



NC TRAVEL NEWS

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

New NCTIA President Jessica Roberts



Jessica Roberts is the new President of NCTIA, a position she assumed on November 16 at the [NCTIA Tourism](#)

[Leadership Conference](#)

Luncheon sponsored by Visit Raleigh.

Roberts, who is the Executive Director at Tourism Partnership of Surry County, was introduced as the organization’s new leader by outgoing President Andrew Schmidt, Executive Director at Visit Greenville.

“I am honored and excited to be selected by my peers to serve as the new President of the North Carolina Travel Industry Association and represent my community of Mount Airy and Surry County for the next two years,” said Roberts. “I am looking forward to leading and collaborating with fellow tourism and industry professionals all over North Carolina.”

Roberts was also appreciative to her predecessor: “Thank you to Andrew Schmidt for leading us the last two years as I have big shoes to fill.”

NCTIA Visits Wilmington & Beaches CVB

NCTIA Executive Director Vince Chelena and Lobbyist Brian Lewis visited with the Wilmington & Beaches CVB on Wednesday for a TDA Work Session.



Kim Hufham, the President/CEO of the New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority, invited NCTIA to lead a discussion around the NC General Assembly long session, the tourism issues addressed by state lawmakers, and the long-term

challenges facing the industry in 2024 and beyond.

Chelena and Lewis also highlighted the importance of [Sen. Michael Lee \(R-New Hanover\)](#) in his new role as a chairman of the [Senate Appropriations Committee](#) and [Senate Education/Higher Education Committee](#).



“A lot of the work session discussion with the TDA centered around the importance of preserving the summer calendar law, which continues to be a challenge in the General Assembly,” said Chelena. “This coastal community understands how important it is to protect summer for their local businesses, the students who rely on summer employment, and their local tax-base that funds their schools.”

Other local topics of conversation included occupancy tax policy, the need for workforce development, and sports wagering.

The New Hanover County TDA is comprised of Zachary Brigman, Embassy Suites Wilmington Riverfront; James Kitts, representing Vacation Rental Properties; Michael (Hap) Fatzinger, NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher; Natalie English, Wilmington Chamber of Commerce; Nicole Jones, Hilton Garden Inn Wilmington; Nicolas Montoya, The Blockade Runner; Ross Pitman, Dreamers Welcome Bed & Breakfast; Angela Rhodes, Catch Modern Seafood Cuisine & Phun Seafood Bar; and Tom Ullring, Courtyard by Marriott Carolina Beach Oceanfront.

Ex-officio members include LeAnn Pierce, New Hanover County Commissioner; Mayor Lynn Barbee, Carolina Beach; Mayor Craig Bloszinsky, Kure Beach; Mayor Bill Saffo, Wilmington; Alderman Zeke Partin, Wrightsville Beach; and Eric Credle, New Hanover County Chief Finance Officer.