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Subject: September 2016 News & Economic Indicators of Tourism in South Carolina

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Sept. 30, 2016

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Stories add Depth to Marketing

Savoring the Movement

Duane Parrish

Director, SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism
No longer a trend, culinary tourism established itself as a permanent niche in the travel industry shortly after the International Culinary Tourism Association declared it a movement in 2001. South Carolina has taken full advantage of the opportunity ever since, leveraging its own reputation for good food and good times wrapped up in Southern hospitality.

Most recently, SCPRT launched the successful Barbecue Trail and Satisfy Your Thirst initiatives, luring people to the Palmetto State with the promise of savory barbecue, Southern sides, sweet tea and craft beer. Both campaigns captured the attention of more consumers, helped them discover places for authentic Southern food, and took visitors to hidden gems around the state.

South Carolina is also in its second year of the Chef Ambassadors program, a joint effort established by Governor Nikki Haley between SCPRT and the SC Department of Agriculture to promote the state's culinary bounty. The chefs' creative approaches to

Statewide RevPAR -- RevPAR for July 2016 is slightly ahead of prior year's. Overall, RevPAR continues to outperform last year's business.

*Admissions Tax -- An admissions tax report was not available for the month of July while upgrades are being made to the tax processing system.

State Parks Revenue -- Parks open up the new fiscal year with more than 12% growth in revenue. While all major revenue categories reported increases, the largest area of growth was admissions.

Deplanements

Charleston International Airport leads other major airports in the state with more than 1 million deplanements. YTD deplanements in South Carolina are up 7.6%.

Occupancy Forecast

STR, Inc., predicts a slight increase in occupancy for October and slight decreases for the remainder of the fall.

Journey to James Beard

SC Tourism Hosts Media Event and Public Meal at the Famous Chef's House in New York City

A popular hors d'oeuvre at the event was the Carolina Gold Arancini, made with Anson Mills Arancini, Ossabaw Pulled pork and Carolina Gold BBQ Sauce.
-- by Chef Orchid Paulmeier.

Being invited to cook at the prestigious James Beard House is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and one that not all chefs will be able to add to their resumes. Following in the footsteps of renowned culinary giants like Emeril Lagasse, Jacques Pepin, Marcus Samuelsson and Charlie Trotter, has been likened by many chefs as the same as an actor winning an Oscar!

preparing dishes from locally sourced foods are the focus of numerous travel news stories and blogs. Among the chefs' multiple public appearances this year were a media event, open dinner and private lunch at the James Beard House in Manhattan, N.Y.

SCPRT also places a brand presence at prestigious food festivals in the state, which some of the nation's top food writers attend. Chef Ambassadors led cooking and prep demonstrations at both Euphoria in Greenville and the Charleston Wine+Food Festival in Charleston.

While we are proud of these efforts, we will continue to identify and respond to consumer expectations, which, as we all know, only helps grow tourism in the Palmetto State.

Reminders!

Save the Date!

The annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and Travel will be held Feb. 20-22, 2017 at the [Spartanburg Marriott](#). The Governor's Conference is the largest annual gathering of tourism industry professionals in the state and provides a business setting for educational sessions and networking. Registration should begin in November and will be available at www.SCGovCon.com.

The house, located on the Lower East Side of New York City, was once lived in and owned by James Beard - an educator, mentor and culinary advocate. After his death, the house was saved by friends and family and now operates as the James Beard Foundation. Hosting events regularly to raise awareness and funding, celebrity and notable chefs are featured at dinners nearly every night of the week.

Chef Ambassadors Teryi Youngblood and Ramone Dickerson preparing dishes in the kitchen at the James Beard House.

In August, the 2016 South Carolina Chef Ambassadors were granted this rare opportunity - and boy did they deliver! Chefs Teryi Youngblood, Ramone Dickerson, Forrest Parker and Orchid Paulmeier collaborated on a joint South Carolina Heritage meal, highlighting the numerous agricultural offerings found in every corner of the state.

For the first and second course, the chefs delighted guests with Sheepshead Paillard with Carolina Gold and Okra Limping Susan, Brown Oyster and Benne Stew and Dry Aged Duck Roasted on the Bone with Chinquapin Chestnut Corn Pudding, Palmetto Cabbage and Sercial Madeira Jus Lie. Third and fourth courses featured MiBek Oxtail Desibradas with African Runner Peanut Kare Kare, Grilled Heirloom Okra and Carolina Gold Rice Middlins, and Iron Skillet Lamb Chops with Smoked Maple Bourbon Glaze over Toasted Goat Cheese, with Sweet Potato Fufu, Imperiled Peas Succotash and Trotter Broth.

Media guests captured the moments on their smartphones during a special gathering held exclusively for them at the James Beard House.

With every dish, guests were taken on a journey through South Carolina and were provided an opportunity to taste a little piece of the Palmetto State. Through a partnership with the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, the meal included a number of products and produce driven up from South Carolina - to ensure quality and culinary authenticity.

Earlier in the day, the chefs lent their culinary skills and talents to the South

Carolina media mission - an event mixing New York City based media with South Carolina's regional tourism partners. Because each of the chosen South Carolina Chef Ambassadors were from all across the state, the chefs made a great talking point for the state's tourism partners to discuss when each of their dishes were presented.

Overall, the events held at the James Beard House were wildly successful in raising awareness of those undiscovered regions and locations within the state, celebrating South Carolina's agricultural resources and showcasing more South Carolina culinary talent - proving once again why South Carolina is Just Right!

A delegation of South Carolina travel professionals and the Chef Ambassadors hosted South Carolina events at the James Beard House in August.

Featured this Month!

"Stories" add depth to South Carolina's tourism marketing

There are a multitude of great stories in South Carolina that are difficult to capture in a single space. That's why SCPRT initiated an effort on the state's official tourism website at [DiscoverSouthCarolina.com](https://www.discoverSouthCarolina.com) called "Stories," a platform that shares some distinctive but undertold aspects of the South Carolina experience. Using a team of professional writers, the agency posts good news about Food and Drink, Outdoor Adventure, Golf, Family Travel and Undiscovered South Carolina. The writers have a passion for the Palmetto State and prepare stories every month.

Not only do the new features keep content fresh and exciting on the website, they strengthen South Carolina's appeal to consumers, suggest undiscovered destinations and introduce new ways to vacation.

The stories can be found by clicking on the "Discover" tab on the website, and finding the "Stories" subpage, or by visiting [here](#).

Tourism Today will list at least one feature every month. Here are links to the types of stories featured recently:

[Six Easy-to-Access Overlooks to Catch the Fall Color Show in the Upstate](#)
[Take a Drive Down US 17 and Discover the Best of SC Beaches](#)
[Discover Native American History at South Carolina State Parks](#)
[October Brings a Bumper Crop of Festivals to South Carolina](#)
[Discover South Carolina's State Drink: Milk](#)
[10 Great Fishing Piers in South Carolina](#)
[Discover Old-Fashioned Sweetness at South Carolina Soda Fountains](#)
[How We Do Farm-To-Table in South Carolina](#)

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