



CHAPEL HILL/ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

# 2019-20 STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN



#ChapelHill #Carrboro #HillsboroughNC  
[www.visitchapelhill.org](http://www.visitchapelhill.org)

**CHAPEL HILL**

HILLSBOROUGH & CARRBORO

ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU



## GREETINGS:

To all of our community partners: thank you for being part of the tourism industry of Orange County, North Carolina and the communities of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough.

It's great pleasure to be involved in such a highly collaborative Board whose members include local Mayors Lydia Lavelle and Pam Hemminger; Town Council member Rachel Schaevitz; Orange County Commissioner Chair Penny Rich, Hillsborough Town Board member Mark Bell, UNC's Associate Vice Chancellor of Communications, Tanya Moore, and the managers of Carolina Inn, AC by Marriott, Siena Hotel as well as local leaders in the Arts, High School Athletics, Triangle Polo Fields and all sectors of economic development.

Currently the Board is exploring a comprehensive marketing strategy that unfolds on these pages.

Visit Chapel Hill strives to be an industry leader among destination marketing organizations.

Read on.

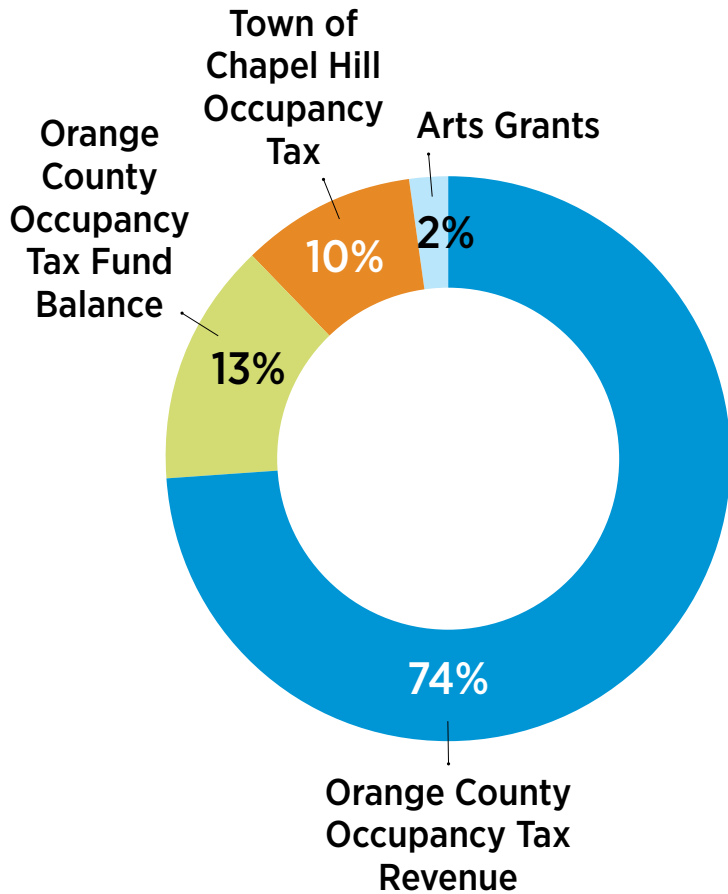


**ANTHONY CAREY**

*Chairman*



# 2019-2020 BUDGET



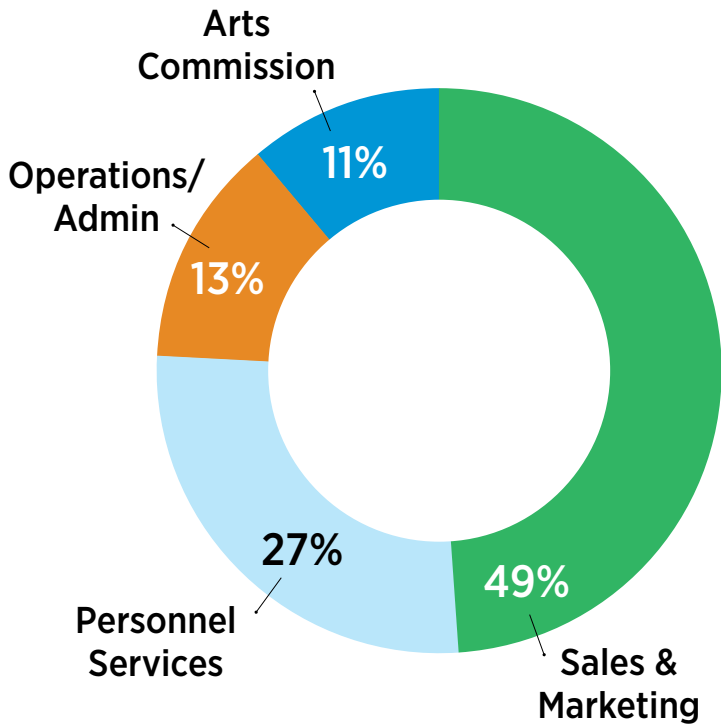
## REVENUE: \$1,924,380

● Orange County occupancy tax revenue	\$1,423,571	74%
● Orange County occupancy tax fund balance	\$259,606	13%
● Town of Chapel Hill occupancy	\$200,000	10%
● Interest	\$4,000	<1%
● Merchandise sales	\$800	<1%
● Arts grants	\$36,403	2%



# 2019-2020 BUDGET

## EXPENDITURES: \$1,924,380



● Sales & Marketing	\$934,838	49%
● Personnel Services	\$518,841	27%
● Operations/Administration	\$259,533	13%
● Arts Commission Operations	\$211,168	11%
Recurring Capital	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,924,380</b>	



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM A NEW RESEARCH STUDY TO BE UNVEILED IN NOVEMBER:

- Overall, travelers have positive perceptions of Chapel Hill. They just don't have enough awareness of all that the town has to offer.
- The popularity of sports overshadows Chapel Hill's other offerings.
- Chapel Hill is not seen as welcoming as we would like it to be.





## GROWTH OF SHORT-TERM RENTALS NATIONALLY

The national sharing economy has catapulted Short Term Rentals, specifically Airbnb, into a threat to traditional hotel accommodations.

Its listings outnumber those of the top six hotel chains combined, helping the company reportedly generate more than \$1 billion in revenue in the third quarter of 2018.

Visitor demand for Airbnb is increasing





## EDUCATION:

- UNC boasts a diverse enrollment of nearly 30,000 and is consistently named one of the best values for academic quality in higher education.
- With the university, there have been more than 450 spin-off companies from research and emerging technology.
- Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools system is one of the best systems in the state, and Orange County Schools, which also serves Chapel Hill, is also highly ranked.





- Chapel Hill, with a population of 51,485, retains a small-town ambiance in a highly cosmopolitan environment.
- With Duke University just minutes north in Durham, North Carolina State University 30 miles in the state capital of Raleigh, and an array of high-tech companies in the area, the Research Triangle formed by the three cities boasts more doctorates per capita than anywhere in the country and perhaps the world.
- Chapel Hill's location in Research Triangle Park should always be emphasized in tourism branding.

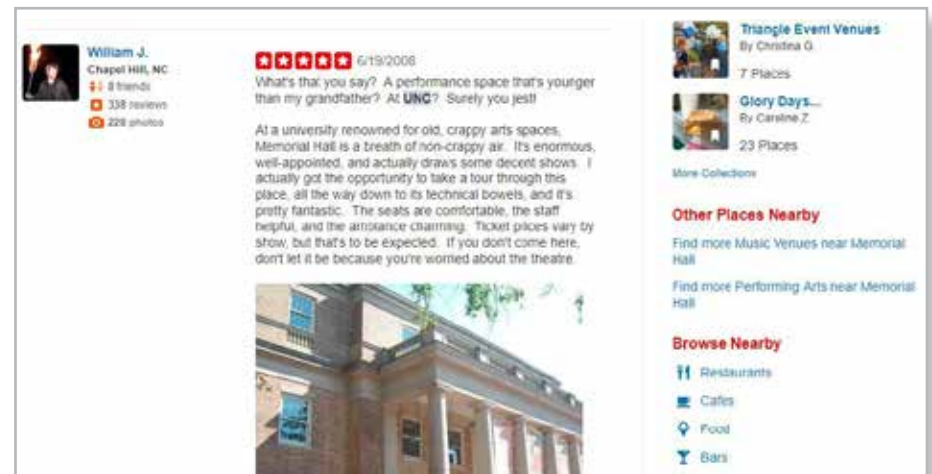
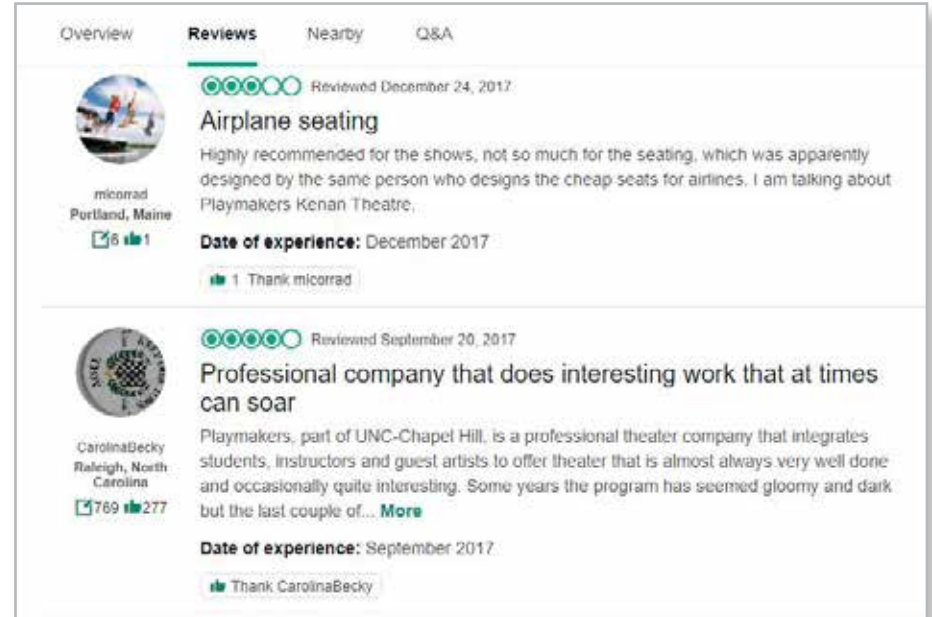






## CONTINUOUSLY CHANGING CONSUMER DEMANDS

- Growth of AirBnb in Chapel Hill
- Social media dramatically exacerbates the risks, in an environment where a single social media gripe by a traveler, no matter how mundane, can spread like wildfire and even be picked up by local news outlets.
- Tourism managers must continually monitor Trip Advisor, Yelp and related sites.





## SHORTAGE OF EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL

- Travel and hospitality companies must identify and address wage and worker satisfaction issues to keep their people happy and motivated to provide the level of service customers expect.
- The hospitality industry has always included tips as an important part of compensation for its customer-facing individuals. But we're moving more and more to a cashless society.

## CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF RISK

- Incidents of political or social violence can have impact on travel behavior across a region.





## HEALTHY DOWNTOWN

- By creating a downtown where residents want to live now and continue to live long(er) term, we create a happier, healthier community with a sense of pride and ownership over their urban center.
- When downtown is a place with happy people, they create cool things and usher in tourism, as outsiders travel from outlying areas to see this authentic, thriving town.

## ONLINE BOOKING — THE SERVICE EXPERIENCING CONSTANT GROWTH

- We must offer our clients the opportunity of booking and choosing services online: above 60% of all reservations in the sphere of traveling is made online. The travelers have now a perfect opportunity to review a great variety of deals on the web and choose the ones, which meet their needs, preferences, and expectations most.

## MOBILE APPLICATIONS

- Mobile applications facilitate the booking and reservation.





## CULINARY TOURISM

- The future of culinary tourism will move away from expensive dining to more authentic food experiences.
- Visiting local markets and dining with locals in their homes (made easier by websites like EatWith and Meal Sharing) will be major interests for travelers exploring new destinations.

## ACHIEVEMENT IS THE NEW EXPERIENTIAL

Challenging situations like completing a marathon (Tar Heel Marathon, Rambling Rose) for the first time, finishing a degree or technical skill. Romance of *Outlander* drives a new tourism boom!

## WALKING TOURS ARE IN

Travelers are requesting both guided and self-guided Walking Tours and hospitality leaders have an opportunity to add more organized tours of our communities. Recently Trip Advisor named the Chapel Hill-based “Free Walking Tours Chapel Hill” as one of the best walking tours in the area.





## COMMUNITY-FOCUSED WELCOME CENTERS

It's time to convert the visitor's centers into "visitor lounges".

The Smartphone has replaced traditional Visitor Centers. Yes, there are some people who don't carry a Smartphone, but those are becoming a very slim minority.

Today's travelers and motorists seek out place to stop and gather information and get questions asked. There is still a need for human communications but not traditional Visitor Centers. The trend in Visitor Centers is toward designated spaces to **hang out in and come together with local experts to ask questions.**

### PROVIDE:

- A place to put your feet up, access a clean toilet and get some decent Wi-Fi
- Kiosk maps, inside and outdoors
- Coffee, refreshments
- Pet friendly environment

**In 2020-21 the Visitors Center will rebrand to WELCOME CENTER with a gradual transition in scope and services.**





## INFORMATION GATHERING IS STILL A CHALLENGE FOR VISITORS

Even though we live in a highly connected world and we're nearly always online through our mobile phones, visitors still struggle to find reputable information when they need it.

The Chapel Hill area should thoughtfully plan its next evolution of a WELCOME CENTER.



\* NOTE: Maps are FPO

A photograph of a man with dreadlocks tied up, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, smiling and looking towards the left. He is sitting at an outdoor table with a burger and a drink. The background is a lush green outdoor setting with trees and a wooden structure. A semi-transparent blue banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

# 2019–20 VISITORS BUREAU PLAN OF ACTION



## BRAND PLATFORM

Celebration of Individualism: Chapel Hill is the progressive gem of North Carolina. It's a place that seamlessly blends its rich tradition with an openness to change. Though historic landmarks and notable locations are everywhere you look, it's the unique people and experiences that define the area's personality and make it special. Chapel Hill fully embraces the celebration of individualism for visitors and locals alike.

## CREATIVE CAMPAIGN

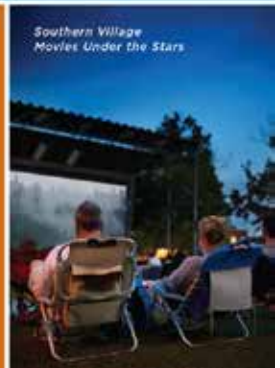
This campaign is all about letting potential visitors picture themselves getting out of their routine and enjoying into the breadth of unique activities that the Chapel Hill area has to offer.



CHAPEL HILL HILLSBOROUGH & CARRBORO



From downtown murals to movies under the stars, there's no one way to experience Chapel Hill, Hillsborough, and Carrboro. Find what you love, or discover something new. Whatever you do here, just do you.  
[VisitChapelHill.org](http://VisitChapelHill.org)

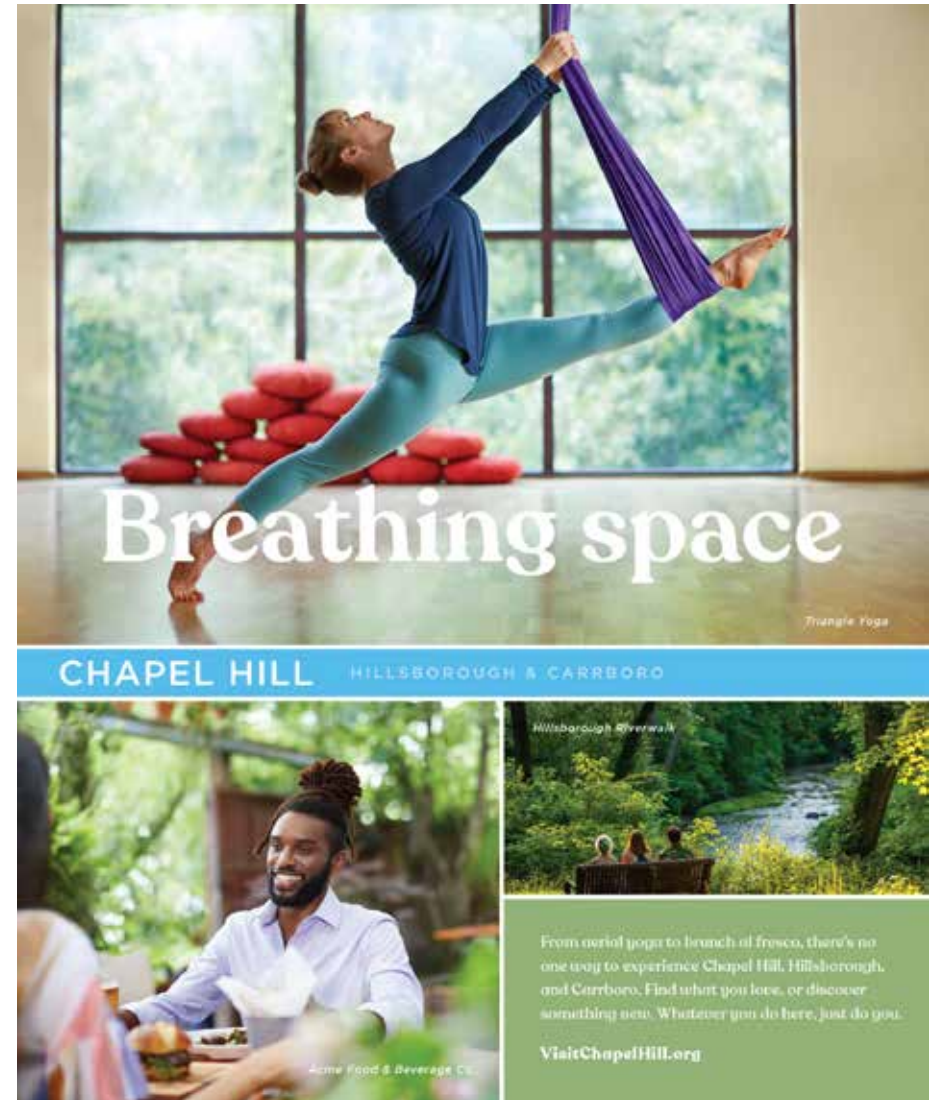






## GOALS OF THE CAMPAIGN

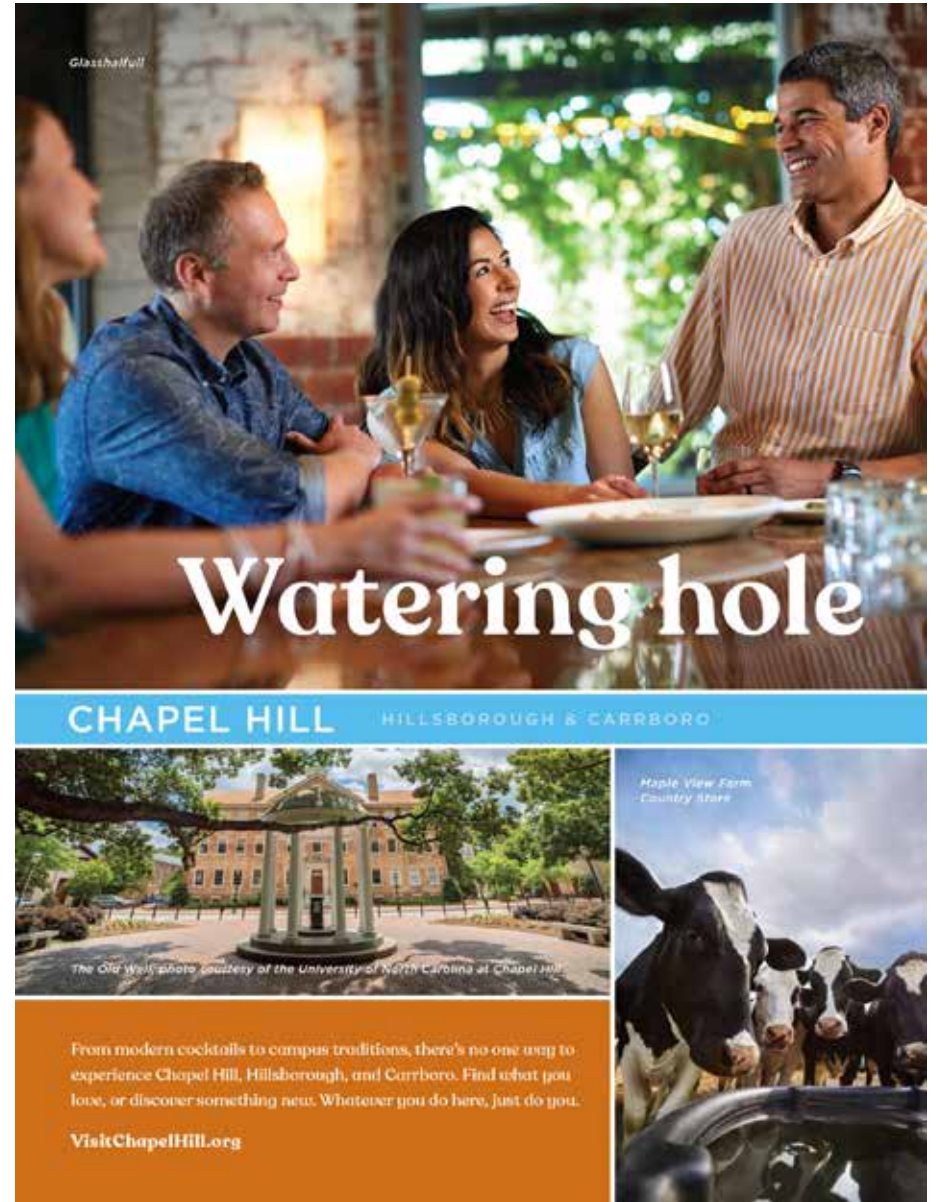
- Capture the progressive, welcoming spirit of Chapel Hill and Orange County
- Embrace the individual while allowing people to picture themselves here
- Recognize our diverse audience members and their range of interests
- Promote experiences the area offers rather than solely focusing on businesses
- Achieve balance between Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough





## CAMPAIGN CHANNELS AND TACTICS: PRINT ADS

The print ads are based around themes that can apply to all three towns, showing the breadth of experiences to be had in the area. Though we're focusing on one theme per ad, each town brings it to life with a unique angle that applies to the respective town.





## CAMPAIGN CHANNELS AND TACTICS: MINI DOCUMENTARIES

- Film human interest stories that show the power of a place where you can “just do you.” We find real people living outside the Triangle and give them the chance to do that thing they love on the next level in Chapel Hill. Each mini-doc would start with these people in their current situations and show them doing that thing they love. Then, we follow them on their physical and emotional journeys as they follow their passions in Chapel Hill and Orange County.

- Examples of documentary subjects include:
  - Urban farming couple spends a weekend on a working farm in HB
  - Hobby artist/photographer gets her own gallery showing

do you dare mini-doc video: urban farming

### Urban farming couple spends a weekend on a working farm in HB



**Josh and Brittany**  
Couple from Charlotte  
Home gardening enthusiasts

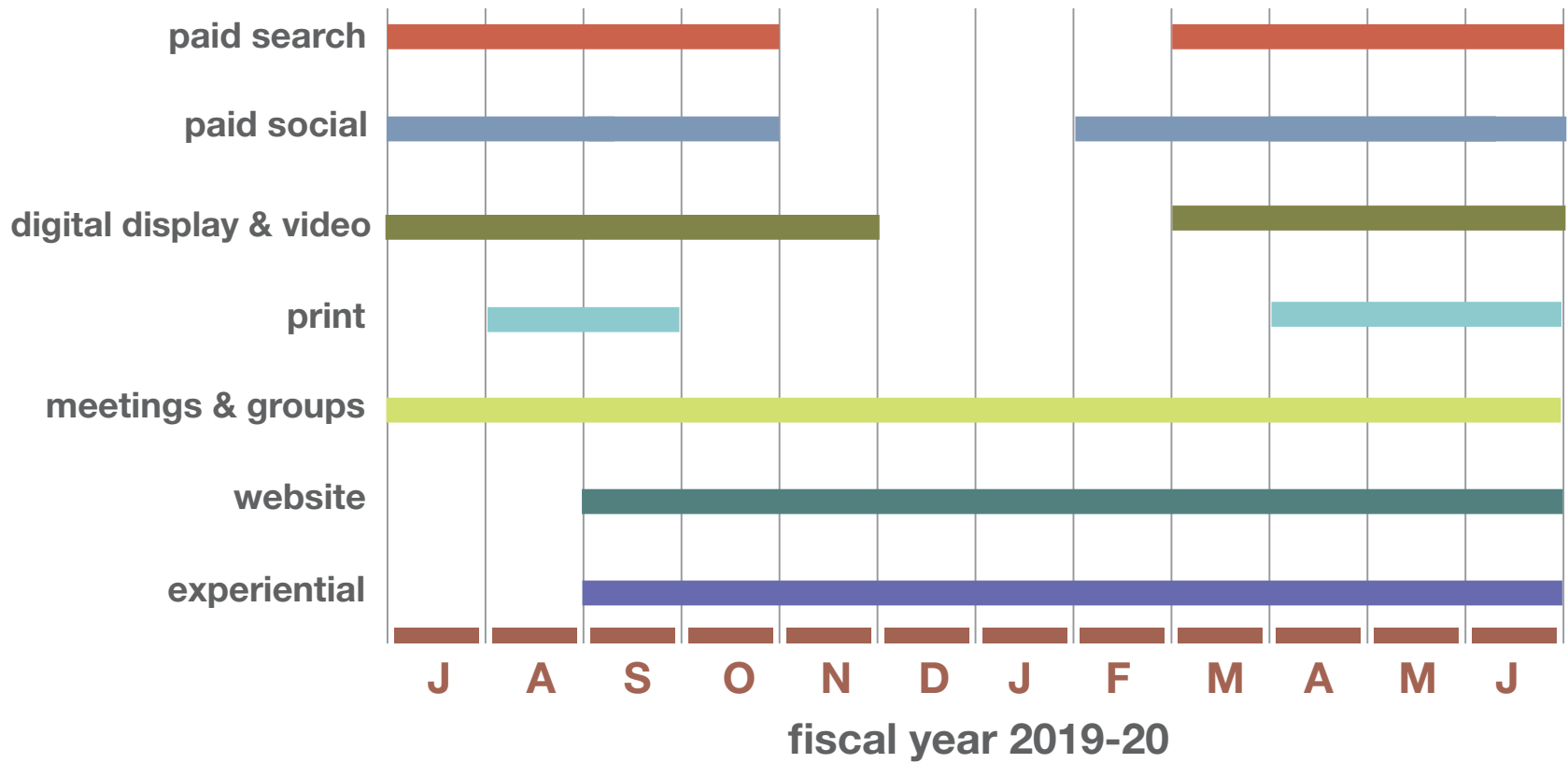


**Ten Mothers Farm**  
Hillsborough  
Organic farming by hand



## MEDIA PLAN

campaign timeline





# MAJOR EVENT SPONSORSHIPS



The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitor Bureau’s goal for events is to attract more customers to our communities by generating new audiences, overnight stays and national publicity.

## 2019–20 VISITORS BUREAU EVENT SPONSORSHIP

### TERRAVITA FESTIVAL / OCTOBER

- Increase reputation as major Food Hub
- Attract new audiences
- Generate national publicity in food and leisure publications





## BLACK ALUMNI REUNION / NOVEMBER

- Build on historic and diverse audiences
- Attract alumni
- Partner with large affinity group on campus

## 2ND FRIDAY ARTWALK

- Support the Chapel Hill/Carrboro community's sense of place
- Create new energy on Franklin Street
- Showcase local artists





# MAJOR EVENTS (...CONTINUED)

## FESTIFALL / SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2019, 11AM-3PM

- Support downtown
- Keep Franklin Street Center open to guests
- Provide restrooms, dressing rooms, sense of community
- Attract new audiences

## CARS TOUR / ORANGE COUNTY SPEEDWAY ROUGEMONT, NC / APRIL, 2020

Formed in the fall of 2014 by owner Jack McNelly, the CARS Tour was built out of the remnants of the former Pro Cup Series. The tour, based in the Carolinas features two division of Late Models: Super Late Models and Late Model Stock Cars.







## **OUTLANDISH HILLSBOROUGH / OCTOBER 12-13, 2019**

Downtown Hillsborough and Ayr Mount event celebrating Scottish heritage and using the Outlander popularity and theme to attract new audiences to Orange County.

## **HOG DAY HILLSBOROUGH / SEPTEMBER 20-21, 2019**

Local food and heritage festival that attracts day visitors from Triad and Triangle. Steeped in heritage and family events.





## FILM FESTIVAL 919 / OCTOBER 9-13, 2019

- Film Fest 919 highlights the best feature films the year has to offer.
- Hosted at Silverspot Cinema, the event generates national promotion and publicity and brings top filmmakers to Chapel Hill.
- In the festival's inaugural year its films went on to win seven Oscars including Best Picture and looks to continue to bring films of this quality to Chapel Hill every year.

## ORANGE COUNTY ARTISTS GUILD OPEN STUDIO TOURS

- The Orange County Artists Guild is an inclusive, non-profit organization of “artists supporting artists,” seeking to increase the visibility and recognition of area artists and craftspeople.
- **2019 Tour Dates:** Saturday November 2nd, 10am-5pm  
Sunday November 3rd, 12 noon-5pm  
Saturday November 9th, 10am-5pm  
Sunday November 10th, 12 noon-5pm

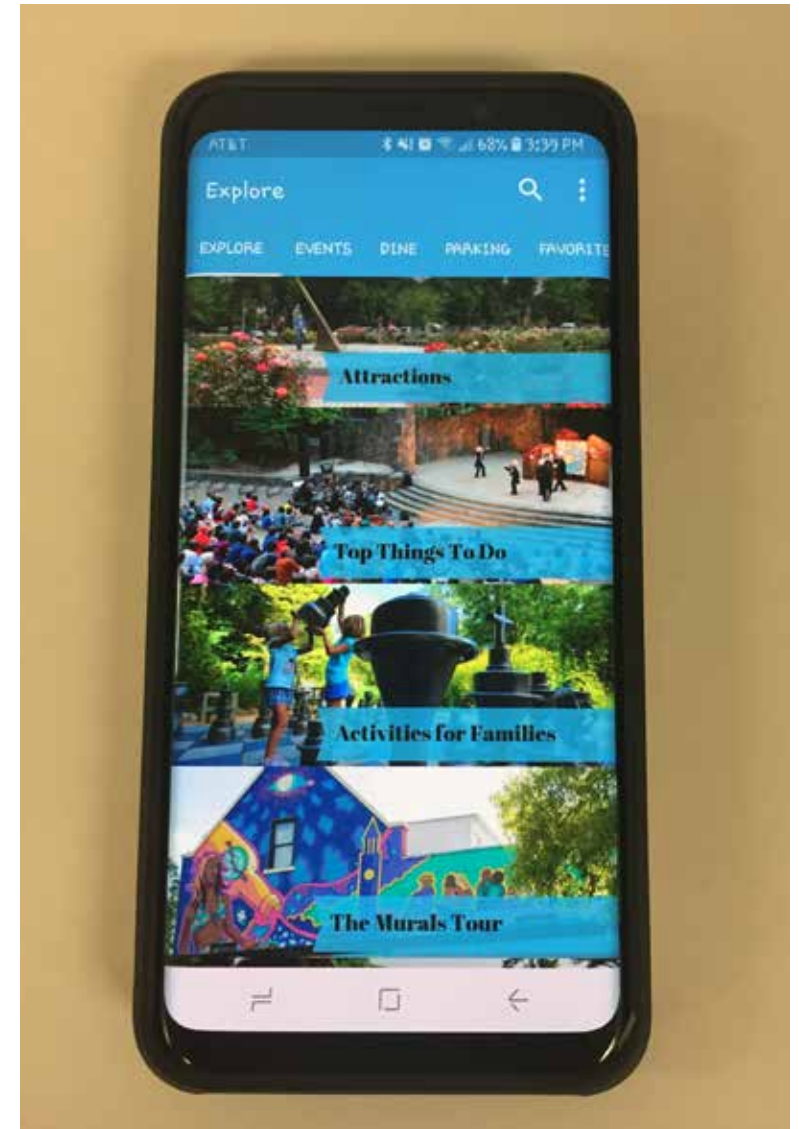




## PUBLIC RELATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau uses media and on-line messaging to help inspire travel to the destination and bring the Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough stories to life in traditional and new media outlets.

- Paid search, social, and digital display ads begin
- Visit Chapel Hill mobile app goes live
- Newsletter Economic Trends
- Orange County Farm Apps is live and maintained
- National travel writers visit
- New campaigns launched weekly on social media
- Communications Staff attends Visit NC Media Mission in Raleigh
- Fall press releases on key events
- Finalize Fall Digital Media Influencer Visits





# MARKETING & PRINTED MATERIALS

- Newsletter Economic Trends
- Digital display & video ads run
- Staff attends Internet Summit in Raleigh
- Annual TerraVita event; hosts food writers to Orange County
- Communications staff attends Society American Travel Writers, SATW
- Produce and print Itinerary Rack Cards
- Update Holiday Events flyer for visitors
- Develop 2020 Annual Events list for Visit NC and external channels
- Write 2020 Tourism Events and promote through newswire story





## NEWSLETTER ECONOMIC TRENDS

- Train NC Call Center staff at Women's Prison in Raleigh
- Paid search, social, digital display & video ads run
- Newsletter Economic Trends
- Host Digital Influencers
- Pitch media stories to VisitNC 365 PR Round table

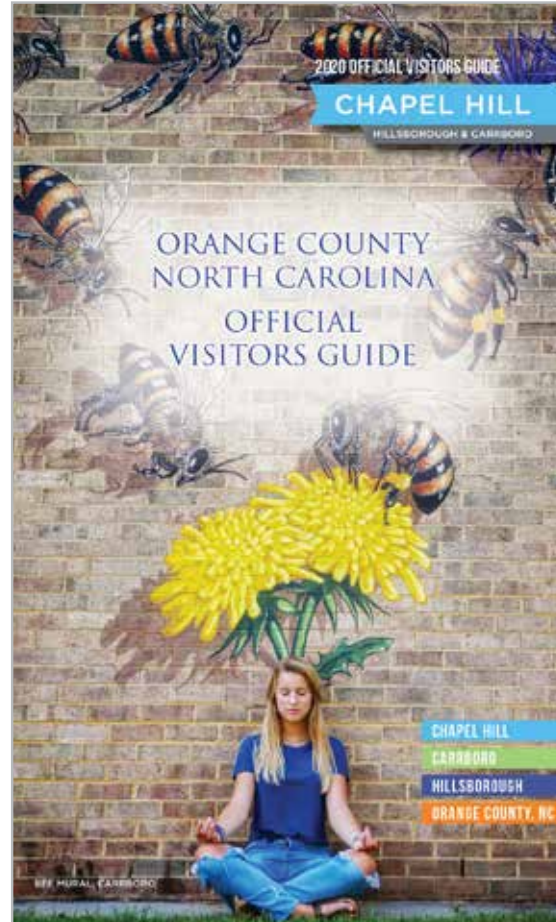
## DIGITAL INFLUENCER WRITER HOSTING

- Media blitz to state newspapers and TV
- NC Beer Month promotion with Visit NC





# MARKETING & PRINTED MATERIALS (...CONT)





## SALES/GROUP BUSINESS

Using last fiscal year as a guideline, the Visitors Bureau Sales team confirmed 42 definite bookings from July 2018 to June 2019.

- Non-hotel stay events brought 2,175 attendees to Orange County
- Local hotel bookings generated 2,717 room nights
- **TOTAL OVERALL ECONOMIC IMPACT** was **\$978,089** for all bookings including; Conference/Meeting, Sports, Weddings and Social events
- Total number of leads sent to stakeholders was 71



## BUSINESS BOOKED BREAKDOWN

Business Type	Room Nights Generated	Economic Impact
Conferences/Meetings	872	\$330,896
Sports Events	620	\$192,721
Social Events	180	\$86,446
Weddings	1045	\$368,025



## PROGRAMS FOR 2020

- Staff attends Connect Marketplace
- Staff begins developing tours options for visitors
- Staff attends IPEC conference
- Staff attends AENC Winter Conference
- Staff attends Rendezvous South conference
- Staff attends AENC Spring Conference
- UNC Campus Blitz







**THANK YOU!**