- Hosted with industry partners a familiarization tour for NC meeting planners.

"THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT and hard work on behalf of Hillsborough. Ladies Night Out is successful, in part, because of what you bring to the table. And our downtown merchants always talk about the support you give them. I am glad the county has funded a visitor's bureau and I look forward to our continued relationship."

—George Horton, Summit Engineering

- Hosted 3-day sales blitz in March 2009 on the University of North Carolina campus. The Blitz was completed with a luncheon held at Extraordinary Ventures and featured a keynote speaker. A total of 85 UNC employees and planners attended the event.
- Sent quarterly online e-mail blast promotions to over 150 Washington DC and Chicago area meeting planners.
- Conducted quarterly lodging sales roundtables for Orange County accommodations.
- On-going special campaign for Memorial Weekend Bob Gibbons Basketball Tournament.
- On-going special campaign and promotion for the Chapel Hill Tennis Club Annual Southern Open Tennis Tournaments held in July.
- Responded to 1,015 requests for meeting and conference and group tour information from groups interested in hosting events in Orange County.
- Provided conference services and visitor information to 195 groups meeting in Orange County.
- Generated 52 sales leads to local lodging and meeting sites.
- Generated or assisted 43 conference bookings with 17,039 attendees producing an economic impact of \$3 million.
- Generated 2,903 room nights in Orange County hotels through efforts of Bureau sales department.

TRAVEL TREND FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 2009
(% change from 2008)

Occupancy	ADR	RevPar	Revenue
61.3	\$111.48	\$68.39	\$33,948,755
-8.6%	-2.5%	-10.9%	-10.5%

PARTNERSHIPS, ALLIANCES, COOP MARKETING AND MEMBERSHIPS

- Destination Marketing Association International
- Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina
- Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International
- Meeting Professionals International
- Meeting Professionals International, Carolinas Chapter
- North Carolina Travel Industry Association
- Association Executives of North Carolina
- North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association
- Triangle Area Hotel Motel Association
- Society of American Travel Writers
- U.S. Travel Association/ North Carolina Tourism Division Washington DC Travel Leadership Summit
- North Carolina High School Athletic Association
- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership Board
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
- Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce
- North Carolina Rehabilitation Association, *opening speaker, 2009 conference*
- Orange County Historical Museum traveling exhibit, *Here Comes the Bride* marketing partner
- FRANK, Franklin Street Arts Collective, *marketing supporter*
- DSI Comedy Theater marketing partner
- Hillsborough Spring Garden Committee
- Hillsborough Candlelight Tour Committees
- Hillsborough Hog Day Committee
- Heritage Museum and Genealogical Center, study funder
- 2009 Orange County Agricultural Summit



Congressman David Price and Communications Director Patty Griffin at the September 2008 DC Travel Summit.

“THANK YOU TO YOUR AGENCY for arranging a warm welcome party for me on my return to Chapel Hill. It’s nice to know that somebody cares so much for Chapel Hill that they look for every opportunity to promote the town. I too am a big fan and I appreciate all that you have done to spread the word about my music career and love for Chapel Hill.” —Anoop Desai, American Idol finalist

COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

VISITORS STATISTICS	2008-09	2007-08
Visitor Inquiry Packets Mailed	5,673	4,495
Visitors to Franklin Street Visitors Center	11,094	13,263
Attractions, Welcome Centers & Guided Tours Attendance	1,763,213	1,828,452
Website Unique visits	110,219	207,374
E Newsletter Subscribers	1,567	1,256

VISITOR MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED	2008-09	2007-08
Visitor Guides	50,950	47,400
Visitor Maps	33,350	35,800
Passport to Value Coupon Books	7,180	13,560
General destination brochures	7,000	13,000
Destination Post Cards	3,000	5,000
Meeting and Event Planning Guides	114	100

& Awards Banquet held June 8, 2009 at the Embassy Suites Charlotte-Concord Hotel and Convention Center. The purpose of the Destination Marketing Achievement Awards is to honor and showcase innovation, best practices, creativity and outstanding efforts/results in destination marketing.

Platinum Award

- “Take Me Out After the Ballgame” Touch Downtown Chapel Hill ad—“Best Print Advertising Leisure”

Gold Awards

- 2009 Official Visitors Guide—“Best Visitors Guide”
- 2007-08 Visitors Bureau Annual Report—“Best Local Constituents Communications”
- Meeting Planners Guide—“Best Niche Marketing”
- “It’s March Madness and there’s only one sure winner” postcard promotion—“Destination Marketing Initiatives” award

Innovation Awards

- Touch Downtown Chapel Hill campaign—“Best Local Stakeholder Relations” category
- Bureau’s support of the Carrboro children’s book A Weekend in the Paris of the Piedmont and the Hillsborough story Polly and the Forbidden House—“Community Partnerships” category
- 2009 Official Visitors Guide also won a Platinum Hermes Creative Award from the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals. Bureau website www.visitchapelhill.org and the magazine ad “Every to Do List” both won Gold Hermes Creative Awards.

AWARDS WON

- The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau received seven Destination Marketing Achievement Awards at the tenth annual Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina’s Annual Meeting



“Wow, WHAT A GREAT RESOURCE this county has in your agency. We did not know how we were going to open another new Hillsborough business and your public relations team stepped right in and spread the word on our opening, our products and why visitors should support our store. We loved the enthusiastic support of your team. Thank you.”

—Karan Sjoberg, co-owner, Spruce Antiques & Interiors in the Shops at Daniel Boone Village



MEDIA RELATIONS

- Provided reference, background and story ideas to journalists, which resulted in 277 travel, tourism and event stories in local, regional, national and international media. Assisted 204 media.

- The destination was featured in numerous Leisure media in 2008–09 including *Garden & Gun Magazine*, *Sherman's Travel*

Magazine, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Southern Living*, *Bon Appetit*, *Money Magazine*, *Newsmax Magazine*, *Preservation Magazine*, *Charlotte Magazine*, *NC Signature Magazine*, *15-501 Magazine*, *Metro Magazine*, *Chapel Hill Magazine*, *USA Today*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Travel Channel's Man vs. Food*, *Fox Business Network*, *WGHP-TV Fox 8*, *North Carolina Weekend (WUNC-TV)*, *WNCN-TV*, *News 14 Carolina*, *Chris Robinson Travel Show*—CFRB *Radio Toronto Canada*, *CNN.com*, *Forbes.com* and *WRAL.com*.

- Trade Publications featuring information on Orange County include *ConventionSouth Magazine*, *Small Market Meetings*, *Group Travel Leader*, *Meetings & Conventions Magazine*, *Southeast Association Executive*, *Association News*, *USAE*, *Meeting South*, *Carolina Heritage Guide*, *Triangle Travelhost*, and *MPI Carolina Blitz*.

Press Distribution

- 48 press releases, highlighting tourism-related stories sent to media.
- 486 digital images in response to media requests.
- Weekly What's Happening Column to *Chapel Hill Herald* began in September 2008.

TRAVEL WRITERS IN ORANGE COUNTY

Hosted six travel writers and broadcast media during in 2008–09 which resulted in articles in media including travel websites, cable television, magazines and newspapers such as *bylandersea.com/travel*, *automotivetraveler.com*, *visitnc.com*, *UK Daily Telegraph*, *AAA Go Magazine*, *Travel Channel's Man vs. Food*, and *New York Post*.

MEDIA MISSIONS IN 2008-09

- Attended the Society of American Travel Writers 53rd Annual Convention in Houston, TX in October 17–22, 2008. Met with 18 travel writers during the media marketplace.
- Pitched stories on Orange County to more than 60 media at three media missions during 2008–09. Met with local, regional and national media representing newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, internet sites and freelance writers. Media missions were held in Charlotte, NC in August 2008, Atlanta, GA in January 2009 and Raleigh, NC in March 2009.

STRATEGIC OUTREACH

Participated in the US Travel Association's Travel Leadership Summit in Washington, DC in September 2008.

INDUSTRY & HOSPITALITY PARTNER RELATIONS

Conducted three hospitality-training programs (one classroom and two bus tours) in Orange County with 34 participants in 2008–09.

Hospitality Bus Tour stops at Orange County Historical Museum in Hillsborough.



“THANKS for agreeing to speak to our group when we met at the Sheraton Chapel Hill. We needed a speaker to welcome us to town and tell us some unique history and fun facts about the area. You did not disappoint. The group appreciated all that the visitor's bureau did to make them feel welcome. We already look forward to a return visit.”

—NC rehabilitation associates, conference planners of 2009

FUNDING

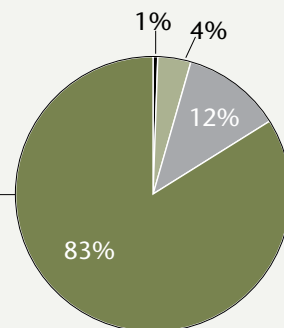
As Orange County's marketing agency, the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau is a pro-active, visitor-centered approach to economic and cultural development of the towns of Orange County including Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Hillsborough.

- The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau is a division of Orange County government. The county government employs staff and funds the tourism strategy as well as the Franklin Street Visitors Center and the sales office in Washington DC.
- Orange County, North Carolina collects a 3% occupancy tax from lodging guests, which the Board of Commissioners dedicates to the operation of a countywide Visitors Bureau. For the 2008–09 fiscal year, this amount totaled \$935,220. No local property taxes are used to fund the Visitors Bureau.
- The Town of Chapel Hill also collects a 3% occupancy tax on guests who stay in local hotels and lodging properties. From these receipts, the town of Chapel Hill grants the Visitors Bureau 13% or approximately \$130,000 annually.

REVENUE *and* EXPENDITURES FY 2008-2009

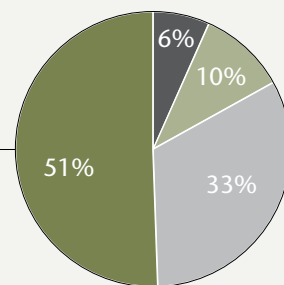
REVENUE

● Occupancy Tax Receipts (3% County)	\$935,220
● Chapel Hill Occupancy Support	\$130,000
● *Fund Balance Transfer	\$43,558
● Partnership Reimbursement/ Merchandise Sales/Interest	\$5,862
TOTAL	\$1,114,640



EXPENDITURES

● Sales & Marketing	\$564,312
● Salaries & Benefits	\$363,808
● Operations/Administration	\$114,511
● Overhead (phone, rent, utilities, etc)	\$72,009
TOTAL	\$1,114,640



*Fund Balance was appropriated to support sales/marketing efforts.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- FY 2008–09 funding for the Visitors Bureau includes \$935,220 in occupancy tax proceeds, \$130,000 contribution from the Town of Chapel Hill.

- Occupancy rates are down slightly due to market conditions.
- In 2010, the department will aim for a 68% occupancy rate.
- In Orange County, each 1 percent increase in occupancy generates \$900,000 for the local economy.

“ON BEHALF OF THE LITERARY FESTIVAL, I thank you for your support and early insistence that this unique event be held in Chapel Hill. We serviced twelve thousand visitors, kids, authors and families and I thank you for your enthusiasm, marketing skills and ability to let the world know about our efforts.”

—Amy Baldwin, UNC Literary Festival Director

MISSION 2009–2010

- Position Chapel Hill and all of Orange County, North Carolina as a desirable place to visit and a desirable place to host a meeting or conference, with careful consideration to the needs and assets of the Orange County communities.
- Engage in a variety of activities that will result in increased hotel bookings, rental of area meeting facilities, visitations, increased occupancy tax receipts and visitor expenditures.
- In cooperation with community organizations, achieve a comprehensive marketing program with advertising, collateral materials, website and social marketing as well as conference services.



- Serve as a countywide leader in developing strategies for consistently providing quality visitor services to the travelers who visit Orange County.
- Encourage longer stays, increased spending and repeat visits to Orange County to support the county's economic development goals.

- Examine the range of visitor services available, identify unmet needs, and encourage private businesses to meet those needs, as appropriate.
- Contribute to the economic development and quality of life that comprises Orange County.

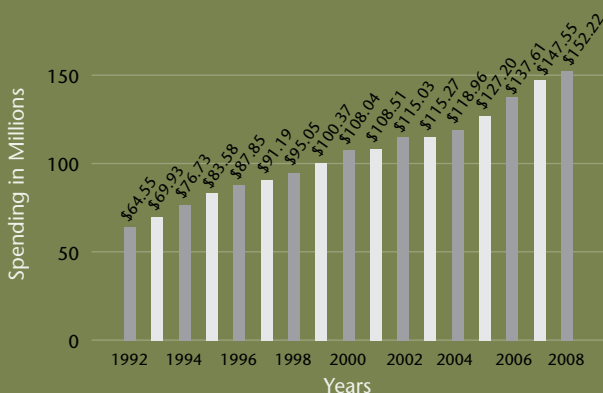
2010 STRATEGIC MAP AND GOALS



- Expand sales department.
- Increase by 10% leads generated for area lodging properties.
- Enhance percentage of digital footage on website.
- Continue to improve website.
- Introduce new trolley services to visitors.
- Advertise Orange County seasonally in feeder markets.
- Working with the renaissance computing lab, add touch screen and interactive displays to Visitors Center.
- Create podcasts, individualized IPOD tours and maps.
- Create destination video for local hotel rooms.
- Increase variety of sales sampling opportunities for meeting planners.
- Bring fans to the area before the game and encourage them to stay and play after the game.
- Get the word out about Orange County to visitors and media.
- Convert Orange County travelers to Orange County tourists, lengthening stay and promoting area amenities.



TOURISM GROWTH IN ORANGE COUNTY



2010 GOALS

- Increase the amount of spending in Orange County by visitors each year.
- Provide information to Orange County visitors six days a week at the Visitors Center.
- Increase number of bookings initiated and assisted by the Visitors Bureau.
- Increase number of sales leads distributed to hotels and meeting facilities.
- Increase demand for attraction, welcome center and tour visitations.
- Increase countywide average daily hotel room rates.



BOARD *of* COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Valerie P. Foushee, *Chair*

Bernadette Pelissier, *Vice-Chair*

Alice M. Gordon

Pam Hemminger

Barry Jacobs

Mike Nelson

Steve Yuhasz

CHAPEL HILL / ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

Visitors Center Hours:
Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM–5 PM
Saturday, 10 AM–2 PM
501 West Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Toll-Free: (888) 968-2060
Phone: (919) 968-2060
Fax: (919) 968-2062
E-mail: info@visitchapelhill.org
Website: www.visitchapelhill.org

 [twitter](#)

Follow us on Twitter: [orangecountync](#)

 [facebook](#)

Follow us on Facebook: [Chapel Hill/Orange County Friends & Visitors](#)