



A weekly newsletter on North Carolina General Assembly news relevant to the North Carolina tourism industry

## NCTIA Visits Wilkes County



NCTIA Executive Director Vince Chelena addressed the Wilkes County Commissioners this week on occupancy tax legislation enacted in 2010, but not yet levied.

Chelena provided commissioners with a history of the 2010 legislation as well as a briefing on how other communities have leveraged the occupancy tax to enhance tourism.



The meeting was a work session well attended by the community, including Wilkesboro TDA Executive Director Thomas Salley (standing in lower photo).

Visit NC Director Wit Tuttell also spoke to commissioners at the meeting.

Click [here](#) to read an Elkin Tribune op-ed Salley wrote on July 27.

## 2021 Visitor Spending Up in All Counties

The following article was excerpted from a [press release issued by the NC Department of Commerce on August 17.](#)

Recovery in visitor spending was felt statewide in 2021 with all 100 counties seeing increases, according to preliminary [data released today](#) by the NC Department of Commerce and Visit NC, a unit of the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.](#)

Key findings from the study:

- Strong recovery was seen statewide compared to 2020 with visitor spending across the state up 45%. Each of the state's 100 counties experienced increases in spending from 2020 to 2021.
- Mecklenburg County received \$4.1 billion (up 46%) in traveler expenditures to lead all 100 counties. For the first time, Buncombe County ranked second with \$2.6 billion (up 81%), followed by Wake County with \$2.3 billion (up 40%), Dare County with \$1.8 billion (up 30%) and Guilford County with \$1.3 billion (up 52%) in visitor spending.
- Top percentage spending increases from 2020 were Gates County (up 83%), Buncombe County (up 81%), Beaufort County (up 71%), Moore County (up 70%) and Alexander County (up 68%).
- Seventy-five counties had 2021 spending that topped 2019's record sums. Four of these counties had spending up 50 percent or more from two years ago: Warren County (up 68%), Stokes County (up 66%), Madison County (up 59%) and Alexander County (up 57%).
- Mecklenburg County had the largest number of direct tourism employees (28,438), an increase of nearly 6% from 2020. Three other counties had more than 10,000 direct tourism employees: Wake (21,357, up 23%), Buncombe (18,278, up 31%) and Dare (12,295, up 4%).
- Top counties for percentage increases in tourism employment were Buncombe (up 31%), Gates (up 25%), Wake (up 23%), Cabarrus (up 21%) and Alexander (up 20 %).

"NCTIA is very proud of its members and the work they put in each and every day during the pandemic to bring us to this point in our recovery," said NCTIA Executive Director Vince Chelena. "Our industry was confident that we would come out of 2020 stronger and the data shows we were right."

Full tables can be accessed at [partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies](https://partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies).