



NEWS RELEASE

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Tourism Works for Suffolk

SUFFOLK, VA (October 4, 2007) Tourism is one of Virginia's most powerful industries and newly-released economic impact figures prove it has big benefits for the City of Suffolk [according to the Travel Industry Association of America and distributed to localities by the Virginia Tourism Corporation]. Today Suffolk announced that tourism revenues increased by 11.9 percent locally, bringing in a total of \$46,676,578 in visitor spending in 2006. Across the state, visitor spending brought in a record \$17.7 billion in 2006, a 7.2 percent increase over 2005.

The direct spending by domestic travelers in Suffolk supported 521 full-time and seasonal jobs, which generated more than \$8.6 million in wages and salaries. Tourism related local taxes, including sales and property taxes, generated \$1.4 million for Suffolk.

"Suffolk's 'historically hip' spirit embraces nearly four centuries of rich heritage through historic homes, neighborhoods, churches, trails, festivals and events," said Mayor Linda Johnson. "And with new lodging and dining accommodations recently completed and under development, the economic benefit from the travel and tourism industry will continue to diversify our local economy."

For Virginia, tourism is big business. Governor Timothy M. Kaine recently announced that visitor spending in Virginia reached \$17.7 billion in 2006. Tourism provided 208,200 jobs for Virginians in 2006 and generated \$706.8 million in state taxes and \$503 million in local tax revenue.

It's a good time to be in Suffolk

Alisa Bailey, president and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, said that tourism on the local level is critical to the economy. “There is no doubt that efforts to attract visitors to Virginia pays huge dividends on both a statewide and community level. For every dollar we invest in marketing to tourists, we get back five dollars in state and local taxes for a 5:1 return on investment,” she said.

Research from the Virginia Tourism Corporation shows that the \$706.8 million tourism generates in state tax revenue could pay for the education of more than 80,000 Virginia students, 1,900 miles of roadways – the distance from Virginia Beach to Denver, or salaries and benefits for 11,500 state police officers. If earmarked, the \$503 million in local taxes from tourism could pay for the annual wages of all local fire protection employees or the salaries of approximately 11,000 elementary and secondary school teachers.

For more details on *The Economic Impact of Domestic Travel Expenditures on the City of Suffolk-2006*, contact Lynette White, Tourism Development Manager at 923-3881. The mission of the Tourism Division is to improve the level and quality of tourism activity in the City of Suffolk and to increase the awareness of the natural, historic, cultural, and architectural heritage of the City. The Suffolk Visitor Center is located in the heart of historic Suffolk in the Prentis House (c. 1800) located at 321 N. Main Street. Open daily, 9 am - 5 pm. Call 923-3880 for more information. www.Suffolk-Fun.com

For more information about Virginia’s travel destinations and to begin planning a trip, go to www.Virginia.org or call 1-800-932-5827 to request a 2007 Virginia Travel Guide.

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