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From: South Carolina Tourism Today
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To: Agency Info,
Subject: October 2015 News & Economic Indicators of Tourism in South Carolina

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SCPRT Acts Quickly To Bolster Coastal Tourism

**Duane Parrish, SCPRT
Director**

A new television spot that highlights South Carolina's coastal destinations and tells consumers the Palmetto State is a great place to visit year round is now airing in key markets along the eastern seaboard, and it highlights a number of efforts SCPRT has launched to help the state recover tourism business after the flooding.

The :30 spot will air in targeted markets through November, temporarily replacing the Discover campaign television spot. The spot is airing in Atlanta and

October 30, 2015

Statewide Hotel RevPar -- RevPar for the month of August 2015 was \$77.44, down 3.1% when compared to August 2014. Year-to-date RevPar in South Carolina is up 6.1%.

Admissions Tax -- Processing of September 2015 returns was negatively impacted by flooding in early October 2015. Unprocessed September 2015 returns will be included in the next month's totals along with October 2015 returns.

State Parks Revenue - Increases in revenue from camping and Park Passport sales contributed to a 2.5% increase in revenue for the month of August 2015 when compared to August 2014. Year-to-date revenue in parks is up 2.3%.

Airport Deplanements

Most major airports in South Carolina are reporting increases in deplanements for the month of August 2015. Charleston International leads with a 10.1% increase. Year-to-date, deplanements in South Carolina are up 5%.

Occupancy Forecasts

STR, Inc. forecasts relatively flat growth in occupancy for late fall and early winter in South Carolina.

Augusta, Ga.; Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem, N.C.; Roanoke, Va.; Charleston-Huntington, W.Va.; Cincinnati and Columbus, OH; Buffalo, NY; Pittsburgh and Scranton, Pa., and Jacksonville, Fla.

The new spot was crafted by SCPRT's advertising agency of record, BFG Communications.

Additionally, SCPRT will intersperse similar digital messaging with the coastal/visit-year-round focus into the existing fall flight of the Discover campaign creative. SCPRT increased its fall media buy by more than \$250,000 in order to expand the fall television flight.

Two weeks ago, SCPRT ran a social media blitz on Discover South Carolina's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels with real-time video and photography demonstrating that the coast was open and ready for visitors. During the three-day blitz, there were a total of 68 posts generating 198,695 impressions and 15,563 total engagements over all three channels. The engagement rate was 110 percent higher than the average 3-day span and also exceeded October's overall engagement rate by 15 percent.

Two of SCPRT's long-standing print and digital media partners are also spreading the recovery message. Southern Living published a [blog post](#) about South Carolina post-flood, inviting people to help by visiting the state. Meredith Corp is providing bonus exposure in at least two of its women's magazines in coming months. The full-page print ads, which will appear in

New Sign at I-26 Landrum Welcome Center

Crews recently installed a new entrance sign at the South Carolina Welcome Center on Interstate 26 in Landrum. The sign features the iconic brand Palmetto tree and crescent moon, but also incorporates a stone base to represent the Blue Ridge of the Upstate. The welcome center re-opened last spring after a renovation to its visitor lobby, and serves as a prototype for the redevelopment of the other eight welcome centers managed by SCPRT. New technology and a more open design were incorporated to meet rising traveler demands for quicker, faster service and information. SCPRT Director Duane Parrish recognizes welcome centers as the "front porch" of South Carolina, a first impression that should deliver high standards of hospitality and a rich expression of welcome.

The industry's monthly e-newsletter "[South Carolina Tourism Today](#)" will profile general session speakers and other key topics each month leading up to the [2016 Governor's Conference on Tourism & Travel](#). Scheduled for Feb. 15-17 at [Belmond Charleston Place](#) in Charleston, the conference is the industry's largest annual gathering, and covers consumer trends and best marketing practices to help grow tourism in South Carolina.

The Conference's Opening General Session Speaker: Anirban Basu Economist, Chairman & CEO of Sage Policy Group

Nationally renowned economist Anirban Basu will lead the opening session of the Governor's Conference on Tourism & Travel, at 2 p.m. Monday, Feb. 15, and will set the stage for an intriguing and informative conference. Basu will provide a detailed, data-driven update of the performance of the global, national and regional economy, with special attention on key aspects of economic life, including trends characterizing financial, real estate, energy and labor markets.

He is chairman & CEO of Sage Policy Group, Inc., an economic and policy consulting firm in Baltimore, Maryland. The firm provides strategic analytical services to energy suppliers, law firms, medical systems, government agencies, and real estate developers among others.

Maryland governor Larry Hogan recently appointed Basu Chair of the Maryland Economic Development Commission. He also serves as chairman of the Baltimore County Economic Advisory Committee and economic advisor to the Baltimore-Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce. He is also the Chief Economist to Associated Builders and Contractors and Chief Economic Advisor to the Construction Financial Management Association.

Basu currently lectures at Johns Hopkins University on Global Strategy. He has also taught international economics, urban economics, micro- and macroeconomics at Hopkins.

Family Circle and Better Homes and Gardens magazines, will, like the television spot, invite consumers to begin planning their South Carolina vacation and will remind that South Carolina is a year-round destination.

Given the circumstances, it is vital that SCPRT help emphasize that South Carolina's coast, which drives the largest percentage of tourism revenue, is open for business and welcoming visitors, while continuing to promote the whole state through its marketing channels.

SCPRT will resume television broadcast of the broader Discover campaign spot in early spring with the start of the spring campaign flight.

In 2007, the Daily Record newspaper selected Basu as one of Maryland's 50 most influential people. The Baltimore Business Journal named him one of the region's 20 most powerful business leaders in 2010.

Basu earned his B.S. in Foreign Service at Georgetown University in 1990. He earned his Master's in Public Policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and his Master's in Economics from the University of Maryland, College Park. His Juris Doctor was earned at the University Of Maryland School Of Law.

In addition to general sessions, the conference will offer breakout sessions on sports tourism, airport trends and other industry-related topics, tours of Charleston and an awards luncheon. Registration material should be available by late November. Visit www.SCGovCon.com for more information.

New Sports Tourism Grant Offered by SCPRT

Deadline for Event Hosting Applications is Friday, Nov. 20

The new Sports Tourism Advertising & Recruitment (STAR) grant program is designed to assist communities and eligible non-profit organizations in attracting and hosting large, new-to-the-state sporting events that will bring participants and visitors to South Carolina. Through STAR, SCPRT will provide 1:1 matching grants of up to \$50,000 to approved applicants for eligible expenses associated with Event Bidding and Event Hosting.

An approved application for Event Bidding expenses will fund bid fees and costs associated with the development of marketing materials for proposals for successfully-recruited sports events. An approved application for Event Hosting costs will fund certain site and advertising costs associated with hosting an awarded sports event. Bidding applications are accepted year-round and should be submitted within 180 days of a signed contract or signed letter of intent from the events rights holder. Hosting applications are accepted in the fall and spring, and the fall deadline for the current cycle is 4:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20.

The applicant may not use other state general appropriations funds as match. In-kind matches are not allowed.

The applicant must be a county or municipal government with the necessary capacity and infrastructure to host the proposed event. The local government may also apply on behalf of an eligible non-profit organization holding a tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS.) The applicant must provide evidence of a functioning organization and the capacity to administer a grant, and cannot have significant or unresolved issues with any grant program administered by SCPRT.

For a complete package of guidelines and applications, [click here](#).

South Carolina State Parks Launch Ultimate Outsider Campaign

Billboard creative for Ultimate Outsider campaign

Overstuffed backpacks are the captivating centerpiece of the new "Ultimate Outsider" campaign launched last week for South Carolina state parks. The new campaign will feature will appear in television spots, on billboards, in

digital advertisements and social media posts this fall inviting people to become Ultimate Outsiders by visiting all 47 state parks.

The backpacks are filled with kayaks, beach umbrellas, golf clubs, fishing rod and reel, tents, compasses and other outdoor gear.

For more information on the Ultimate Outsider program, click [here](#).

South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism
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