Many tourism businesses understand that ‘going green’ is important. It can help reduce operating costs, a growing number of consumers are asking for green products and services, and there is growing evidence that if we do not change how we do certain things, the destinations we like to visit are at risk of being permanently negatively affected.

But ‘going green’ is easier said than done. Where do you start, who are the trustworthy experts to ask questions of, and what real evidence is there that going green is the right thing to do? Although there is no single answer to any of these questions, in an effort to provide some basic information, the Center for Sustainable Tourism and the Office of Innovation and Economic Development at East Carolina University, in partnership with the NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development and the NC Department of the Environment and Natural Resources have written a collection of sustainable tourism tips.

These tips vary in theme and subject matter, but they are all intended to provide solutions to help any tourism organization ‘go green.’ For any questions or comments related to these tips, please contact Daniel Johnson at johnsondan13@students.ecu.edu or by telephone at 252-737-4296.
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*Increasing Value by Providing Environmental Education

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Safety training for employees
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Weather’s important in marketing, travel decisions

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*Keeping Them and Your Guests Safe
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Education in Sustainability

1. INCREASING VALUE BY PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
   According to a recent study by ClimatePath.org on eco-tourism, the number one travel motivator for green conscious travelers is learning about different cultures and ecologies (http://www.climatepath.org/forbusinesses/ecotourism). North Carolina provides travelers a wealth of opportunities to experience nature in ways that few destinations can offer. The N.C. Office of Environmental Education (www.ee.enr.state.nc.us) has a number of resources and support to supplement visitor experiences with nature based learning. The N.C. Office of Environmental Education has a calendar of local environmental education (EE) events, certified EE centers in your area, and an online searchable database of EE resources to help your tourism accommodation or attraction enhance the experience for travelers. For more information on how your tourism business or organization can become more involved with EE, contact Marty Wiggins at (919) 733-1362 or via marty.wiggins@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

Energy Efficiency

1. NO COST WAYS TO REDUCE
   With utility bills going up and growing concerns about climate change, many tourism-related business owners are becoming increasingly interested in how they can reduce their energy consumption. Before investing in a new, and possibly expensive, energy efficient lighting system, examine current lighting policies to see if there are any no-cost measures that can be taken. Is staff turning off lights when they vacate offices and conference rooms? Is seating in dining areas planned in such a way to minimize the need for lighting? Are shades and blinds open to take advantage of sunlight? Many of these small measures can result in significant reductions in the use of artificial lights and cost nothing but a few seconds of time to implement. For instructions on conducting a lighting audit, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25979.pdf. A complete list of energy saving practices for the tourism industry can be found at www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/criteria.cfm. For more information on energy conservation in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. *RESOLUTIONS TO SAVE ENERGY
   With rising energy prices, energy conservation is sure to be a New Year’s resolution for many tourism businesses. There are many tools for business owners and managers to begin examining how they might make the next year a little brighter while reducing energy bills. One is EPA’s Energy Star Program (www.energystar.gov), which has an energy efficient purchasing and procurement guide (http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bulk_purchasing.bus_purchasing) as well as a program specifically for the hospitality industry (http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=hospitality.bus_hospitality). The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (www.p2pays.org) also has a wealth of information, such as an “Energy Savings and Opportunities” guide (http://www.p2pays.org/ref/38/37949.pdf). The N.C. Solar Center (www.ncsc.ncsu.edu) also has a number of resources, including a Renewable Energy Professional Directory (www.greenprofessionals.org) and a database of renewable energy financial incentives (http://www.ncsc.ncsu.edu/information_resources/renewable_energy_incentives.cfm). For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. *AIR SYSTEMS
   Keeping customers cool at a tourism business during the heat of summer is of utmost importance. However, inefficient HVAC systems not only consume large amounts of energy but can leave customers uncomfortable and unsatisfied. If the business has an older HVAC system, it may be best to consider upgrading to a more efficient
4. SEALING THE BUILDING
According to the EPA, heating and cooling accounts for 46 percent of energy used by a typical hotel, costing about $0.65 per square foot of space. While maintaining guests’ thermal comfort is of the utmost importance, putting an HVAC system on overdrive to compensate for a drafty building not only greatly increases costs, but the results may give guests cold hands and feet in the winter and discomfort in the summer. Leaks in a building’s envelope are most often found around windows and doors but they can be found around electric outlets and poorly designed remodeling projects. There are a number of tools that energy efficiency professionals can use to identify potential envelope leaks in a building, such as a blower door and infrared imaging, but many leaks can be identified simply by walking through the property and feeling for drafts. And in many cases, repairing leaky windows and doors is as simple as re-caulking or replacing worn seals. For more information on improving a building’s envelope and for free technical assistance, visit www.wastereductionpartners.com, or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.

5. REAL LIFE ENERGY MONSTERS
Everyone know about the monsters and ghosts that come out around the end of October and many tourism attractions and accommodations even partake in the seasonal haunting. But what few owners and managers might be aware of are the energy monsters that add to their utility bills every month. Phantom energy load is a real situation when an electrical device continues to use energy even though it is not being used. A common example of phantom energy is a computer monitor that is not turned off although the computer it is connected to is. Other examples include cell phone chargers, DVD players and stereos. To see how much energy typical appliances consume while not in use, visit tech.icrontic.com/articles/phantom_power/. And for a detailed report on the subject, visit www.aceee.org/research-report/a981. But the easiest way to reduce your phantom energy load is to use power strips with switches so that when you are not using an appliance, you can simply switch it off. For more information on energy efficiency, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.

6. SMALL SAVINGS TURN TO BIG SAVINGS
A magical thing happens when you implement low-to-no cost energy efficiency measures: small savings from monthly energy bills start turning into big savings. It is relatively simply to calculate how much one energy efficient light bulb can save: take the wattage of the current bulb and subtract the wattage of the energy efficient bulb. Then multiply the difference in wattages by how many hours the bulb is used over a year to give the wattage saved per year. The final step is to multiply to total wattage saved by the cost of electricity. Unfortunately, energy efficiency upgrades are often much more complicated than replacing just one light bulb. For example, replacing older inefficient exit signs with LEDs typically costs between $20 to $40 to purchase and install but can save up to $37 a year in energy costs and $26 a year in labor costs, paying for the initial investment in the first or second year of installation. Although first year savings in energy might only be a few dollars, once the energy savings pays back the initial investment, guaranteed savings will grow over time by as much as $500 per sign over the life of the LED exit sign. In a building with 10 exit signs, that’s a cost savings of $5,000 that, once the signs are installed, you don’t have to do any more work to enjoy. And with energy prices trending upwards, savings will be even greater in the future. For more information on how to save energy and dollars contact, Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.
7. BEYOND THE HEADLINES- EVERYDAY ENERGY SAVINGS
Earlier this summer, Travelocity released its list of “Cutting-Edge Green Hotels.” While it is always interesting to learn about new innovative sustainable practices being implemented, unfortunately, many of the sustainable practices mentioned in such articles are difficult to replicate. While not every hotel can have a garden on its roof or generate its own electricity, there are many sustainable practices that every hotel, restaurant or attraction can implement that lead to everyday savings. For example, replacing older exit signs with LED exit signs is an easy way to be more energy efficient that also helps reduce utility costs. Developing policies that take into account Energy Star options when any new equipment is purchased ensures that efforts to save energy are maintained at all levels of an organization. And while setting office equipment to sleep mode when not in use probably will not get a property mentioned in a national travel magazine, it will help save energy every day. For more examples of everyday, implementable sustainable practices, download any of the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s tip sheets. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

8. SWITCHING FROM COLD TO HOT
With the end of winter quickly approaching, many tourism businesses are once again turning off their heaters and getting their air conditioners ready for the summer. According to the U.S. EPA’s Energy Star, central heating and air account for 46 percent of hotels’ energy use. Unfortunately, due to poor insulation, drafts and inefficient equipment, much of this energy use is wasted. But there are a number of strategies that can be implemented to help reduce air conditioning costs this summer. Conducting an energy audit with an energy professional can quickly identify what steps could be taken to improve the energy efficiency of an HVAC. Many utility companies offer their customers free-of-charge energy audits and/or consultation free of charge. Energy consumption can also be reduced by using energy efficient heating and cooling equipment, such as those certified by the Energy Star program. For more information on energy efficiency in the tourism industry, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative and Energy Star for Hospitality and Entertainment, contact Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. In addition, information from the Feb. 14 webinar about energy efficiency programs offered through utility companies is now available.

9. BEING AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER OF ENERGY
Tourism managers know that success in the hospitality industry is dependent on maximizing guest satisfaction while simultaneously reducing the costs associated with doing so. This difficult balancing act often comes to a head with regards to energy usage. Between allowing guests to set the air conditioner much cooler than they would at home and keeping energy costs low can be greatly enhanced by using effective energy management strategies. A growing number of tourism-related facilities are using automated energy management systems to improve energy efficiency without sacrificing guest comfort. These systems can offer a number of energy solutions such as sensing when a room is unoccupied and adjusting temperature settings accordingly. Although having an automated system can greatly enhance your ability to manage energy use, there are also a number of simple and low cost measures any facility can implement. For example, filling north-facing rooms during the hot summer months can reduce the need for air conditioning. Even a simple measure like instructing housekeeping to close drapes to reduce heat gain in the summer or heat loss in the winter can help reduce utility bills. To learn more information on energy management, register for a free Sept. 2 webinar at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/428016920. For more information on the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@ncommerce.com.

10. SAVING FESTIVAL ENERGY FOR THE FESTIVITIES
Festivals are one of the best traditions in the tourism industry. While festivals are a wonderful way to celebrate a community’s heritage, they take a lot of energy to put on. There are a lot of things every event manager can implement to help reduce the amount of electricity needed without having to enjoy the event in the dark. One way events can start saving energy that doesn’t cost any additional money is to have a plan in place to make sure lights and equipment are turned off when not needed. Using best idling practices for shuttles will not only save energy but reduce local air pollution. Some festivals have taken steps to work with vendors to be more energy efficient as well by providing a maximum power draw per vendor or requiring energy efficient lighting. Other festivals are
greening up their energy usage by purchasing renewable energy credits or using on-site renewable energy such as recycling stations and biodegradable food/beverage containers. To learn more about energy efficiency at festivals and events, can download a Greening Festivals and Events tip sheet or attend the free Renewable Energy in Tourism’s Sustainable Events & Festivals webinar on Oct. 18. For more information on the webinar, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach.

11. KEEPING THE POOL’S BILLS COOL
Having a swimming pool to is a great way to add value to a guest’s stay. But pools are energy and water intensive, which can add significantly to monthly water and electricity bills. The main water usage of pools is when the pool is first filled, but there is additional water usage to maintain the water level from water that is lost through evaporation. While a simple pool cover is the best way to reduce loss of water due to evaporation, reducing the water temperature can also lessen water loss, since warmer water evaporates more quickly. Keeping a pool covered whenever possible also helps reduce the amount of energy need to keep it warm, which can help lower energy costs. Using energy efficient lighting, just like outside of the pool, is an easy way to help reduce energy costs. For more information on water and energy efficiency in pools, visit Reduce Swimming Pool Energy Costs. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

12. KEEPING WARM DURING THE HOLIDAYS
Despite the cold air outside, there is enough holiday cheer in hotel lobbies, meeting venues and restaurant dining rooms to warm even the coldest of hearts. But unfortunately that warm spirit doesn’t help toes and fingers stay warm. Keeping guests warm and comfortable sometimes mean additional heating has to be provided. To help keep the cost of heating down, there are a number of alternative heating strategies that can be implemented. The simplest and most cost effective alternative heating strategy is passive solar, which uses the sun’s rays to warm interior space. Active solar heating uses the sun’s energy as well, but uses collectors to concentrate the sun’s energy. Property owners and managers can also go underground to help keep their buildings warm. Geothermal heat pumps take advantage of the stable ground temperatures. And while traditional fireplaces may do a poor job of keeping guests warm, there are a number of energy efficient wood and pellet burning appliances. But the best way to keep heating costs low is to conduct annual or semiannual inspections to ensure your heating system is running properly and set correctly. For more information on energy efficiency in tourism, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative, or contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

13. TAKING THE NEXT ENERGY EFFICIENCY STEPS
According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association 2010 Lodging Survey, 88 percent of hotel properties are now using energy efficient lighting. This has left many hotels looking for the next green practice they can implement. While lighting is one of obvious choices, there are many other green practices. One option is to improve the energy efficiency of vending machines. According to the U.S. EPA, a conventional vending machine has an energy cost of around $366 a year. Some properties have improved the energy efficiency of vending machines by removing the interior lamp of machines in well-lit areas, which is estimated to save more than $50 a year per machine. Another option is to replace older vending machines with EPA Energy Star machines, which is estimated to save $150 per machine. Other easier energy efficiency choices include energy efficient office electronics and computers, installing lighting monitoring and control systems and taking advantage of government and utility rebate programs. For more information on energy efficiency in tourism, click here or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

14. A NEW KIND OF ENERGY DRINK
Between all the equipment, cooling, and warming a great deal of energy is used to beer and wine. But more and more breweries and wineries are looking at alternative methods to both save, and increasingly, to produce energy. Some energy efficiency practices at wineries and breweries are standard industrial energy efficiency measures, such
as efficient lighting and air compressors. But the unique needs of wineries and breweries have led to some unique innovations. The need for electric power, hot water and the opportunity for on-site energy generation led the Sonoma Wine Company to install a Cogenera Solar system, which produces both hot water and electricity from the sun. And the methane produced during the brewing process led Sierra Nevada Brewery to install a 250-kilowatt co-generation fuel cell system that generates both electric power and heat. Learn more about renewable energy at wineries and breweries during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Jan. 24 free webinar. To register, click here. For more information on the webinar, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative.

15. CALMING THE STORM OF ENERGY PRICES
Any casual observer of the news is well aware of the volatility of energy prices. And the tourism industry, with its high energy use, is often directly impacted when energy prices drastically rise or unpredictably fall. In an effort to reduce their dependence on fossil fuel energy prices, many tourism businesses have started making investments in renewable energy sources. Many in the beer and wine industry, which are even more energy intensive than lodging or restaurants, have invested heavily in renewable energy systems. The Sonoma Wine Company has installed a Cogenera Solar system, which produces both hot water and electricity from the sun’s energy. And Sierra Nevada Brewery has installed a 250-kilowatt co-generation fuel cell system that generates both electric power and heat. Learn more about renewable energy at wineries and breweries during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Jan. 24 free webinar. To register, click here. For more information on the webinar, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative.

16. FINDING SPARE CHANGE IN THE “ENERGY EFFICIENCY SOFA”
There is always a feeling of surprised delight when cleaning couch cushions and loose change is found. That feeling of getting free money also occurs when energy saving measures are identified and implemented that result in operational cost savings. Many energy saving actions, like replacing old emergency exit signs with energy saving LED exit signs or putting motion sensors on vending machines, have low initial costs and can start saving money within the first year of implementation. And the best part is these activities will continue to save money throughout the life of the product. However, it can be complicated to identify which energy saving measures will yield the best return on investment. To provide assistance, Waste Reduction Partners is offering a limited number of no-cost Green Assessments to North Carolina tourism-related businesses. The Hospitality Greening Assessment is an on-site, technical review of a business’s utility use and environmental practices, combining energy and water-use audits, solid waste recycling guidance, and other sustainability recommendations into one technical assessment. For more information, contact Russ Jordan with Waste Reduction Partners at (828) 251-7477. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

17. ENERGY MANAGEMENT REDUCES COSTS
One of the easiest ways to reduce operating costs is by effectively managing energy usage. Because energy is difficult to see or feel, it can be easy to waste with inefficient HVACs, lights left on, and countless other ways, without even noticing until the energy bill comes in. However, according to the EPA, reducing energy consumption by as little as 10% can have the same impact as increasing RevPAR by $0.60 for limited service hotels and by more than $2.00 for full-service hotels. And using energy wisely can also improve guest and visitor experiences by helping to improve lighting and better control indoor air temperature. There are a number of strategies that can be implemented to better manage energy, from no cost programs, such as the EPA Energy Star program, to high-tech systems, such as the system used at the King’s Daughters Inn. To learn more about developing an energy management plan at your facility, contact the Waste Reduction Partners. For more information about energy and the tourism industry, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative website. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
18. Controlling heating and cooling costs
According to the U.S. EPA, heating and cooling are responsible for nearly 40 percent of electricity and more than half of natural gas consumption in hotels and motels. Due to the heat of summer, costly utility bills can result for even the most energy efficient buildings. There are, however, many low-to-no cost measures to help rein in cooling costs. One example is to regularly check HVAC equipment is tuned up and running properly. Poorly maintained HVAC systems, which include leaky ducts, dirty filters, rusty coils, and too high or too low refrigerant levels, can contribute to even the most energy efficient HVAC system being inefficient. Making sure the building envelop is sealed properly can also help improve energy costs. Leaks around window and door frames are easy places for cooler indoor air to escape, and poor insulation and fireplaces are examples of other common trouble spots. Another way to improve the efficiency of an HVAC system is to make sure only rooms that are occupied within the next couple of hours are cooled. Fans can also help make a room feel cooler, but they should also only be used when the space is occupied. Timing the use of heat-generating equipment, such as dryers and ovens, for times of the day when it is cooler can also help keep things cooler. If such equipment must be used during the hottest time of the day, making sure they are only turned on when needed can help things stay cooler. Energy efficient lighting can also reduce indoor heat, particularly where very bright lights are needed, since most of the energy from incandescent bulbs is emitted as heat rather than light. For more information about energy efficient cooling, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

19. EV charging stations can entice visitors
Installing Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations at a facility can offer a myriad of sustainable advantages such as increased tourism visitation and spending, lowering of fuel costs, decreased dependency on fossil fuels, zero tailpipe emissions, and decreased noise pollution. The first step to becoming EV-friendly is to offer charging stations. Though it will take a number of hours, an EV can be charged using a simple wall socket. For example, some facilities allow EVs to charge overnight by plugging their vehicle into a wall socket using an extension cord or a dryer outlet using an adaptor. EV drivers typically travel with adaptors, so a business simply needs to make a plug available. By enabling charging for visitor use, the tourism industry opens the door to this growing market while building consumer and brand awareness. Each segment of the industry has an opportunity to enable EV Tourism and educate guests to an alternative source of transportation. It is also important to educate staff about electric vehicles, such as charging needs and expanded hotel policies regarding these vehicles. Valet staff should be particularly knowledgeable about EVs. For more information on the installation of EV charging stations, click here. For information on sustainable tourism, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the Center for Sustainability at ECU at (252) 737-4296.

20. HVAC tune-up can save energy, money
As colder weather sets in, it’s a good idea to prepare business facilities and operations accordingly. Late fall is a great time for scheduling a professional inspection and tune-up of the HVAC system. By taking a few simple steps now, this can help keep utility bills low, a business operating efficiently, and guests and staff healthy, comfortable and happy throughout the winter months. Damaged or poorly insulated windows, doors and walls lead to cold air drafts that can significantly increase utility bills. Repair broken windows before cold temperatures arrive and consider weatherizing facilities to minimize heat loss. Installing adhesive weather-stripping to doors, insulating gaskets around electrical fixtures and applying insulating film to windows require minimal labor and investment. Cover heating vents in storage rooms and unused offices, so only occupied work areas are heated. If large portions of the offices are unused, consider working with an HVAC professional to be sure the heating system is only expending the energy it needs for the active office space. Ask staff to close window shades at the end of the workday to prevent overnight heat loss and to open them during the day to take advantage of natural light. Duct leaks, clogged filters and other malfunctions can reduce heating efficiency by more than 20 percent, so a seasonal servicing of the system can keep energy costs as low as possible. For more information on ways to conserve energy consumption associated with heating, click here. For information on sustainable tourism, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the Center for Sustainability at ECU at (252) 737-4296.
21. SAVING WATER AND ENERGY
With dryer and warmer than normal weather this fall, North Carolinians are being reminded of the importance of being water conscious. Of particular interest to tourism business owners and managers are those opportunities where they can not only save water but also energy, doubling their savings. One of the best examples of saving energy and water in hotels is water efficient shower heads. By reducing shower water volume, while maintaining the coverage and pressure, one can maintain guest satisfaction and reduce use of hot water. Reducing the need for hot water reduces water consumption and energy use. Another great example of saving energy and water are pre-rinse spray valves at dish-washing stations. Pre-rinse spray valves can increase water pressure, improving staff ability to quickly spray down dishware, while reducing water volume, again saving hot water. And by reducing the need for hot water, the water heater does not have to work as hard, which will reduce maintenance costs and equipment failures. For more tips on saving water and energy, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm or contact Keyes McGee at keyes.mcgee@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

22. EPA: AN AGE-OLD RESOURCE
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. During those 40 years, the EPA has been responsible for developing a number of resources, programs, and initiatives that help small to mid-sized businesses be more energy efficient, conserve water and reduce waste. One of the most well-known EPA programs is Energy Star, which recognizes products and buildings for their energy efficiency. Energy Star has programs for specific business sectors, including the hospitality and entertainment sector. A similar EPA program that addresses water efficiency is WaterSense. Just like Energy Star, the WaterSense program identifies consumer products, such as toilets and showerheads that meet an efficiency standard. The EPA has also developed the program Recycle on the Go, which encourages recycling in public places such as parks, stadiums, convention centers, airports and other transportation hubs, shopping centers, and at special events. Find more information about EPA programs at partner programs and Businesses and Non-Profits. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

23. TAKING SOME BITE OUT OF THE GAS STING
There are still a number of questions about how changing gas prices may impact travel this summer. While it might not be known how travelers will react to higher gas prices, rising gas prices do have a direct impact on operating costs. Higher gas prices mean guest shuttle services, gas-powered lawn equipment and company vehicles cost more to operate. But there are a number of simple steps that can be taken to help reduce fuel costs and improve fuel economy. The U.S. Dept. of Energy estimates that just by keeping tires properly inflated, gas mileage can improve by as much as 4 percent. Instituting a no-idling policy for company vehicles and shuttles can also significantly reduce a business’s gas costs. Another option to help reduce gas consumption is to replace gas-powered lawn equipment with electric versions. Not only do electric lawn tools cost less to operate, they are also quieter and easier to maintain. For more examples of other fuel efficient practices, visit N.C. Project Green Transportation. Also, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

Green Cleaning

1. MANY BENEFITS OF GREEN CLEANING
The importance of cleanliness is well understood by the tourism and hospitality industry, but a growing number of tourism business owners and managers are also finding additional benefits of green cleaning. Historically, environmentally preferable cleaning options have failed to perform as well as conventional products, often at a higher cost. However, recent improvements in chemistry and cleaning procedures have greatly improved the performance of green cleaning products and reduced costs. Furthermore, many green cleaning products serve as all-purpose cleaners and are available in concentrated form, reducing the total number of specialty products needed, which can further reduce cleaning costs. Since environmentally preferable cleaning products are often less noxious,
are easier to use, require less stringent safety protocols, and cause less damage to the surfaces and products being cleaned, they are often more cost effective than traditional cleaning products. Using green cleaning products also reduces potential injury to housekeeping staff and improves air quality, which is not only better for staff but to guests and visitors alike. Using environmentally preferable cleaning products can provide an advantage in attracting potential guests who suffer from allergies, asthma or other sensitivities. For more details, view green cleaning training videos from the San Francisco Dept. of the Environment or read about green cleaning at Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks from the EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing. For more information about green cleaning and how to be recognized by NC GreenTravel as a green attraction or accommodation, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

Green Destinations

2. GREENING AT A DESTINATION LEVEL

There is a new trend in sustainable tourism recognition programs: destination level initiatives. The Green Destination Orlando Program, announced at the Green Lodging & Hospitality Conference, joins a growing number of destinations that are working to highlight the collective sustainability efforts of area attractions and accommodations. Gatlinburg and Virginia Beach have also established efforts to position their destinations as greener. The Asheville Independent Restaurant Association, in partnership with the Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute, is working to position Asheville as the greenest dining destination in the country. With sustainability continuing to be a significant industry trend in both the meetings industry and the leisure market, the question will no longer be if a destination is green, but how green is it? For more information on how to green your travel destination, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

3. IT’S ELECTRIC

Despite their higher upfront costs, more consumers continue to buy electric and hybrid cars. Some drivers are motivated by the lower operating costs, others are motivated for environmental reasons, and other drivers are buying them because they see them as a luxury product. To make sure they are not missing out on potential guests, many hotels are now adding electric-vehicle charging stations. And more car rental companies are offering electric vehicles as an option to customers. It is hard to tell if charging stations are the new must-have hotel amenity, but the relatively low cost and many federal and local government incentives make offering charging stations, even free charging, attractive to hotels. Learn more about electric vehicles and alternative fueled vehicles during the Center for Sustainable Tourism's April 24 free webinar. Click here to register, or contact Nathan Hingtgen for more information. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

4. HOW DOES YOUR DESTINATION MEASURE UP AS A GREEN DESTINATION?

NC GreenTravel is only one of many resources attractions and accommodations can turn to for assistance on implementing green practices. The American Hotel & Lodging Association's Green Resource Center, the National Restaurant Association's ConServe, the EPA's Energy Star for Hospitality, and Sustainable Travel International's STEP are only a small sample of the growing number of resources hotels, restaurants and attractions can turn to examine their adoption of sustainable practices. Recently however, there has been growing attention to developing resources for entire destinations. Programs such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for Destinations, the Green Restaurant Association's Dine Green and Sustainable Travel International's Sustainable Destinations provide tools that can help travel destinations be more than just a collection of green tourism businesses and become green travel destinations. To help destinations get started, Sustainable Travel International is offering a confidential and no-cost Destination Sustainability Self-Assessment. For more information about Sustainable Travel International's assessment, contact Bobby Chappell, senior director of standards & certification, at (404) 849-6572. For more information NC GreenTravel, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
5. WHY BE RECOGNIZED FOR GREENING?

According to research from the Biltmore Company and PGAV Destinations, being LEED certificated falls very low on the list of green practices consumers view as an outward sign of a destination having an environmental commitment. For tourism managers, this should raise some serious questions about the value of pursuing a green certification or recognition like NC GreenTravel. However, there are some key benefits of being recognized by an outside organization that should also be considered. The first is, since a growing number of meeting planners and corporate travel providers are seeking to integrate green into their products, many will be looking for ways to identify greener properties, which will most likely include certification and recognition programs. A second benefit to being recognized as being green by an outside party is, according to Trip Advisor’s 2012 eco-friendly travel survey, while many travelers are looking for greener travel accommodations, many are unaware if a hotel is green or not. So being recognized as a green property helps inform potential guests that the property is environmentally-friendly. Participating in a green program also provides a road map to facilitate greening. For many property owners and managers, while they would like to be greener, they are not sure what green practices should or could be implemented and in what order. Certification and recognition programs can provide that road map. And lastly, participating in a certification or recognition can provide access to a number of resources to assist in implementing green practices. For example, Waste Reduction Partners offers no-cost environmental audits as part of the NC GreenTravel Initiative. For more information on NC GreenTravel, North Carolina’s statewide green tourism recognition program, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

6. CONTRADICTION IN THE GREEN TRAVEL MARKET

For some tourism professionals, there may seem to be a contradiction in the results of the many market surveys that indicate a growing majority of travelers prefer greener accommodations and destinations. While many travelers say they prefer greener travel options, critics of green travel argue few travelers seem to take advantage the growing number of green options, let alone act in environmentally responsible ways themselves during travel. There are however a number of possible explanations for this contradiction. For example, as stated in TripAdvisor’s 2011 eco-friendly travel survey, 57% of travelers say they "often" take green factors into consideration when planning travel, but 60% of travelers feel they know little about if a hotel is really green. A second possible explanation is many green practices often implemented may have little impact on guests' experiences. For many green practices, such as energy efficient lighting, being undetectable is preferred. However green-minded guests might be more attracted to green practices, such as locally sourced food, that allow for an enhanced experience. And yet another example is that what might be considered an important environmental issue for one traveler may be less important for another. For example, a traveler might be very concerned with indoor air quality, but less concerned about waste reduction.

For more information on how to best market to green-minded travelers, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

7. TRAVEL AND TOURISM AS A VENUE FOR STEM EDUCATION

Even during the very early days of tourism, the value of travel as an educational experience was well known. However, the need for such programing is perhaps less well known. A recent report from PGAV states that despite the financial incentive for young people to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, there is a need to make STEM fields "exciting, fun, accessible, and attractive." The report goes on to state that tourism attractions provide a wonderful venue to get young people interested in learning. North Carolina’s tourism industry is well equipped to provide such opportunities. In addition to the more than 200 recognized Environmental Education Centers in North Carolina, a growing number of non-traditionally science specific attractions and accommodations provide guests with an opportunity to get excited about science, such as educational field trips to the NASCAR Hall of Fame. The N.C. Office of Environmental Education also provides venues with support to provide educational opportunities. In addition to providing training opportunities on environmental education, the office has lesson plans, funding opportunities and a host of additional resources to help support environmental education at
any attraction or accommodation. For more information about being an environmental education center, contact Environmental Education Program Consultant Marty Wiggins at (919) 707-8124. For more information about the benefits of going green, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

Green Financing

1. FINDING THE GREENS FOR YOUR GREENING

One of the biggest challenges for tourism businesses to improve energy efficiency is the upfront costs of energy efficiency or renewable energy projects. There are, however, a number of resources available to assist tourism businesses to both understand how energy upgrades will impact finances, as well as how to pay for them. The Energy Star program, for example, has a number of resources to help managers better understand the financial impact of energy upgrades. There are also a growing number of renewable energy professionals, financial professionals that specialize in energy efficiency. A key resource energy efficiency finance professional can help tourism business owners navigate an energy incentive program, many of which can be found on the North Carolina Solar Center maintained database of federal and state incentives for renewable and energy efficiency. These programs can provide substantial savings for private sector projects; however, since many rebates are provided as income tax credits, non-profit and governmental attractions and accommodations often have to find alternative strategies to finance renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. For many local, state and federal government-owned properties, energy performance contracting provides a strategy to finance energy projects. For instance, many non-profits have found that solar energy purchase agreements provide the necessary flexibility to successfully finance renewable energy projects. Learn more about energy efficiency and renewable energy financing by registering for a free Dec. 10 webinar. For more information on energy efficiency, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

2. CASHING UP TO GO GREEN

Between energy efficient appliances, new renewable energy options, energy management systems, and a host of other emerging technologies, the opportunities for tourism businesses to improve their energy efficiency have never been greater. But while the cost savings from implementing green practices can quickly add up, greatly improving profits, the challenge is determining how to pay for green upgrades. However, unlike many other types of investments, there are a number of resources to help businesses invest in energy efficiency. One of the most interesting types of support is utility incentive or rebate programs. While it might seem counter-intuitive that a utility company would help its customers consume less energy, utility companies across the country are under growing pressure to identify new sources of energy for their expanding customer base. For many of these utility providers, it is less expensive for them to pay their current customers to use less energy than to build new power plants. Duke Energy, for example, provides its North Carolina business customers with incentives on lighting, HVAC, pumps, and a host of other energy upgrades. This is in addition to any local or state incentive that may apply. There are also a growing number of commercial loan programs, such as those provided by Self-Help, that focuses on improving energy efficiency. Learn more about these green loans and utility incentives by registering for a free webinar on green financing on Dec. 10.

For more information energy efficiency, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
Green Lodging

1. EXAMINING INCREASED GUEST SATISFACTION AT GREEN HOTELS
   When hotels began implementing green practices, saving water and energy had to be balanced with providing guests top quality service. Now according to a recent article in Fox Business, guest satisfaction shows an "increase" when hotels go green. Improvements in energy and water efficient technology now allow environmentally preferable products to perform on par with traditional options without sacrificing the customer experience, but the technological advances alone do not explain why guest satisfaction is higher at green hotels. Part of the explanation might be that an increasing number of consumers not only prefer environmentally friendly products but are more knowledgeable about what makes a product green. When a hotel guest sees compact florescent light bulbs in the lobby or preferred parking spaces for alternative fuel vehicles, not only do they know what that means for the environment, but they are more likely to appreciate it. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

2. LINEN REUSE MIGHT NOT BE SO SIMPLE
   Anyone that has stayed at a hotel during the last five years is likely familiar with linen reuse programs. The idea seems simple: Travelers that are concerned about the environment and would prefer not to have their towels and bed sheets changed every day have the option to do their part to save the environment. And hotels can save hundreds of dollars on water and energy. Yet despite its simplicity and clear benefits, linen reuse programs face many challenges. Guests that would prefer the premium of fresh-daily towels may be put-off by the program. And researches are finding out that participation in linen reuse programs may be impacted by complex psychological behavior. For example, according to Dr. Michael Giebelhausen, from his recent presentation at the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU, hotel guests that participated in linen reuse programs reported being more satisfied than those that did not. However, the satisfaction of guests that participated went down when they were offered an incentive to participate, while the satisfaction of guests that did not participate went up. Plus, all of this assumes that housekeeping has the proper training and does not just change the towels anyway. So maybe it really isn’t easy being green. For more information about greening of the tourism industry, contact NC GreenTravel, program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

3. TRIPADVISOR’S GREENLEADERS PROGRAM GOES LIVE
   Last week, TripAdvisor officially launched its GreenLeaders program, an initiative to help the 79 percent of travelers that feel eco-friendly practices in accommodations are important find greener lodging accommodations. TripAdvisor users can now find green accommodations by looking for the GreenLeaders badge on property listings as well as sort-by-green properties. There is no cost to be recognized and the program is open to all hotel and B&B accommodations in the U.S. To be recognized, properties are required to complete the online Green Practices Survey and must meet the required green practices as well as achieve a minimum score of 30 percent on the survey. Required green practices include tracking energy use, using at least 75 percent energy-efficient light bulbs, linen reuse plan, recycling at least two types of waste, staff training on green practices, and provide guest education on green practices. Recognition by the GreenLeaders program also counts towards recognition by the NC GreenTravel program. The NC GreenTravel staff are available to provide technical assistance in meeting the requirements of the GreenLeaders program. For more information about TripAdvisor’s GreenLeaders program, visit the website (http://green.tripadvisor.com) or contact them by email. For more information about NC GreenTravel, contact program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

4. THE NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE LODGING NETWORK
   The National Sustainable Lodging Network is a growing online community of sustainable hospitality practitioners and a clearinghouse to support the work of this community. There is no fee to join and full access to the network can be obtained simply by signing-up and creating a profile. Some of the resources available through the Network include a membership directory, with profiles of the more than 500 members; links to training materials from past conferences, workshops and webinars; an events calendar of related sustainable hospitality conferences, workshops and webinars; and blogs, including "Featured Guest Blogs" from field experts on a particular issue or topic. While the Network was initially focused on lodging properties, it has now grown to include resources for meetings,
restaurants, casinos and many more sectors of the travel and tourism industry. The Network also includes more than 20 Groups that allow members to connect around topics, geographic location and sectors. Membership is moderated to prevent spammers from accessing the Network, so there is a slight delay when confirming new requests for membership. For more information about the National Sustainable Lodging Network, contact Andy Bray, with NEWMOA / P2Rx Center for EPA Regions 1 & 2, at (617) 367-8558 ext. 306. And for more information about the networks of NC GreenTravel recognized businesses, contact program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

5. WHEN LESS MEANS MORE
While towel re-use programs have become almost synonymous with green travel, there are still many travelers, even green-minded ones, who object to what they see as a reduced service. There are, however, a number of green practices that will not only lower costs, but often improve performance. One example is water efficient faucets that have higher pressure and less volume, which better facilitates hand-washing. Similarly, low-flow, pre-rinse spray values at dishwashing stations greatly improve water pressure, thereby improving dishwashing speed while reducing water use. Another green alternative that improves performance is LED exit signs. Because LED exit signs have longer lasting and more durable bulbs compared to glass bulbs, the LED lights are more likely to be in working order in the case of an emergency. And some green hotel practices, such as improved air quality, in-room recycling options and abundant natural lighting have been found to contribute to a luxury experience for guests. Additionally, recent research has found that efforts to inspire guests to participate in green practices might have a negative effect, and that green-minded guests may have higher levels of satisfaction than those who do not. For assistance in identifying sustainable practices that may not only reduce energy or water consumptions but also improve the guest experience, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

6. GREEN HOTELS ATTRACTIVE DURING COLLEGE DROP-OFF
For many communities across North Carolina, late August brings the return of college students. And while most of the students will be spending their first night on campus in their new dorm rooms, many of the family traveling with them will be spending the night in a local hotel, which for some may be a green hotel. It is well understood by most travel professionals that children have an impact on leisure travel decisions. It is also generally accepted that college students have an increased enthusiasm for sustainable products. A growing amount of research shows that Gen Y not only sees sustainability as important part of travel, but essential. Therefore, it would not be surprising that some parents may be paying closer attention to the green credentials of overnight lodging options, such as TripAdvisor's GreenLeaders or NC GreenTravel programs. And while there are many other factors that influence where parents spend the night, spending the night at a green property might be one way to placate their child's green preferences when dropping their son or daughter off at college. For more information about how your property can join the growing number of recognized green tourism related business, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

7. NEW ADVANCES IN GREENING TECHNOLOGY
It was only a few years ago that compact florescent lighting (CFL) was the best option for energy efficient lighting. Yet, in less than a decade, LED lighting has overtaken CFLs as the best alternative in energy efficient lighting. The progress in LED color, brightness, and costs have been tremendous, with 60 watt-equivalent LED bulbs now retailing for as low as $10. There have also been great advances in lighting controls, with a growing number of LED bulbs that can be controlled wirelessly and remotely and many other advances in lighting control technology for the hospitality industry. Energy management systems (EMS) for the hospitality industry have also seen drastic improvements recently. Early EMS had a number of problems, but through improvements in technology and best practices, a growing number of EMS options are available for a broad range of accommodations and attractions that can improve the guest experience and reduce energy costs. However, some of the biggest advances in greening the tourism industry have been from new ways of thinking about waste rather than new technology. One of the biggest successes in reducing waste in the hospitality industry has been toiletries recycling, which collects soaps, lotions and shampoos to be reprocessed and donated. For more new technology or low-tech ideas that can help save money
and the environment, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

8. WATERSENSE FOR H2OTEL CHALLENGE

Earlier this month, the Environmental Protection Agency launched the WaterSense H2Otel Challenge, a new initiative to encourage and support best management practice for reducing water use in hotels. The program, developed as an extension of the WaterSense program, which certifies water saving fixtures, is built around a three-step process. First assessing water use and saving opportunities; then changing products or processes to incorporate best management practices; and, finally, tracking water-saving progress and achievements. The program also focuses on water conservation measures that reduce water consumption without negatively impacting the guest experience, a critical part of any successful green hotel practice. The WaterSense challenge includes an opportunity for hotels to take the pledge to reduce water use and operating costs, which gives hoteliers access to a number of additional resources. Furthermore, many of the practices recommended as part of the WaterSense initiative are included in the NC GreenTravel and TripAdvisor’s GreenLeader criteria for recognition. As part of the EPA’s rollout of the program, there are a number of upcoming webinars with additional information and resources. For more information about saving water in the tourism industry, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

9. DOES BEING GREEN MATTER?

Last fall, a study from the Cornell Center for Hospitality Research set out to answer what impact being a green hotel has on revenue. The researchers’ findings, that being a green hotel neither improves nor reduces hotel revenue, would seem to contradict a growing body of market research, such as TripAdvisor's TripBarometer, that indicates travelers feel environmentally friendly practices in hotels are important to them. One way to make sense of this gap is to argue that this is a clear example of the difference between intent and behavior. However, this argument fails to consider the vast difference between the Cornell study and research like the TripBarometer. Another explanation may be that just stating a property has been recognized as a green property fails to convey to potential customers how the green recognition will impact their vacation, either in a positive or negative way. This an argument outlined in the Green Marketing Toolkit from Fáilte Ireland. For more information on how to better communicate green practices, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

Green Marketing

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GREEN?

One of the most common questions tourism businesses face when examining sustainable practices is what does it mean to be green? The Center for Sustainable Tourism has defined sustainable tourism as “actions that contribute to a balanced and healthy economy by generating tourism-related jobs, revenues and taxes while protecting and enhancing the destination's socio-cultural, historical, natural and built resources for the enjoyment and well-being of both residents and visitors.” While this might seem like an easy definition to understand, it can become complicated. Questions such as “can a business be completely sustainable” or “how do you measure the total environment impact” quickly arise. And while these questions are difficult, the crux of sustainable tourism is quite simple. It means being committed to evaluating the broader impacts of business decisions to include areas of environmental and social impact. So while everyone can debate the specifics of zero waste or local foods, all should be able to agree that actions that help a business’ bottom line that are more environmentally and socially responsible, are more sustainable. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
2. SUPPORTING YOUR GREEN GUESTS
One way to really impress green conscious guests and customers is to offer them special discounts or benefits for their personal sustainable practices. Not only will this impress customers, it is a method of increasing customer loyalty and attracting new green consumers. Consider offering preferred parking for guests who use alternative forms of transportation such as car-pooling or alternative-fueled vehicles. Some hotels have offered financial savings to guests who participate in a linen re-use program. A growing number of retail businesses offer rebates to customers who use their own shopping bags. One hotel has even started offering a free drink for guests who choose to off-set the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from their stay. Businesses can also raise company morale by recognizing the green efforts of staff, such as include sustainability as part of staff evaluations, and offer prizes to staff that have adopted sustainable practices. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. MARKETING YOURSELF AS GREEN
In its 2009 Travel Trends, TripAdvisor found that 34 percent of U.S. travelers will seek to visit an environmentally-friendly hotel or resort in the next year (http://www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i208-c1-Press_Releases.html). For hotels looking to attract these green conscious travelers, it is important to develop a marketing plan that is honest, transparent and verifiable. Green conscious travelers want to know more than the destination they are visiting is green, they want to know what specific action have been taken to reduce environmental damage. The Federal Trade Commission has developed some guidelines to help businesses interested in marketing their environmental efforts (www.ftc.gov/bcp/grnrule/guides980427.htm). For more information on what you can do to attract green travelers, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

4. TELLING YOUR GREEN STORY
The growing number of tourism-related businesses advertising they have gone “green” can make it difficult for travelers to differentiate between organizations that have taken honest efforts to reduce their environmental impact, from those that only say they are “green.” To add to the problem, a number of environmental certification programs have emerged that are difficult to understand or know what environmental steps are needed to be certified. One way to help consumers decide whether or not your business has met its green tastes is simply to state what environmental practices you have implemented. This can be done by adding a page to your Web site, including a list of practices on your menu, or by including it as part of your brochure or advertisements. For a list of sustainable practices you can implement at your food service or lodging business, visit http://author.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/criteria.cfm. For more information on sustainable tourism practices you can implement, contact Alex Naar at (919)715-3782 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

5. SHARING THE GOOD NEWS
It’s not hard to find great examples of tourism businesses that have implemented sustainable practices – hotels with solar hot water heaters, restaurants using local-sourced produce, festivals composting, and attractions with recycling programs. Although many tourism businesses know how to go green, fewer are sure how to tell their guests and customers. There is a long tradition in the tourism industry of letting guests’ satisfaction speak for itself. But for many green practices, if done correctly, guests may never know they are using less water every time they take a shower or are using less electricity when they turn the lights on in their room. But with a growing number of travelers taking notice of green travel, it is important to share a sustainability story. There are a number of ways to toot a green horn. For help on how to best share with guests how a property is greening, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. There is a free webinar on May 26 at 10:30 a.m. on green tourism marketing. For more information and to register, click here or contact Garrett Zeigler.

6. 10 GREEN PRACTICES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TODAY
Many tourism businesses and organizations know they should be adopting environmental practices but are concerned about how much such measures will cost. So the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU, in partnership with the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention, has put together a list of 10 sustainable practices that have low or no...
costs to implement. Many of the practices will start saving money almost immediately. To view the list, click the link at http://www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm. For more information on conservation in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

7. MEASURING: THE KEY TO GREEN SUCCESS

One of the most important steps in assessing if you are reaching your green goals is to establish a method to measure success. To effectively monitor which sustainable practices you are implementing lead to reduced energy and water consumption or waste reduction, you can develop any number of record keeping methods. Although many monitoring systems can include complex algorithms and sophisticated software, you can start with a simple spreadsheet that tracks monthly electricity and water usage. By using this simple method, you can see if new energy efficient measures are resulting in reduced electricity usage and really lowering bills. This record keeping can also assist in producing information that can be used in marketing materials. For more information on measuring your green success, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

8. AWASH WITH GREENWASHING

A common concern of tourism marketers when using the adoption of sustainability practices to help advertise is the negative backlash that might occur if consumers feel the marketing message does not match the company’s real commitment to sustainability, a condition commonly referred to as greenwashing. Or marketers are nervous of the ramifications of a situation where they advertise to consumers the accommodation has implemented a recycling program and a guest observes a staff member throwing an aluminum can in the trash rather than the recycling bin. With Internet sites like www.greenwashingindex.com that spot examples of green washing, marketers have reason to worry, if they are indeed misleading travelers. But with a growing number of travelers actively seeking green travel accommodations and a growing number of tourism businesses implementing sustainable practices, there is increased pressure to include sustainability in travel marketing messaging. If a property is interested in including sustainability in its marketing efforts but is nervous about inadvertently greenwashing, there are a number of ways to check, many of which are listed at www.stopgreenwash.org. There is also a free webinar on May 26 at 10:30 a.m. on sustainable tourism marketing. For more information and to register, click here or contact Garrett Zeigler.

9. HOW SERIOUS IS YOUR GREEN

One of the newest meetings trends is the use of games or gamification to influence behavior. Because of its heavy use of games, the 2011 Green Meetings Industry Council’s Sustainable Meetings Conference was one of the most anticipated conferences of the year. But meetings and events are not the only travel industry sectors to use games. Last year, Travelocity also used a game as part of its Travel for Good program. Research has shown that peer pressure is a powerful tool to motivate guests to be greener. Making going green fun might motivate even more guests to reduce their impact while traveling. And sometimes, just being funny or creative is enough to help sustainability initiatives stand out or better engage travelers. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
10. WHY GREENING DOESN'T SELL AS WELL AT YOU MIGHT THINK IT SHOULD

Last month, green marketing expert Jacquie Ottman raised an interesting question on her blog: why is there such a disconnect between the large number of consumers who say they take environmental issues into account when making purchasing decisions and the small number of consumers who actually purchase green products? Ottman provided three possible answers. The first is there still remains a fair amount of confusion in the market place as to what constitutes as a green product or service. The second reason is consumers may be overstating how green their purchasing decisions really are. Ottman blames the many confusing messages consumers are confronted with when making purchasing decisions but also concedes consumers are also likely overstating how green they really are to pollsters. The last explanation is marketers might be misinterpreting why consumers purchase green products. A growing number of green travel marketers are moving away from touting specific sustainable practices implemented at their accommodation or attraction, and increasingly focusing on how the sustainable practices create a better experience for guests. One of the best examples of how this strategy is used is Chipotle’s use of sustainably raised food. While Chipotle is proud of its use of sustainable meats, its story starts with how doing so makes the food taste better. For assistance on green marketing of the travel and tourism industry or for technical assistance on the greening of the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes with NC GreenTravel at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

11. SURVEY SAID....

In the last month, both Harris Interactive and TripAdvisor have released the results of research on green consumerism and travel. While both studies indicate a majority of U.S. consumers and travelers are concerned about the environment, each study drew different conclusions. The Harris study, which focused on general consumers’ attitudes and preferences, concluded that fewer Americans are taking sustainability into account when making purchasing decisions or in their personal lives. The TripAdvisor study, which examined Americans’ attitudes towards green travel, found the opposite to be true. Amongst the 700 U.S. travelers surveyed by TripAdvisor, 71 percent reported planning to make greener travel decisions in the next year, compared to 65 percent in 2011. It could be argued the differences between these two studies is due to consumers only being attracted to sustainable options if it does not require any additional effort or cost. However, the TripAdvisor study found over half of their respondents would be willing to pay more for a greener accommodation, and 23 percent were willing to pay up to an additional $25 for a greener property. For more information on what the results of these surveys might mean for your tourism organization, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

12. MARKETING YOUR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EFFORTS

The 2012 American Hotel & Lodging Association's Lodging Survey found implementing sustainable practices has become more common. Yet despite the growth of sustainable tourism options, TripAdvisor recently found 60 percent of travelers say they know very little about hotels’ green initiatives, and 13 percent say they know nothing. Given that it is now well known that consumers prefer more sustainable travel options, it would seem much of the tourism industry is missing an opportunity to attract travelers by better marketing their sustainability efforts. There are many reasons why a hotel or attraction might shy away from promoting their sustainability effort, such as being accused of greenwashing or guests will think being green will lead to a lower quality experience. While these are valid reasons, with 57 percent of travelers reporting to TripAdvisor that they “often” take environmental factors into consideration when making travel decisions and half of travelers willing to pay more for green travel experience, not sharing green practices seems like the wrong discussion. To help navigate the difficulties of marketing sustainability efforts in the tourism industry, Xavier Font produced the report "Keep it real." The report provides practical advice on who, why, what, where and when of sustainable tourism marketing. For more information on how to best market your sustainability efforts, or for technical assistance on implementing green practices, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

13. GREEN MARKETING GETS A CLOSER LOOK

Last fall, the US Federal Trade Commission issued its revised "Green Guides". While some of the revised guidelines have less relevance to the tourism industry, there are some guidelines, such as those dealing with certifications, that
may have more direct impacts on tourism businesses and organizations that use such claims in their marketing efforts. The guidelines do not serve as agency rules or regulations. However, they do provide information on what environmental claims the FTC may find to be deceptive and Section 5 of the FTC Act does allow the FTC to take enforcement action against deceptive advertising and marketing. Nor should tourism businesses that promote their green practices see the new guidelines as a warning against any green marketing, but rather information on how to avoid mistakenly making misleading claims or greenwashing. One way to avoid mistakenly making misleading claims is to participate in a recognition program like NC GreenTravel. The clear guidelines of what green practices needed to be implemented to be recognized by NC GreenTravel help accommodations and attractions clearly convey the basis for recognition. Another area now included in the FTC Green Guides includes carbon offsets and renewable energy. For more information about carbon offsetting and renewable energy credits, contact Katie Shepherd with NC GreenPower at (919) 716-6398. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

14. GREEN MARKETING DEPENDS ON TARGET AUDIENCE
Marketing a property or destination's adoption of green practices, like with any marketing, depends a great deal on whom the audience is and what they're looking for. Meeting and event clients, such as Stonyfield Farm, may have specific corporate goals or guidelines so may be more interested in specific practices a host site has implemented. However, leisure visitors may be less interested in what specific sustainable practices are implemented and more interested in how various sustainable practices impact their experience. For example, a 2012 MindClick SGM consumer study found guests were more likely to choose lodging properties that had green furnishings and fixtures than one that had focused solely on sustainable operations. This finding mirrors many of the suggestions provided in the VisitEngland report "Keep it Real: Marketing and Communicate Your Credentials." However, regardless of the target audience, it is important that efforts are not misleading or greenwashed. For more information on marketing your destination, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

Green Meetings/Events

1. MEETING GREEN MEETING EXPECTATIONS
CVBs and convention centers of all sizes and locations have for many years now been aggressively working to offer more green meeting options. From offering community service projects to award-winning green practices and even going so far as generating renewable energy, meeting planners have more green options now than ever before. For many meeting destinations and venues, investing in sustainability is becoming a bigger part of how they attract meeting and event planners. With 45 percent of meeting planners reporting that when choosing a meeting venue, green practices are "somewhat important" and 18 percent saying it is "extremely important," being green can mean the difference between securing a meeting or not. Perhaps even more significant is the increasing number of meeting planners that are asking meeting venues about their green practices and the number of travel managers that are implementing sustainability initiatives for their managed travel programs. For more information on how a business can green its destination, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

2. GATHERING GREEN FOR MEETING VENUES
It should come as no surprise to meeting professionals that sustainability remains an important industry trend and is expected to be implemented in almost 30 percent of meetings in the coming year. While many industry experts and surveys show that going green will become an increasingly important part of securing future business, they are also noting that activities such as recycling is becoming a minimum standard and sustainability is increasingly part of the meeting strategy. To help planners integrate sustainability into their events, a growing number of tools have been developed, such as the APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Meeting Standards, the Global Reporting Initiative Event Organizers Supplement, and the ISO 20121:2012: Event Sustainability Management guidelines. Learn more about greening events and meeting venues during the Center for Sustainable Tourism's March 6 webinar on
energy efficiency at meeting venues. Register online, or for more information contact Emily Ayscue. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

3. GREEN EVENTS, ANOTHER REASON TO CELEBRATE
A growing number of large-scale sporting events, music festivals, and corporate events are now integrating sustainability into their program. Smaller events, which might not have press releases or a media day to showcase their implementation of sustainable practices, are also increasing integrating sustainable practices. Many brides-to-be are looking at options to have greener weddings. Community events, like road races and block parties, are also adopting green measures. To learn more about what green practices a meeting and event venue might implement to attract green-minded brides, family reunion organizers and community events, download a checklist of green practices for conferences and events from the Center for Sustainable Tourism. The NC GreenTravel Initiative also has a number of resources to help green any venue or destination. Learn more about greening events and meeting venues during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s March 6 webinar on energy efficiency at meeting venues. Register online or, for more information, contact Emily Ayscue. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

4. A DIFFERENT SHADE OF GREEN FOR WEDDINGS
With emerald being the 2013 Pantone Color of the Year, many wedding destinations and venues are likely seeing green popping up in some unusual places this wedding season. But while not every bride will be sporting a green wedding dress, a growing number of brides and grooms are looking at how to have a different kind of green wedding, one that integrates green practices. And while going green for weddings is not a new trend, serving sustainable local foods, more environmentally friendly flowers arrangements and green weddings in general continues to grow. To help meet the growing demand for green weddings, venues such as the N.C. Arboretum and the N.C. Botanical Garden are tailoring their sites to meet the standards of a green wedding. And many wedding/event vendors, like Green Planet Catering and Shade of Green Events offer services to help make weddings greener. CVBs, such as the Asheville CVB, are also pitching their destination as a great place for a green wedding by providing additional information on local green wedding services. Wedding professionals, through programs like the GreenBrideGuide.com Green Wedding Professional Certification Course are now also becoming more sophisticated on how to green weddings, raising the bar on what makes a wedding green. For more information on how you can make your wedding venue greener or to have your wedding venue recognized by the NC GreenTravel program, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

5. MEASURING CARBON FOR GREEN MEETINGS AND EVENTS
A growing number of corporations, as varied as 21st Century Fox to Apple, are voluntarily tracking and reporting their carbon footprint. This is in addition to Federal agencies, which, as part of Executive Order 13514, are now required to measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Local governments such as Asheville are also reporting their carbon footprints. With the growing focus on managing corporate- and agency-wide carbon emissions, a number of meeting venues are trying to attract green-minded planners by taking active steps to help meeting planners calculate the carbon footprint of holding an event at their site. This is particularly important as meeting planners are becoming increasing knowledgeable about issues related to sustainability and are more likely than ever to ask for hard data about a meeting venue’s environmental impact. However, understanding or reliably calculating the carbon footprint of an event can be difficult to determine. To assist meeting venues and event planners, NC GreenPower offers tools to help assess the carbon footprint of events and meeting venues. Learn more about carbon offset opportunities and the tools offered by NC GreenPower by registering for a free Sept. 10 webinar. For more information about NC GreenPower and carbon offset options for the tourism industry, contact Katie Shepherd at (919) 716-6398. For more information about carbon and the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
6. GREEN RECOGNITION FOR MEETING VENUES

In the 2014 Meetings Focus Trends Survey, 37.8 percent of planners said that they are planning or expect to plan a green or sustainable meeting during the next year. With more than a third of meeting planners saying that they plan on having a green meeting in the coming year, meeting venues would do well to position themselves as a green venue. One option of doing so is be recognized by the NC GreenTravel Initiative which has recently developed criteria for Large Venues & Convention Centers. To become recognized as a green meeting venue by the program, venues are asked to download and complete an application, which includes identifying the green practices that have been implemented at the venue. For each green practice implemented, the venue earns points, which are then used to determine if the venue meets the minimum number of points to be recognized, and if so, if the venue is a One, Two or Three Dogwood-recognized venue.

If applicants do not meet the score needed to be recognized by the program, NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service and the Waste Reduction Partners staff are available to provide technical assistance in implementing additional green practices so that the applicant can meet the standards to be recognized. For more information about getting your venue recognized, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

7. GREENING OF CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

This year's Governor's Conference on Tourism in Charlotte featured a number of sustainability-oriented practices that showcased the added value of going green for event organizers and attendees. Green practices, like publishing an electronic copy of the conference program, not only reduced the amount of paper and printing costs, but also allowed conference attendees to directly connect to through their smart devices to the conference's social media efforts and Web links, as well as Division staff's contact information. Holding the conference within walking distance of area attractions and accommodations, which reduced the need for using personal cars, also allowed conference attendees to enjoy the host city without having to worry about traffic and parking. These types of value-added green practices are a growing focus for many meeting planners who are looking for ways to reduce costs, while maintaining or even enhancing the experience for attendees. However, one common mistake that many meeting planners do is they fail to effectively communicate the effectiveness of their corporate social responsibility efforts. One simple way to better communicate with attendees is by being recognized by an organization that specializes in recognizing green meetings and events such as NC GreenTravel. For more information about becoming recognized by NC GreenTravel, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

8. GREENING FESTIVALS

During the next couple of weeks, visitors and residents alike will be enjoying the many great, outdoor festivals and events North Carolina has to offer. One of the features that attendees will get to enjoy is the natural and scenic beauty of where the festivals are being held. But anyone who has been involved in holding an event can attest to the toll outdoor festivals and events can have on both the environment and the local community. There are, however, a number of ways event organizers can help minimize the damage, many of which are outlined in the Greening Festivals and Events tip-sheet, from the Center for Sustainable Tourism at East Carolina University, and in a how-to manual by the Icarus Foundation. N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service can provide assistance for any event interested in implementing a recycling program at their event. The NC GreenTravel program has also identified a number of resources for festivals. They have also developed criteria to recognize green festivals. And for event organizers interested in off-setting the energy footprint of their event, NC GreenPower offers a program specifically for events. For more information about greening your event or to be recognized by NC GreenTravel as a green event, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
9. Green Weddings

According to the U.S. EPA, heating and cooling are responsible for nearly 40 percent of electricity and more than half of natural gas consumption in hotels and motels. Due to the heat of summer, costly utility bills can result for even the most energy efficient buildings. There are, however, many low-to-no cost measures to help rein in cooling costs. One example is to regularly check HVAC equipment to ensure it is tuned up and running properly. Poorly maintained HVAC systems, which include leaky ducts, dirty filters, rusty coils, and too high or too low refrigerant levels, can contribute to even the most energy efficient HVAC system being inefficient. Making sure the building envelop is sealed properly can also help improve energy costs. Leaks around window and door frames are easy places for cooler indoor air to escape, and poor insulation and fireplaces are examples of other common trouble spots. Another way to improve the efficiency of an HVAC system is to make sure only rooms that are occupied within the next couple of hours are cooled. Fans can also help make a room feel cooler, but they should also only be used when the space is occupied. Timing the use of heat-generating equipment, such as dryers and ovens, for times of the day when it is cooler can also help keep things cooler. Energy efficient lighting can also reduce indoor heat, particularly where very bright lights are needed, since most of the energy from incandescent bulbs is emitted as heat rather than light. For more information about energy efficient cooling, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

10. Sustainability for music festivals

Music festivals across North Carolina are popular visitor events that support local economies and community quality of living. These festivals often attract visitors from across the demographic spectrum, helping to increase a region’s visibility and promote amenities attractive to small business and company development. For most music festivals, sustainability (e.g. recycling, waste management, energy conservation) has been a cornerstone of their planning and continues to expand and improve with each passing year. The Shakori Hills Grassroots Festival in Silk Hope offers a number of sustainable opportunities such as composting and recycling bins, the utilization of solar energy, access to locally grown foods, and a firm commitment to water conservation and preservation of the local woodlands. The success of the recycling initiative at the Mountain Song Festival in Brevard is attributed to dedicated volunteers as well as the cooperation of local food vendors who serve on compostable ware so that everything can be recycled or composted. In 2013, the festival recycled 80 percent of the total waste with its sights set for 100 percent recycling of food waste this year. For more information on greening events and festivals, click here, or contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-4296.

11. Tailgating parties can be sustainable

Football season is in full force drawing large numbers of fans to small college towns and large metropolitan cities all across the state. One of America’s favorite fall pastimes is to get together with friends and family to tailgate before the game. Whether at games or viewing parties, there are a number of ways to make tailgating festivities more sustainable. Hotels or event hosts should consider utilizing shuttle services for guests, which can greatly reduce the carbon footprint and alleviate the stress of game day traffic. Hotels or restaurants could host onsite tailgating parties for their guests, using biodegradable utensils, cups and plates so that they can be composted after use to reduce non-recyclable waste. If there is grilled food, use propane because it burns cleaner than charcoal or wood, making it the more environmentally-friendly cooking fuel choice. This is also the perfect chance to spotlight locally produced seasonal foods and beverages. Finally, make sure that waste receptacles at the tailgate party are labeled recycling, trash, composting, or reuse, to encourage the guests to make sustainable waste disposal decisions. For more information on sustainable tailgating, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-4296.
1. **ASHEVILLE’S DINING GROWS GREENER**

The achievement of Asheville becoming the first city to be designated a Green Dining Destination allows the city to build upon its culinary traditions and positions the city to take advantage of the continued popularity of sustainability in restaurants and travel. Asheville efforts also differ in that it takes advantage of branding the destination itself as green rather than only individual properties at the destination. From the federal government to the private sector, there is increasing attention being paid at hosting meetings and events in destinations that facilitate green meetings. And being a Green Dining Destination is one way to further a destination's position as a green travel and meetings destination. For more information on how to green your destination, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

2. **GREEN HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS AS THE NEW NORMAL**

It was not so long ago that a hotel or restaurant being built as a green property was seen as somewhat unusual. But in the five years since the Proximity Hotel in Greensboro was recognized as the first LEED Platinum Hotel in America by the U.S. Green Building Council, a growing number of hospitality properties from across the state have been built or renovated to meet green standards. Last year, Asheville, having 16 Certified Green Restaurants, was itself recognized as the first Certified Dining Destination; the Raleigh Convention Center installed an estimated 725,000-kilowatt solar system on its roof. There are now more than 60 tourism entities across the state that have been recognized by the NC GreenTravel program. And it seems the trend to go green in the hospitality industry will only continue to grow. McGraw Hill Construction reports owners of retail and hotel establishments are reporting growing levels of green building activity planned over the next two years, estimating that by 2015, 64 percent of hotel projects will be green. For tourism business owners interested in implementing green practices or implementing addition practices, there are a number of resources to help them get started. In addition to the resources available from NC GreenTravel, the NC Waste Reduction Partners currently offers a no-cost environmental assessment. The U.S. EPA, through its Energy Star for Hospitality program, provides free benchmarking tools. For more information on greening your property, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

3. **NC 10% CAMPAIGN PLEDGE**

In 2007, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, an arm of the N.C. Agricultural Cooperative Extension, established the NC 10% Campaign to promote North Carolina's local food economy. The NC 10% Campaign is a way for consumers and business owners to pledge to utilize 10 percent of their annual food budgets to purchase locally grown and harvested food resources. The NC 10% Campaign also provides detailed information on the availability of seasonal produce so that consumers are well aware of what food goods are available and when. The Campaign also keeps track of an individual's progress as well as the progress of the entire program throughout the state. Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about the origin of the foods they eat, and what better way to communicate an organization's commitment to sustainability than by participating in an initiative like the NC 10% Campaign? For more information on the NC 10% Campaign, click here, or contact Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

**Indoor Environments**

1. **TAKING CARE OF THE INDOOR ENVIRONMENT**

When most people think of environment management, they think of the world outside of buildings. But facility managers or property engineers might say indoor environmental quality is just as important as protecting the great outdoors. In fact, indoor environmental quality is so important, it accounts for almost 15 percent of the possible points of the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Existing Building certification. Indoor environmental quality can be impacted by a number of factors, including a building's central air and ventilation system, indoor contaminants such
as cleaning chemicals, mold and mildew, and cigarette smoke, and the amount of natural light. Addressing indoor environmental quality might have fewer initial cost savings compared to installing a new energy-saving lighting system, but according to one article, there are many benefits to investing in indoor environmental quality, ranging from improved staff morale and productivity to improved guest satisfaction. For more information on indoor environmental quality, visit the U.S. EPA’s indoor air quality for lodging, or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.

**Lighting**

1. **EFFICIENT HOLIDAY DECORATIONS**
   As the air starts to cool and the days get shorter, many tourism businesses have started putting up seasonal decorations. Although decorative lights are a wonderful way of sharing the holiday spirit with guests and customers, the decorations can result in inefficient energy usage if improperly managed. One easy way to reduce the energy consumption of decorative lights is to make sure they are set on timers so they are only on when needed. Another option is to use lights with LED bulbs rather than incandescent. Although more expensive, LEDs are more energy efficient, durable and have a longer life. If buying new LED lights, check that the product has a warranty to protect your investment. Seasonal LED lights are now available at many local and online retailers. For more information on seasonal LED lights, visit www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=dls.pr_dls. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. **SAVING WITH LIGHTS**
   During these economic times, many tourism businesses are looking for ways to cut back on costs while still providing the highest level of quality for their guests and customers. One of the easiest ways to reduce expenses is to invest in more energy efficient lighting. Before purchasing new light bulbs though, it is important to first research which lighting system is the best for each situation. In many situations, simply encouraging customers and staff to turn off lights when not needed, using appropriate signage and changing staff procedures can result in significant reduction in utility bills. If investing in new lighting technology is an option, it is important to remember not all light bulbs perform the same. Lights bulbs vary not only in how much light they emit, but also in the color light they emit, which can change what color objects and spaces appear to be. Different light bulbs also differ in where they can be most efficiently used. For example, compact florescent light can have difficulty in cold temperatures where LED light bulbs can perform quite well in extreme weather conditions. It is also important to develop a system of monitoring energy usage to ensure that the changes made are leading to real results. For more information on energy efficiency in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. **TURNING IT OFF**
   As the seasons change, smart tourism managers are once again evaluating their lighting policy to ensure that only necessary lights are used and turned on only when needed. The EPA estimates that lighting is responsible for 13 percent of the energy usage in commercial buildings and, while it is important to have lighting in essential areas to ensure customer and staff safety, leaving unnecessary lights on can lead to direct losses in your business’s bottom line. For example BlueMap Inc. estimates that a typical hotel that leaves its parking lot lights on just one hour longer than needed results in $250 a year wasted in unnecessary energy usage. Turning off or down unnecessary lighting can result in additional benefits as well. The EPA reported that when the Comfort Inn & Suites Boston turned overnight lighting in guest hallways down by 50 percent, not only did they increase their energy savings, but overnight staff received fewer noise complaints from guests. To learn more about how turning off unnecessary lights can help your tourism organization start saving energy and reduce operating costs, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
4. FINDING A BETTER LIGHT BULB

Energy efficient lighting has quickly become the practice of choice for tourism businesses looking to cut costs while maintaining a quality product. And for good reason – lighting is the second highest use of energy in hotels after heating & cooling, and the third highest in restaurants after heating & cooling and food preparation. Until recently the best options for many businesses were compact florescent light bulbs, but according to a recent New York Times article (www.nytimes.com/2009/05/30/science/earth/30degrees.html?ref=science), LED lighting might soon be the bulb of choice. LEDs are more energy efficient, work in a wider range of situations and can be dimmed. But, like with any investment choice, it is important to research what options are the best fit for each specific situation. More information regarding energy efficient lighting can be found at www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25979.pdf. For more information on energy efficiency in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

5. IS THERE A LIGHT BULB FOR ME?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, almost a quarter of a hotel’s electricity usage goes to lighting. In a typical restaurant, lights are on for as much 16 to 20 hours a day. Given how much lights are used at attractions and accommodations, it is important to choose light bulbs that are energy efficient and help keep operating costs low. But it is equally important to choose light bulbs that make guests feel comfortable, put them in the right mood and feel safe. To help pick the right light bulb for your situation, the EPA has developed a Small Business Guide to Lighting, which even offers information on decorative lighting. You can learn more about energy efficient lighting, by attending a free webinar on energy efficient lighting for the tourism industry. Register for the Dec. 8 webinar at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/392577289. For more information on the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252)737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

6. TIMERS, SETTINGS AND AUTOMATION FOR LIGHTING

Short days and the holiday season are the perfect mix for using more lights. And with everything that is going on this time of year, it can be easy to forget to turn the lights off when you leave, using more electricity and increasing utility bills. One option to help keep your operating costs down is to designate a member of your staff who is responsible for turning lights off. Another option is to use timers. There are all sorts of timers you can choose, from the very simple mechanical timers you can buy at any hardware store, to much more complex timers that are linked into an energy management system. If you use timers, it is important to remember to set them correctly and regularly check they are in working order. According to Green Lodging News, leaving your parking lot lights on just one hour too long in the morning and evening can lead to an increase of as much as $250 annually. You can learn more about energy efficient lighting by attending a free webinar on energy efficient lighting for the tourism industry. You can register for the Dec. 8 webinar at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/392577289. For more information on the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252)737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

7. USING ENERGY EFFICIENT “EXIT” SIGNS

A recent study conducted by the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU found that 38 percent of North Carolina tourism businesses surveyed still use inefficient incandescent exit signs. Although this is better than the results of the AH&LA Green Assessment Survey, which found nationwide 50.3 percent of hotels still use inefficient incandescent exit signs (www.ahla.com/green.aspx), the Center’s survey results would indicate that a significant number of tourism businesses are not taking advantage of potential cost savings that can be achieved by switching to LED exit signs. LED exit signs use significantly less energy and due to the longer life of the bulbs require less maintenance. Not only will using LED exit signs reduce operating costs, but can also reduce a business’s carbon footprint by as much as 500 lbs. a year per sign. For more information on switching to LED exit signs, visit www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/upload/LED-Exit-Signs-Tip-Sheet.pdf. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
8. ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHT BULBS CAN STILL BE INEFFICIENT

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 includes a number of measures intended to help the United States become more energy efficient. One of the major provisions in the act, according to an article in Green Lodging News, is incandescent light bulbs will be phased out starting in 2012. This will require accommodation and attraction owners and managers to use more energy efficient lighting throughout their property. But unless energy efficient lighting is used efficiently, they can still waste energy. One of the most common inefficient lighting blunders is when lights are left on when no one is using the space, but there are a number other common inefficient lighting oversights as well. Some examples include leaving exterior lighting on during the day, keeping the lights on in vending-machines when lighting is not needed, and not regularly cleaning fixtures. For more information on energy efficiency in tourism, visit www.sustainabetourism.org/RETI. You can also register for a free Sept. 2 webinar on energy management in tourism by visiting www1.gotomeeting.com/register/428016920. For more information on the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
9. LED LIGHTS TIME HAS COME

Until recently, when accommodations and attractions wanted to install energy efficient lighting to replace incandescent screw-in light bulbs, their best options were compact fluorescent bulbs. While compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are much more energy efficient than incandescent, they have a number of drawbacks. They don’t perform well in extreme temperatures and there is a short delay before they reach full brightness. Because of the ballasts, there are many situations, such as recessed lighting, where CFLs cannot be used. And although they are more environmentally preferable than incandescent bulbs, they still contain small amounts of mercury. LED light bulbs have existed for a number of years and have been used in a variety of locations, ranging from exit signs to holiday lighting, but early LEDs were too costly to replace incandescent bulbs. Recent improvements in technology have radically reduced the costs of LEDs by so much that many lighting experts expect LEDs to quickly become the bulb of choice. To learn about energy efficiency at meetings and events, register for an upcoming Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar or contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism, or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

10. LEADING WITH LED LIGHTING

While LED light bulbs are far from new technology and have long since replaced neon lights, until recently, they were limited to a few very specialized situations, such as exit signs or ornamental lighting. However, recent drastic improvements in both price and functionality have made their use for many hotels and restaurants a much more attractive option. In addition to being more energy efficient, LED bulbs also have a number of additional benefits over other energy saving bulbs, such as CFLs. Unlike CFL, LED bulbs contain no mercury, perform well in cold temperatures, are cool to the touch, which can reduce HVAC costs, and are less likely to break. The long life of the bulbs can also reduce maintenance costs, which can be particularly beneficial in hard-to-reach places. And new technology is making it even easier to control LED lighting in innovative and cost-saving ways. However, like any new technology or property upgrade, there are a number of things to keep in mind, such as understanding not only bulb costs but installation costs as well. For more information on energy efficient lighting in the tourism industry, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

11. SPREADING HOLIDAY GREENS

With the holiday season only weeks away, now is a great time to start thinking of ways to help keep energy costs from skyrocketing during the holiday season. One option that is becoming increasingly attractive is to use energy efficient decorative lighting, many of which are now more affordable than ever before due to improvements in LED lighting technology, which, in addition to consuming less energy, are less likely to be a fire hazard. The Energy Star program now recognizes energy efficient decorative lighting that consumes at least 65 percent less energy than conventional string lights as well as meeting specific quality standards. Using timers and photo cells for decorative lighting can also help make sure lights are only turned on when needed, reducing energy usage by as much as 75 percent compared to leaving lights on 24 hours a day. And while hanging holiday lighting, multi-task by inspecting the building for any possible air leaks that need attention. The holidays also are a natural time to partner with local non-profit organizations to identify opportunities for guests and visitors to give back during travel. While volunteering during meetings has becoming increasingly popular, there are many opportunities for leisure travelers to participate in philanthropic activities while traveling as well. And the winter season provides a wealth of environmental education opportunities, from stargazing under the clear winter sky to winter plant identification. For more ideas about how to be greener during the holiday season, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
12. LED LIGHTING AS A REAL OPTION

During the last couple of years, there have been dramatic functional and cost improvements to LED lighting that now position them as a viable option for tourism-related businesses. LEDs have long been the optimal choice for exit signs and holiday decorative lights, which in addition to being more energy efficient, require less maintenance and improve safety. However, until recently, white, warm-colored LED lighting for everyday use was too cost prohibitive and often had a color spectrum that was less appealing than incandescent. But recent improvements in LED lighting now make it an attractive option in a number of hospitality functions, ranging from outdoor lighting, walk-in coolers, to standard screw-base bulbs. The long life and durability of LEDs can greatly reduce replacement costs, particularly in situations where bulbs are difficult to access or are spread out across a large property. LED lighting is also an attractive option because of its ability to easily integrate in energy management systems, allowing for further improvements in lighting energy efficiency. Furthermore, since LED lights can be dimmed, change colors, be installed in a number of creative ways, and are more easily controlled, they can be used to help customize and set the mood in ways unimaginable only a few years ago, all while reducing the overall energy consumption. For more information about how to improve the energy efficiency of tourism-related business, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

NC GreenTravel

1. *NC GREENTRAVEL INITIATIVE WEBSITE UP AND RUNNING*

In October 2011, the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Tourism, launched the NC GreenTravel Initiative website. The website provides users with a wide range of resources, including information on the NC GreenTravel Recognition Program, North Carolina’s first and only statewide sustainable tourism recognition program. The recognition program currently has criteria for hotels, B&Bs, vacation rental properties, restaurants, and museums, with additional criteria currently under development. There is no cost to participate in the program but tourism properties are required to submit an application to the Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. All applications for currently available sectors are posted on the NC GreenTravel website. Once the forms have been submitted, they will be scored and evaluated, and properties that score high enough based on the implementation of various sustainable practices will be recognized as a One, Two or Three Dogwood Blossom property by the N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

2. *FIRST PROPERTIES RECOGNIZED BY NC GREEN TRAVEL*

Since the launch of the NC GreenTravel Recognition Program, a non-regulatory and voluntary program managed by the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Tourism, seven properties have submitted their application and have been recognized by the program. Old Edwards Inn and Spa in Highlands was the first property to be recognized by the program. Some of the sustainable practices adopted by Old Edwards Inn include energy efficiency, participation in the Global Soap Project, and energy assessment with the Waste Reduction Partners. There is no cost to participate in the NC GreenTravel Recognition Program and it is open to all hotels, B&Bs, vacation rental properties, restaurants, parks, ski resorts, and museums in North Carolina. Applications are currently being created for convention centers, airports, festivals, golf resorts, and many others. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

3. *WHY CERTIFICATION MATTERS*

The NC GreenTravel Recognition Program provides tourism-related businesses in North Carolina a no-cost, non-regulatory option to be recognized for their adoption of green practices. For many tourism businesses, being recognized by a green recognition program is one way to set their business apart from their competitors. Being
recognized by a program such as NC Green Travel as a green hotel, restaurant, or attraction is also a great way to validate their efforts to be green. As more and more tourism businesses claim to be green, participating in a program like NC GreenTravel is a great way to show visitors your property not only talks about being green, but has taken action to do so. And as noted by Mandi McKay of Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, during the last Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar, being green is an excellent recruiting tool. The NC GreenTravel program also provides a number of resources and tools to help implement additional sustainable practices. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

4. *PICKING UP NC GREEN TRAVEL POINTS AT NO COST*

The NC GreenTravel Recognition Program provides tourism-related businesses in North Carolina a no-cost, non-regulatory option to be recognized for their adoption of green practices. For many tourism businesses, being recognized by a green recognition program is one way to set their business apart from their competitors. Being recognized by a program such as NC Green Travel as a green hotel, restaurant, or attraction is also a great way to validate their efforts to be green. As more and more tourism businesses claim to be green, participating in a program like NC GreenTravel is a great way to show visitors your property not only talks about being green, but has taken action to do so. And as noted by Mandi McKay of Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, during the last Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar, being green is an excellent recruiting tool. The NC GreenTravel program also provides a number of resources and tools to help implement additional sustainable practices. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

5. *NC GREEN TRAVEL INITIATIVE RECOGNITION PROGRAM LAUNCHED*

The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach has recently launched its new NC GreenTravel Initiative. The website provides a wealth of resources on such topics as recycling, energy conservation, and on green meetings as well as contact information for additional green travel technical assistance. One of the key components of the new website is the guidelines to be recognized as a sustainable tourism business by the NC GreenTravel Initiative Recognition Program, North Carolina’s first statewide sustainable travel recognition program. Similar to comparable programs in other states, to participate, applicants complete a self-administered grading form, which is then returned to Tom Rhodes, the NC GreenTravel Initiative specialist. Tourism businesses will then receive a score based on the various sustainable practices they indicate they have implemented. There is no cost for North Carolina tourism businesses to participate in the three-tiered recognition program and it is currently open to all lodging, restaurants and parks across the state. Other tourism sectors will be added as the program grows. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative website or recognition program, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

6. *RECOGNITION PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW*

Grandfather Mountain in Linville being recognized as the first attraction to meet the NC GreenTravel criteria for recognition draws renewed attention to the program. The NC GreenTravel Initiative is a joint effort of the Division, N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU. It is designed to provide recognition for tourism businesses and organizations that have implemented green practices as well as provide technical support to implement more sustainable efforts. The NC GreenTravel recognition program requires attractions and accommodations to self-complete an application form. Once the application has been complete, it is reviewed and scored. If tourism businesses meet the necessary score to be recognized, they are awarded a One, Two or Three Dogwood rating based on how well they met the criteria. NC DENR has developed criteria for categories such as Lodging, Restaurants, Parks, Attractions, Museums, Camping, Rafting, and Nature Based, with additional criteria currently being developed. Tourism businesses that have been recognized by the program receive a window decal, a certificate indicating the level of recognition, and are listed on the NC GreenTravel website.
7. *MANY SHADES OF GREEN IN N.C. GREEN TOURISM INDUSTRY*

Sometime in the coming weeks, the number of businesses recognized by the NC GreenTravel program is expected to break 50; already the number is at 39. What makes this milestone all the more exciting is the diversity of tourism businesses recognized by the program. The NC GreenTravel Initiative was designed to provide support to the full range of businesses that make up N.C.’s travel industry - from the very large to the very small and across many different sectors. Additionally, with its three tiers of recognition, the program is intended to assist any tourism business interested in improving their environmental performance, including those that are just starting to think about greening their property. The NC GreenTravel program has a wealth of resources to assist tourism businesses in implementing sustainable practices, including resources on energy, composting, recycling, and water conservation. The NC GreenTravel team is also available to answer any questions about implementing sustainable practices as well as direct tourism businesses to additional resources such as the Waste Reduction Partners Hospitality Greening Assessment program and financial incentives for implementing energy efficiency. NC GreenTravel is also available for presentations to DMOs and their partners to further discuss the program and the benefits of sustainability. For more information on the NC GreenTravel program contact program manager Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

8. *ANSWERS TO YOUR GREEN QUESTIONS*

In addition to recognizing green attractions and accommodations, the NC GreenTravel Initiative offers a number of resources to assist tourism decision makers in adopting additional green practices. Resources include fact sheets, case studies, and links to additional organizations that can provide further assistance on a wide variety of areas, including water efficiency, recycling and energy conservation. The NC GreenTravel Initiative also provides a listserv with regular updates from across the state and the nation on new resources, trends and news about the greening of the tourism industry. One such example is the American Hotel & Lodging Association's newly published list of green guidelines. Each message from the listserv also includes links to tip sheets developed by NC GreenTravel partners. Tourism businesses are also highly encouraged to contact Tom Rhodes, NC GreenTravel Initiative Program Manager, at (919) 707-8140 with any questions about participating in the program or for technical assistance in energy management, water consumption or solid waste and recycling. Additional resources and assistance are provided by NC GreenTravel partners Waste Reduction Partners and the Center for Sustainable Tourism. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative, contact Rhodes or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

9. *CREATING VALUE THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY*

With the start of a new year, the NC GreenTravel program continues to grow and develop. There are now 45 tourism businesses from the mountains to the coast that have been recognized by the program, with many more applications to review. The Jacksonville area continues to have the largest number of recognized lodging establishments, all of which were recognized during the recent Onslow County Tourism's Arties Award Luncheon. The Asheville area, in part due to its success in becoming the first Green Dining Destination by the Green Restaurant Association, has the most recognized dining establishments. In the past year, the NC GreenTravel program has recognized Grandfather Mountain, the first state attraction to be recognized by the program; the Proximity Hotel, one of the greenest hotels in the nation; and Cape Hatteras Bed and Breakfast, the first business NC GreenTravel-recognized accommodation along the Outer Banks. And the NC GreenTravel team, which includes the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, Waste Reduction Partners, the Center for Sustainable Tourism, and the N.C. Division of Tourism, anticipates developing additional recognition criteria, tip-sheets and other resources to expand the program even further in the new year. For more information about the future of the NC GreenTravel program or to become recognized by the program, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
10. *NC GREEN TRAVEL REACHES MILESTONE 50 MEMBERS, SEEKS ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS*

The NC GreenTravel Initiative has reached a milestone in the program's continuing success story, and the program is actively seeking additional participants. With the addition of six new businesses, there are now 50 recognized NC GreenTravel members. Here are the newest listings are Native Kitchen and Social Pub in Swannanoa, Hampton Inn in Hendersonville, Pittsboro Roadhouse & General Store in Pittsboro, Comfort Suites in Jacksonville, New River State Park in Laurel Springs, and Plant Vegan Restaurant in Asheville. All the listings for Lodging, Dining and Attractions and map markers can be found online here.

11. *JOINING THE GREEN CLUB*

It is not news that a growing number of hotels, restaurants and attractions are implementing sustainable practices. But what is news is that many tourism businesses are increasingly working together to be greener. The Asheville Independent Restaurant Association recently partnered with the Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute to become a Green Dining Destination, working with the Green Restaurant Association. The Charlotte Green Team brings together a wide range of businesses to further the sustainability of the city. With meeting and event planners increasingly paying attention to the green practices of their events, according to a forecast by American Express Meetings & Events, communities that can offer a wider variety of green properties are well positioned to be more attractive destinations. By working together, tourism businesses can learn from each other, establish better terms with vendors, and generate local enthusiasm for the project. The NC GreenTravel Initiative is North Carolina's first statewide sustainable tourism recognition program and provides destinations with an established platform to further sustainability at attractions and accommodations. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

12. *CONTINUED GREEN GROWTH AND PROGRESS IN N.C.*

There are now 63 tourism businesses and organizations recognized by the NC GreenTravel program, including four state parks, a brewery, an aquarium, a mountain, a science museum, 34 lodging properties, and 21 restaurants. Recognized properties cover the entire state, from the Outer Banks, to the Mountains, and throughout the Piedmont. Recently, NC GreenTravel has been working with TripAdvisor to help bring attention to the GreenLeader program, which has received 48 applications for recognition. All of this success is in addition to previous sustainable travel successes in the state, including Asheville's Green Dining Destination, the Proximity Hotel's recognition as the first LEED Platinum hotel, the 140 restaurants participating in the 10 Percent campaign, and the green efforts at the Charlotte and Raleigh convention centers. And with the majority of travelers looking for greener places to stay and visit, North Carolina is well positioned to meet the demand. To learn more about how your property can join the growing number of recognized green tourism related business, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

13. *NC GREEN TRAVEL CELEBRATES SECOND ANNIVERSARY*

This fall, NC GreenTravel celebrates its second anniversary. In the short time since this non-regulatory program was launched, there have been more than 80 tourism businesses and organizations from across the state that have been recognized for their adoption of green practices. The NC GreenTravel Initiative, led by the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Tourism, Waste Reduction Partners and the N.C. Division of Tourism, continues to focus on providing tourism businesses with practical and cost-effective solutions that can help reduce operating costs, attract green-minded travelers and improve environmental performance. NC GreenTravel achieves these goals through its recognition program and the growing number of pollution prevention technical assistance resources. To be recognized by the program, tourism businesses complete a sector specific application, which can be downloaded from the NC GreenTravel website. Once applications have been completed, they are submitted to NC GreenTravel, which reviews and provides a score. The scores are then used to determine if the application meets the criteria to be recognized by the program and, if so, at what level. If applicants do not meet the score needed to be recognized by the program, Division of Environmental
Assistance and Customer Service and the Waste Reduction Partners staff are available to provide technical assistance in implementing additional green practices so that the applicant can meet the standards to be recognized. For more on how to be recognized by NC GreenTravel as a green attraction or accommodation, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

14. **FORECASTING THE YEAR AHEAD FOR GREEN TRAVEL**

It is that time of year again when tourism industry experts start predicting what will be the hottest trends for the New Year. As in many years past, sustainability continues to be featured prominently. However, there are a number of significant changes from how it is mentioned from years past. As one example, sustainability has gotten much more nuanced, which can be seen in the top culinary trends identified by the National Restaurant Association. The NRA's trend list is topped by locally sourced meats and seafood, followed by locally grown produce and environmental sustainability, which indicates that customers now understand the difference between issues of sustainability that previously may have been lumped together. Another big change, as noted by Kendall College in Chicago's top hospitality trends forecast, is that sustainability has transitioned from being new and innovative, now to standard practice. Technology will also play a critical role in future sustainability trends. Condé Nest Traveler compiled its own Hot List last April using industry experts. One expert noted lighting in regard to hotel architecture will be increasingly important, particularly as baby boomers get older, so expect to see an increase in the use of LED lighting. With LED lighting prices dropping and the increased ability to control them, more tourism businesses are sure to continue experimenting. And there are predicted changes in how visitors interact with the travel destinations. The IMEX 2014 top meeting trends predicts meeting attendees will spend more effort helping locals through volunteerism. For more insight on the changing nature of sustainability in tourism in the New Year, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346. Learn more about recycling "on the go" in North Carolina by visiting Recycle More NC and U.S. EPA's Recycle on the Go.

15. **WHO WILL BE NUMBER 100?**

Currently, there are 89 tourism businesses recognized for implementing green practices by the NC GreenTravel program, with two additional applications currently being completed. The current list of recognized businesses includes 11 attractions, 14 state parks, 40 hotels, 22 restaurants, and two festivals from across the state. In the past year, 43 tourism-oriented businesses were recognized, including Chimney Rock State Park, the North Carolina Zoological Park, and the I-26 Welcome Center in Mars Hill. And the destination with the largest number of recognized properties is Jacksonville, with 10, although Asheville is close behind with 9. The NC GreenTravel program has also developed new sector-specific criteria for festivals & events and meeting & convention centers. During the next year, expect NC GreenTravel to continue to grow, helping tourism businesses from across the state improve their environmental performance while reduce operating costs and attracting the growing number of green-minded travelers. Additionally, expect new sector-specific criteria to be developed and launched. But which property will be the 100th recognized property is still unknown. Looking at the map of recognized properties, there are a number of holes where there are no recognized businesses, and no meeting or conference center has yet been recognized. If you would like to join the growing number of tourism businesses recognized by the NC GreenTravel program, and possibly be the 100th recognized business, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

16. **CONNECTING WITH NC GREENTRAVEL AT GOVERNOR’S CONFERENCE**

The N.C. Governor's Conference on Tourism is a great opportunity to learn about new industry trends and to connect with industry colleagues. It is also a great opportunity to learn more about the NC GreenTravel program and
find out how the program may benefit a business or organization. Tom Rhodes, NC GreenTravel program manager with the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service and Alex Naar, director of outreach at the ECU Center of Sustainability, will both be on hand to discuss the program. They will also bring with them program applications so conference attendees will have the opportunity to join the close to 100 tourism businesses already recognized. The pair will also have with them a number of additional resources to help tourism businesses identify new opportunities to improve their energy and water conservation, and waste reduction efforts. Attendees can also learn more about having a no-cost "Green Assessments" from the N.C. Waste Reduction Partners, as well as learn about additional programs, such as the Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant program, plus recent research on the greening of coastal vacation rentals. For more information about NC GreenTravel or to set up a time to meet during the conference, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

17. BENEFITS OF GREEN CERTIFICATION

For the large majority of attractions and accommodations, the question is no longer if they should adopt green practices, but how well are the green practices they have already adopted performing? To answer this question, there are a number of strategies that can be implemented. One option is to compare environmental performance after a green practice is implemented to before the green practice was implemented. If this strategy is used, it is important to use comparable measures. For example, comparing electricity usage in the summer, when air conditioners are running, to electricity usage in the spring or fall may not provide much information on the benefits of sealing your building envelope. It is also important to consider what other factors may have impacted an environmental performance, such as occupancy, abnormal weather or new regulatory requirements. Another option is to see if the environmental efforts are working is to compare benchmarks to comparable properties. The Energy Star program provides a robust tool, called the Portfolio Manager, that allows for easy comparison of comparable buildings, as well as track historic energy and water consumption. A third way to measure your success is to measure guests' awareness of what green practices are in place. Regardless of how green success is measured, the important part is to begin collecting data from which to compare. For assistance on developing benchmarks to measure your success, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

Pollution

1. IDLING DIESEL ENGINES POSE HEALTH, ECONOMICAL RISKS

Diesel exhaust from tour buses, shuttles and delivery trucks contains significant levels of particles, known as fine particulate matter, which can pose a significant health risk because they can pass through the nose and throat and then lodge in the lungs. Particulate matter is responsible for lung damage and thousands of premature deaths across the nation every year. Exhaust from vehicles can also enter buildings through air intakes, doors and open windows. Diesel exhaust also contains pollutants that contribute to ozone formation, haze, acid rain, and global climate change. Idling vehicles waste fuel and money, and when idling, a diesel engine burns about half a gallon of fuel per hour. There are simple tips on how to introduce an idle reduction policy at a facility. Vehicles should typically be moving whenever the engine is on. Engines should be turned off as soon as possible after arriving at loading or unloading areas. Vehicles should not be restarted until ready to depart. Limit idling time during early cold morning warm-up to what the manufacturer recommends (generally no more than five minutes). Train drivers to understand and follow the idle reduction policy. Provide a comfortable space inside where drivers can wait. Spot-check loading and unloading areas and delivery areas for compliance with the idling guidelines. For more information, visit the EPA's website for its National Clean Diesel Campaign; suggestions are available for the Idle Reduction Campaign. For more information, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-4296.
Recycling

1. RECYCLING, THE TYPICAL STARTING POINT
Recycling is often the first practice that comes to mind when travelers think about sustainable tourism. But as anyone who has tried to implement a recycling program can tell you, successfully recycling is much more difficult than just setting out some recycling bins. Unlike many sustainable practices, such as energy efficient lighting or water-saving plumbing fixtures that just require equipment installation, recycling requires the participation of guests and staff in addition to having recycling bins. If guests throw trash in the recycling bins and recyclables in the trash bins, waste reduction efforts will be quite limited. There are a number of strategies that can be implemented that will greatly improve the chances of guests and visitors recycling correctly. For example, ensuring staff are provided training on recycling will greatly enhance the success of a program. Using recycling bins that are noticeably different than trashcans, either through different colors or different lids will also help reduce confusion. There are a number of resources to help successfully implement a recycling program, such as Event and Venue Recycling, Recycle on the Go and the Waste Reduction Resource Center. For more help developing a successful recycling program, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

2. THE CHALLENGES OF RECYCLING
Despite having a simple message, many recycling programs can be confusing and difficult for recyclers to understand. What plastic is recyclable, can empty pizza boxes be recycled, and does green glass have to be separated from clear glass? These common questions can lead would-be recyclers straight to the trash bins. The best way to encourage recycling is to make it simple and easy for customers, guests and staff to follow. Consider using bins fitted with specialized slots designated for proper material or developing materials to help inform customers and staff about your recycling program. It is also helpful to monitor your recycling program to ensure it is working properly. For more information on creating a successful recycle program, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00420.pdf, or get in touch with your local waste reduction contact (a county-by-county database can be found at www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp?choice3=Counties). For more information on tourism pollution prevention, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. GETTING YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM INTO SHAPE
According to a survey conducted by TripAdvisor.com, almost three quarters of travelers believe having a recycling program is the most important green hotel practice (www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i235-c1-Press_Releases.html). To meet this demand, many tourism businesses have started a recycling program at their property only to find one of the biggest recycling challenges is getting patrons and staff to properly dispose of recyclables. After placing proper signage, there are a number of additional simple actions that can be taken to help increase recycling success.
1. Use materials that can be recycled. It will be difficult to reduce your waste if you use products in your own operation that cannot be recycled.
2. Place recycling bins and trash bins together. When people see a recycling bin alone they tend think it is a trash can.
3. Make sure your staff is well informed of your recycling policy and that it participates. There are few things customers dislike more than being told an organization is going green to later see a staff member throwing a recyclable in the trash.

For more information on developing a recycling program, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/49/48995.pdf or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
4. WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED

In almost every consumer research study on sustainable tourism, recycling is consistently the most popular green practice which visitors report they expect to see at attractions and accommodations. In PGAV Destination’s “Survival of the Greenest” study, researchers found 87.9 percent of travelers expect to see recycling bins at green attractions. But do you and your staff know what your local recycling hauler will collect? For example, in many communities where paper and cardboard are collected for recycling, pizza boxes and phone books are not accepted. It is important to remember that just because a product has a recycling symbol on the packaging that does not mean a recycler picks it up. The best way to find out what can be collected by your recycling vendor is to contact them directly. If you do not know who your recycling hauler is, or would like to find one, you can contact your local waste reduction specialist, which can be found by visiting www.p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html. For more information on recycling at tourism attractions and accommodations, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

5. RECYCLING AT WORK

Recycling is a basic part of any efforts to reduce a business’ environmental impact, but despite the fact that many tourism professionals recycle at their home, some fail to continue their recycling efforts at work. Much of the time, the lack of recycling occurs due to a lack of knowledge and resources. So to assist North Carolina businesses interested in recycling, the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (NC DPPEA) has developed a Recycling Business Assistance Center, which includes a recycling markets directory at www.p2pays.org/DMRM/start.aspx as well as a business to business waste trader at www.ncwastetrader.org. You can also find local recycling contacts at www.p2pays.org/localgov/PAYT/ncwaste.asp and information on electronics recycling at www.p2pays.org/electronics/business.asp. For further information on recycling at tourism related businesses, contact Alex Naar of ECU’s Center for Sustainable Tourism at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com, or Tom Rhodes at NC DPPEA at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov.

6. AS IF RECYCLING MATTERS

When most people think about going green, the first thing that comes to mind is recycling. Research from PGAV Destination Consulting shows that recycling bins are the best example travelers consider of an attraction’s environmental commitment. And not having a recycling program can result in some strong emotions as one hotel found. According to the Recycling Business Assistance Center, recycling is also good for North Carolina’s economy. Travelers, particularly event planners, are becoming more knowledgeable about waste reduction and are asking questions about where the recyclables go. So it is important that if there is a recycling program, it goes beyond just putting a few recycling bins in a lobby. For assistance, in implementing a recycling program at an attraction or accommodation, contact the local waste reduction contact or Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on recycling, visit U.S. EPA Recycling on the Go, N.C. DPPEA Event and Venue Recycling or Partnership for Bar & Restaurant Recycling. The National Restaurant Association’s recent report on recycling is downloadable. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

7. OYSTER SHELL RECYCLING

Although it’s now at the end of oyster season, many of this year’s shucked oysters will live on to help produce more oysters for North Carolina. The North Carolina Oyster Shell Recycling program (www.ncdmf.net/shellfish/recycle1.htm) collects oyster shells from events and businesses and places them back in the coastal water. The most productive place to grow oysters is on other oyster shells. By using used oyster shells to build oyster reefs, it helps create the ideal oyster home. Over 50 restaurants from across the state participate in the program, diverting what would normally be thrown away to help keep the coast’s water cleaner and producing more oysters. For information on participating in the program, contact Sabrina Varnam of the N.C. Division of Marin
Fisheries at (252) 726-7021 or via Sabrina.Varnam@ncmail.net. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

8. COMMUNITY WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

Preliminary data collected as part of the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Visitor Profile Study indicates more than 85 percent of visitors who completed the survey feel it is important that travel destinations make an effort to reduce waste and recycle, with more than 40 percent reporting that they feel it is extremely important. The 2013 Meetings Focus Trends Survey found that nearly 55 percent of meeting planners have integrated recycling into their programs. This mirrors the findings of other research, such as the results from Environmental Industry Associations recycling survey. A key finding from that study is that, while 82 percent of Americans feel a sense of pride when they recycle, only 22 percent say they have success recycling while traveling, with a lack of recycling options being a major deterrent. For many communities though, the cost of implementing programs can make it difficult to facilitate "on the go" recycling. However, the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) has recently announced the opening of the 2014 Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Round - open to local governments interested in developing lasting capacity to divert materials from the waste stream and/or increase public awareness of recycling. For more information about recycling at tourism destinations or the 2014 Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Round, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346. Learn more about recycling "on the go" in North Carolina by visiting Recycle More NC and U.S. EPA's Recycle on the Go.

9. VENUE AND EVENT RECYCLING

Starting Oct. 1, in accordance with N.C. House Bill 1465 of the 2005 Session, plastic bottles will be banned from disposal at N.C. landfills. Although plastic bottles only make up a small part of residential waste, they make up a significantly higher percentage of waste at tourism businesses and events. Implementing a recycling program is not only important because of the new plastics disposal ban but, according to a study by PGAV (http://www.pgav.com/images/Destin%2012-08.pdf), recycling is becoming increasingly important to potential guests and visitors. The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance have developed a number of resources to help your business implement a successful recycling program. These include the Partnership for Bar & Restaurant Recycling (www.partnership4recycling.org), The Green Plan for Hotels (www.p2pays.org/hospitality), and Event and Venue Recycling (www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling). To contact your local recycling coordinator for information on how to get involved, where to recycle or information on other services offered in your area, visit http://p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html. For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

10. RECYCLING AT EVENTS

Setting up special event and venue recycling is an important part of the recycling cycle. Many tons of recyclable materials are lost each year as a result of poor or nonexistent event and venue recycling programs. Recycling at indoor or outdoor sports arenas, stadiums, concert venues and civic centers can be challenging. Not to mention those outdoor special events held each year in communities, such as holiday day events, festivals, fairs, races, etc. But with the plastic bottle disposal ban, it is even more important that this material is removed from the waste stream. The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach has a website designed to help set up special event and venue recycling. In addition, many cities, such as Raleigh, offer assistance to event organizers regarding recycling at events. To learn more about making festivals and events greener, download a Greening Festivals and Events tip sheet. For more information, visit NC GreenTravel, or Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
Coca-Cola Recycling is educating consumers all over North America about recycling and encouraging attendees at large-scale events, such as the Coca-Cola 600 race at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord last month, to recycle their empty bottles and cans. Watch a YouTube video about the program [here](#). As part of the program, Coca-Cola provided a portable processing center after the Coca-Cola 600 race.

11. RECYCLING ON THE GO

For most people, recycling at home has become second nature. However, recycling while not at home is still a challenge for many people. The problem for many potential "recyclers on the go" is often a lack of access to convenient recycling. To help address this issue, a number of resources have been developed to help businesses and organizations make it easier for people to recycle while away from home. For example, the U.S. EPA [Recycling on the Go](#) provides a number of resources for convention centers, parks, shopping centers, special events, stadiums, and transportation hubs. Recycle More NC has also developed resources to help recycle on the go. These include steps on developing a recycling program, information about purchasing recycling bins, links to local government recycling offices, and case studies of successful models of recycling on the go at places across North Carolina. With 34 percent of festival attendees reporting they were definitely more likely to attend a festival or event that has implemented a recycling program, venues and festivals have a real incentive to help their attendees recycle, according to study by the Center for Sustainable Tourism. For more information on how you can enhance recycling on the go at your event or venue, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

12. *DON'T HAVE RECYCLING BINS? THERE'S HELP FOR THAT*

A common problem for tourism businesses and events looking to develop a recycling program is identifying resources to purchase recycling bins. To help with this task, the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach has developed a list of recycling bin suppliers. There are also a number of resources to help identify low to no cost recycling bins, such as the Coca-Cola Foundation Keep American Beautiful Bin Grant Program’s [Public Space Grant](#). Recycling waste haulers as well as beverage distributors are also excellent resources to ask about obtaining recycling bins as they often have access to discounted recycling bins and may know of other organizations that are switching out their bins or upgrading. For events that will only need recycling bins for a limited amount of time, a number of local waste reduction programs, such as the Raleigh's [Event Recycling program](#), will lend event organizers recycling bins. In addition to providing technical assistance on developing recycling programs, the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach offers several grant programs such as the [Community Waste Reduction and Recycling grant program](#) for local governments. For more information regarding securing recycling bins at tourism-related businesses and events, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

13. GLASS VS ALUMINUM RECYCLING

During the past decade, North Carolina has established itself as a forerunner of the microbrewing revolution in America. Numerous microbreweries have been established throughout the state and larger macrobrewers have chosen to expand their operations in North Carolina. Recently a debate has surfaced within the brewing industry that seeks to establish whether aluminum cans or glass bottles are more sustainable for the environment. In evaluating the environmental impact of cans versus bottles, there are numerous factors to be considered, including raw material sourcing, processing methods, recycling rates, and the distance of the brewery to the distribution point. Aluminum is a lighter material than glass, which makes for a smaller carbon footprint in the transportation process. Aluminum is also more likely to be recycled than glass. However, aluminum is made from bauxite, which requires substantial mining efforts that require significant energy consumption to extract. Glass bottles are actually more sustainable if the entire life cycle of aluminum, including the extraction of raw materials and energy required in producing them, is taken into account. Bottles are made from silica which is easier to extract and is a more abundant resource. Glass processing also has lower overall greenhouse gas emission rates. The best way to appreciate a craft beer sustainably is to enjoy a draught brew out of a reusable glass at your favorite local bar or
restaurant. Another way is to ensure that the bottle or can is recycled after you have finished enjoying your North Carolina beer. For more information on recycling programs in North Carolina, contact Recycle More NC, or contact Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

14. RECYCLING HELPS ALL AROUND
Recycling is an easy way to reduce waste, increase energy efficiency and limit the consumption of natural resources. Although many tourism operations in North Carolina already have established recycling programs, there is always room for improvement. There are a few simple ways to make recycling programs at a facility more efficient. By reducing the amount consumed and shifting to well-designed products and services, one can limit the amount of waste produced and limit the cost of replacing the product. Know the recycling rules of the respective area and make sure that materials sent can't be processed. Buy recycled products; the core of recycling is the recurrent movement of materials through the system which eliminates waste and the need to extract raw materials. See if there's a local artist who is interested in making art from recycled materials, and then offer to provide them with such supplies. Electronics recycling is becoming more common in many areas, and there are organizations that will take electronic equipment for repurposing. Battery recycling programs are abundant, too. For purchases that have packaging, think about how the packaging can be reused - can it be returned for reuse or recycled? Many charities welcome donations of items that are no longer used, and there are programs like the N.C. Recycling Markets Directory that can help businesses and individuals get rid of reusable objects. To better understand the kind of materials that enter and leave a tourism facility, consider conducting a waste audit by accessing different kinds of material flows, and then design a material recovery program that minimizes the amount going to the landfill. For more information on recycling, contact Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

Renewable Energy

1. THE COSTS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
One reason tourism organizations are weary of using renewable energy is because of additional costs it might entail. Although most sources of renewable energy still have a higher initial cost, their prices are quickly dropping. Solar energy, for example, has seen a 55 percent reduction in price over the last three years, while commercial energy prices in general have risen. Secondly, the largest cost of a renewable energy system is the initial installation. However, after a certain amount of usage, a renewable energy system will not only cover its cost of installation but result in avoided energy costs. This is unlike traditional sources of energy that continue to have input costs even after the energy plant has paid for itself. The North Carolina Solar Center (www.ncsc.ncsu.edu) has developed a number of calculators that can help you determine a renewable energy system's payback period. To find a local renewable energy professional visit www.greenprofessionals.org. For more information on renewable energy in tourism visit www.renewabletourism.com, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. ENERGY FROM THE SUN
Many tourism businesses rely indirectly on the sun to power their business. The heat of the summer sun helps drive travelers to seek refuge along the coast, in the mountains or in the cooler climate of the countryside. But the sun’s energy can also power a tourism business directly. Through the use of existing and available technologies, a tourism business can relatively easily use the sun’s energy to heat water and convert its rays into electricity. Unlike traditional sources of power, the sun’s energy is provided free of charge. The main cost of solar energy is the installation of the system used to trap and convert solar energy to a usable form. After the system is installed, aside
from minor maintenance costs, solar energy will be provided free of charge. You can learn about the dollars and cents of renewable energy for accommodations and attractions during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar on May 20. For more information on attending the webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148 or via GCZ0123@ecu.edu. And for more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/RETI/About.cfm, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. TOURISM AND RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS
When you visit the N.C. Zoological Park in Asheboro, not only do you have the opportunity to see animals, but you also can see one of the largest solar energy projects in the state. The Zoo’s Solar Pointe is a 104 kilowatt, 9,600 square-foot grid-tied, photovoltaic solar system mounted on three picnic pavilions. Developed as a partnership between the NC Zoo and Carolina Solar Energy, the park’s solar panels produce enough electricity to power 13 average homes. The project is a great example of the sometimes complex but necessary partnerships needed to make renewable energy projects at tourism attractions work. The Solar Pavilion project took a partnership between the Zoo, Carolina Solar Energy, Randolph Electrics Membership Corporation, and NC Green Power. You can learn more about renewable energy projects at tourism attractions from Richard Harkrader, CEO and founder of Carolina Solar Energy, during a free Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar on Feb. 14. To learn more about attending the free webinar, or on renewable energy and energy efficient utility programs, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148. And for more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

4. WHERE DOES RENEWABLE ENERGY GO?
One of the major limitations of renewable energy, like solar and wind, is it is not always available at the same time as when energy is needed. Many early renewable energy systems addressed this problem by building complex battery systems. The batteries would store excess energy that was produced when the wind was blowing and the sun was shining for later use. But there are a number of challenges in using batteries, including cost. Now a number of renewable energy systems are tied to the grid. This means when the wind turbine or solar panel produces excess electricity, that energy is sold to the power company and is integrated into the existing electricity grid. So when the consumer needs electricity when the sun is not shining, they are able to pull electricity from the grid. There are a number of different models and purchasers of renewable energy and how to sell excess electricity depends on the regulations in a community. In North Carolina, NC GreenPower contracts with renewable energy generators to purchase excess renewable energy as well as sells renewable energy credits. Learn how renewable energy is sold back on the grid during a free Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar on Feb. 14. To learn more about attending the free webinar, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

5. REBATE AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS
It is well known that becoming more energy efficient can provide a number of benefits. It can help attract green-minded travelers, improve the comfort, aesthetic appeal and, in some cases, safety of a restaurant or hotel; and most importantly, being more energy efficient can help reduce operating costs. But there are a number of barriers managers and owners face when they start to consider upgrading existing systems to more energy efficient ones. One of the biggest challenges can be identifying upfront cash. To help address this problem, there are a number of incentive and rebate programs that are available. One of the best sources is DSIRE. Your local utility provider may also have additional programs, which you can learn more about by visiting their website or contacting them directly. To learn more about energy efficiency in the tourism industry, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative. To learn more about attending the free Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar on Feb. 14 on renewable energy and energy efficient utility programs, contact Garrett Ziegler at (252) 737-2148. And for more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
6. WINERIES MAKING LIKE A GRAPEVINE

Grapes, like all other plants, convert energy from the sun’s rays. And a number of wineries are also taking advantage of the sun’s energy to produce power. Solar energy and grape growing seem to go hand-in-hand for many wineries, ranging from the very large to boutique operations. The need for hot water has led many wineries to install solar hot water systems. Other wineries are using the sun’s energy to produce electricity. Electricity produced by the sun at wineries is being used for everything from powering insect traps to charging electric vehicles. And wineries are not the only beverage producer using renewable energy. Breweries are also using solar energy. Learn more about renewable energy at wineries and breweries during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Jan. 24 free webinar. To register, click here. For more information on the webinar, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit the Renewable Energy in Tourism Initiative.

7. IS SOLAR ENERGY RIGHT FOR YOU?

Solar energy is far from a new energy source, but for many attractions and accommodations it remains a mystery. While each property is different, Joanna Malcolm, communications director for FLS Energy, provided some generic answers to many of these questions during a May 20, 2010 Renewable Energy in Tourism webinar. During that webinar, Malcolm suggested simply contacting a commercial solar installation firm with experience in the tourism industry. A list of N.C. green professionals, including solar energy firms, can be found at the Directory of Renewable Energy Professionals, many of whom post current and past projects on their website. And like with any new strategy, it is always helpful to ask other attractions and accommodations that are already using solar energy how pleased they are with the technology or how they would have done it differently. Green Lodging news has put together a list of hotels using solar energy. The N.C. Energy Division, N.C. Solar Center, N.C. Sustainable Energy Association, and NC GreenPower are also available to help you find answers about solar energy and if it is right for your business. For more information about renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism, or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

8. THE CHALLENGES OF CARBON OFFSETS

One of the biggest sustainability challenges facing the travel and tourism industry is its large carbon footprint. The UNWTO estimates the tourism industry is responsible for 5 percent of CO2 emissions, an issue of growing concern for travelers, meeting planners and tourism professionals. To address this problem, many tourism businesses and organizations have started to better understand their carbon footprint, finding fun and innovative ways, such as riding bikes for electricity, to reduce their energy consumption and offsetting any carbon emissions that cannot be eliminated through efficiency or conservation measures. However, understanding carbon offsets can be difficult to understand for both visitor and business alike, and there is still a lot of debate about carbon offsetting. To help deal with many of these questions, NC GreenPower has developed a number of tools to help event tourism businesses better understand how to reduce their carbon footprint, and the footprint of their guests and visitors. Learn more about carbon offsets and the tools offered by NC GreenPower, by registering for a free webinar on Sept. 10. For more information about NC GreenPower and carbon offset options for the tourism industry, contact Katie Shepherd at (919) 716-6398. For more information about carbon footprints and the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

9. HOT AIR AND COOLING COSTS

It is that time of year again when the familiar hum of air conditioners can be heard across the state, leading to higher utility bills. But before the heat of summer sets in, there are a number of things you can do to help reduce summer utility bills. The first is to check that your cooling equipment is working at peak performance. Poorly performing motors, corroded condenser coils or dirty filters can lead to higher energy bills. An inspection of your building envelope and duct work will also help identify potential problems that will lead to higher utility bills. It is also important to check that all thermostats are working correctly and programmable thermostats have the proper
settings. Careful planning and rearranging work schedules can also help reduce cooling costs. By scheduling work that produces large amounts of heat, such as drying laundry or using ovens, to cooler parts of the day will help keep your buildings cooler. It is also important to make sure that equipment that emits heat, such as range tops and ovens, are only turned on when they are in use. The same goes for ventilation, which can suck cool indoor air out of your building. Using energy efficient lighting, particularly in confined spaces where lots of light is needed, such as kitchens and galleries, can also help keep indoor space cooler because many inefficient light bulbs radiate significant amounts of heat in addition to light. For assistance on assessing your cooling efficiency and to schedule a Greening Assessment for the Hospitality Sector, contact Russ Jordan with Waste Reduction Partners. You can also find a database of energy efficiency experts to help keep cool this summer at the N.C. Directory of Renewable Energy Professionals. And for more information on energy efficiency in the tourism industry, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

Supporting Locals

1. **GOING GREEN BY GOING LOCAL**

With the growing season well on its way, farmers markets across the state are filling up not only with melons and tomatoes, but also with a growing number of customers interested in eating local. Besides the many social benefits of eating local, there are a number of environmental reasons for serving locally grown agricultural products at your tourism businesses. Local food requires less transportation, which results in less CO2 emissions. And eating local helps support the conservation of farmlands and open space. But unlike organic, there is no federal designation for locally grown products. If your business claims to serve locally grown products, it is important to share with customers which products are sourced locally and where they are from. For more information on local agriculture in North Carolina, visit [http://ncsustainablefood.wordpress.com/](http://ncsustainablefood.wordpress.com/). To find locally grown products, contact the N.C. Dept. of Agriculture Marketing Division ([www.agr.state.nc.us/markets/](http://www.agr.state.nc.us/markets/)) or your local Cooperative Extension Agent ([www.ces.ncsu.edu](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu)). For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at [tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov), or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via [anaar@nccommerce.com](mailto:anaar@nccommerce.com).

2. **INCORPORATING THE LOCAL AGRICULTURE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

One of the many reasons that visitors travel to North Carolina is because of its natural and scenic landscapes. One of the best opportunities visitors have to interact directly with the land is through local agriculture. Preserving and supporting local agriculture has many environmental benefits and is becoming an increasingly popular tourism activity. There are many opportunities to incorporate agriculture as part of your attraction or accommodation. Restaurants can complement dishes with local produce or meats. Hotels and B&Bs can partner with local farmers to offer farm tours or cooking classes with vegetables guests pick themselves. Historical sites can educate visitors about historical agriculture with small on-site gardens. A list of North Carolina farmer’s markets can be found at [www.ncfarmfresh.com](http://www.ncfarmfresh.com) and a document of what is in season can be found at [http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/availabilitychart.pdf](http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/availabilitychart.pdf). For more information on agritourism opportunities, visit [www.ncagr.gov/markets/agritourism/](http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/agritourism/). For more information on local agriculture, visit [http://greenleaf.uncg.edu](http://greenleaf.uncg.edu), [www.carolinafarmstewards.org](http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org) and [www.cefs.ncsu.edu](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu).

3. **LOCALIZING YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN**

The farm-to-table movement is increasing its position within the tourism industry. The National Restaurant Association’s What’s Hot in 2011 survey once again put locally sourced food as the hottest trends of the upcoming year. Many North Carolina restaurants are seeing the benefits of using locally grown products. In addition, the Best Dish in N.C. competition, which just announced its finalists, continues to gain in popularity. But a number of tourism businesses are taking their commitment to supporting local economies one step further by making an effort to use local businesses for all their needs. This might include using local services, such as advertising and marketing firms, or purchasing from a local manufacture, such as a local t-shirt printing company. While there might be some initial
challenges with “going local,” there are many long-term benefits, such as it supports the local economy plus helps create an authentic destination and a sense of community. While finding local sources for all needs may be challenging, making the effort to use local sources whenever possible is a good place to start. The North Carolina Chamber can help find a local chamber of commerce for help identifying local businesses. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

4. A COMMITMENT TO SERVING LOCAL FOODS

Pick up any travel or food magazine and you are almost guaranteed to read something about using local foods. But as almost any professional chef will tell you, using 100 percent local foods in a commercial kitchen is nearly impossible. What about just 10 percent? That is the challenge the Center for Environmental Farm Systems has set for North Carolinians. The 10% Campaign asks individuals and businesses to commit to spending 10 percent of their food dollars on local sources. Once you sign your business up, you will be emailed a few simple questions each week so your progress and progress statewide can be tracked. The 10% Campaign has a number of resources on its website to help you find sources of local foods. And participating businesses are recognized on the 10% Campaign website. For more information and to sign the pledge, visit www.nc10percent.com, or e-mail questions to nc10percent@ncsu.edu. For more information on the Farm to Fork initiative, visit www.cefs.ncsu.edu/newsevents/news/2010/0421stateactionguide.html.

5. SENDING BACK TO THE FARMS

With the growing popularity of farm-to-table tourism, businesses across North Carolina are making an effort to make locally grown fruits and vegetables available to customers. But few are sending much back to the farm, despite throwing away large amounts of compostable organic matter. Although your tourism business might not be ready for a full composting program, there are a number of smaller composting projects that every tourism business can try. For example, used coffee grounds can be collected and given away to local gardeners. For more information on coffee composting, visit http://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/story.php?S_No=545&storyType=news, or contact your local N.C. Cooperative Extension office at (www.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php?page=countycenters). For more information on composting, visit www.p2pays.org/composting or contact Brian Rosa via brian.rosa@ncdner.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

6. HOLIDAYS WITH LOCALLY RAISED FOODS

As many restaurants finalize what they’ll be cooking up for their holiday guests, one way to add spice to a menu is to offer locally raised and grown foods. If you are unsure how many local products you can use in your menu, start by trying to using one or two locally grown products. And if you are a hotel or an inn, consider offering your guests local snacks, such as peanuts or cookies made with local ingredients. You can also add to your customers’ experience using local agriculture. Painting and drawing classes using locally grown produce for subject matter, cooking classes using produce customers picked themselves, and farm tours are only a few of the examples of adding to tourist experiences using local foods. For more information on available local agricultural products, contact the N.C. Corporative Extension at www.ces.ncsu.edu or visit the N.C. Dept. of Agriculture’s Marketing Division at www.ncagr.gov/markets/gottobe/findNCproducts.html. For more information on sustainable local agriculture, visit the Center for Environmental Farming Systems at www.cefs.ncsu.edu. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

7. LOCALLY GROWN HOLIDAY TREES

It is difficult to imagine holiday decorating without the time-honored Christmas tree – and there are many ways of reducing its environmental impact. The first is to choose a locally grown tree rather than an artificial tree made of PVC. North Carolina is one of the largest producers of Christmas trees, and Christmas tree farms can be located via http://www.ncfarmfresh.com/farms.asp or http://ncchristmastrees.com/choose_cut_farms.htm. You can even
choose a tree with its roots still attached so it can be replanted after use (check before planting to make sure your area is suitable for a specific type of tree). For other tree reuse options, visit [http://www.ncsu.edu/featured-stories/engaging-society/jan-2008/christmas-tree/index.php](http://www.ncsu.edu/featured-stories/engaging-society/jan-2008/christmas-tree/index.php). Also consider using energy efficient LED string-lights and purchasing used ornaments from thrift stores. Another option is to encourage guests and staff to make their own ornaments from old holiday cards and natural items such as cinnamon sticks and ribbons. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

8. **WALKABLE DOWNTOWNS**

For a number of years now, there has been growing attention paid to the value of vibrant downtowns. Programs like NC Main Street have illustrated that vibrant downtowns are more appealing to visitors, serve to preserve cultural heritage and promote a deeper sense of place. But walkable downtowns are also more environmentally friendly. In addition to reducing the number of cars needed to get around, thus improving local air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, walkable downtowns generally have smaller parking lots plus more green space and landscaping that improve storm water management, reduce heat island effects and help create places for native flora and fauna to thrive. It is also much easier to manage a downtown recycling program for visitors when they are walking on the sidewalk than if they are primarily in their cars. The increased sense of pride a vibrant downtown brings may also contribute to less roadside litter. Furthermore, despite the challenges of integrating green building practices of existing buildings, the total environmental benefit of re-using an existing building, in most cases, far outweighs the lack of energy efficiency measures. For more information about how to green existing building or to be recognized by NC GreenTravel, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

**Sustainability in Businesses**

1. **BICYCLING**


2. **GREENING THE GREENERY**

The end of winter and the start of spring mean a number of changes for grounds staff at tourism businesses. Irrigation lines have to be checked, lawn mower blades sharpened and fertilizers applied. While it is important to make sure landscaping meets the expectations of guests and customers, poor landscaping practices can result in a number of negative environmental impacts. Using landscaping best practices can better manage operating costs. For example, overwatering lawns not only wastes freshwater, but it leads to larger water bills. There are a number of resources to help better manage business landscaping in an efficient manner, such as the Environmental Sustainability Resource Center’s [Landscaping Topic Hub](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism.Landscaping-Topic-Hub). Landscaping best practices can also be found as part of the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s [sustainable practice checklists](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism.Sustainable-Practices-Checklists). For more information on
sustainable landscaping practices, contact the appropriate local N.C. Cooperative Extension office, Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

3. MAKING FRIENDS IN STRANGE PLACES
A growing trend in the travel and tourism industry is for-profit enterprises developing partnerships with nonprofit organizations. For a long time, these two groups were often seen as on opposite sides of various issues, but there now seems to be growing understanding that their respective interests are related. Destinations increasingly realize that to be a top tourism attraction, they have to have a clean environment and a rich and strong local community. And environmental organizations are recognizing that to protect the natural environment, they need legitimate business interests that can invest financial resources. Some examples of these public-private partnerships include the collaboration by Great Wolf Resorts and the National Geographic Society on Project Green Wolf and Double Tree’s work with a wide range of partners on various issues; perhaps the best example is the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, compiled of many private and public partnerships. For more information on how a private enterprise might partner with a nonprofit or how a nonprofit might find an ally in a for-profit enterprise, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

4. KEEPING YOUR GUESTS SAFE FROM CHEMICALS
Every hotel manager and attraction owner wants to make sure guests not only have a great time, but that they are also safe while visiting. One of the biggest threats to guest safety is, fortunately, one that is easily avoidable and not very costly to address: the threat of poisoning from harsh chemicals. Cleaning products, pesticides and old paints can be a serious threat to guest safety if not stored properly. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, poisoning is the second leading cause of death in much of the country. There are a number of online resources to help choose alternative cleaning products, such as the EPA Safer Cleaning guide. But sometimes, dangerous chemicals are necessary. In those situations, it is important that all precautions are taken to reduce the risk of poisoning, such as ensuring all harmful chemicals are stored securely, only the amount needed is stored onsite and all products are labeled correctly. For more information on preventing poisoning, visit the U.S. National Library of Medicine’s Household Products and the EPA’s Pesticides factsheet. For more information on reducing environmental risks, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

5. SOME HELP MEETING THE GREEN MARK
For many tourism businesses across North Carolina, meeting the requirements to be recognized by the NC GreenTravel Initiative is second nature. These hotels and restaurants have been implementing sustainable practices long before there was a statewide program to recognize them, so becoming recognized is as simple as completing the application and submitting it. But for other tourism businesses, meeting the criteria for recognition is a daunting task. There are, however, a number of resources to help properties implement the necessary sustainable practices to become recognized. The Center for Sustainable Tourism has developed a number of tip sheets on topics such as LED exit signs, purchasing renewable energy credits, and oyster shell recycling. The U.S. EPA Energy Star for Hospitality program also has a wealth of resources and provides the necessary tools to complete do energy benchmarking. There are also a number of no cost manuals that provide information on implementing sustainable practices, such as the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's "Green Your Business Toolkit." And you can always request technical assistance from the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

6. VALUE ADDED LANDSCAPING
Tourism businesses are always looking for ways to provide additional amenities that do not increase costs to either themselves or their guests. One strategy to add value to properties that also helps keep costs low is using native
plants in landscaping. When native plants are utilized, it increases the number of birds and butterflies that visit a property, which guests are sure to appreciate. Using native plants can help reduce maintenance costs and can even help keep a property looking great during periods of drought without excessive watering. And using native landscaping improves the environmental footprint. Some tourism businesses, such as Highland Lake Inn’s Season’s Restaurant in Flat Rock and Big Mill Bed & Breakfast in Williamston, are even bringing their landscaping inside by using edible plants in their restaurant. For more information on using native plants in your landscaping, contact the respective county N.C. Cooperative Extension office. Find more information about using native plants at the Going Native; find more information about edible landscaping from the Center for Sustainable Tourism. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

7. MOVING UP THE CHAIN

As tourism organizations look to adopt sustainable practices, they are looking not only at their own operations, but also at their suppliers and vendors, in an effort to green their supply chain. Hotels and restaurants across the country are starting to choose locally and sustainably grown produce, more environmentally preferable cleaning chemicals, and website hosting firms that use renewable energy. There are three ways organizations can green their supply chain. The first is choosing products that are more environmentally friendly to produce or dispose of, such as paper napkins made from recycled paper or compostable takeout containers. The second is products and services that are less harmful to the environment when they are used, such as purchasing energy efficient dishwashers or using integrated pest management. And the third area to consider is how the products are made or services delivered, which would take into consideration such things as how employees are treated, as well as the environmental performance of the company. There are a number of resources to help select more environmentally preferable products and services. There are also product certification programs, such as EPA’s Energy Star and Water Sense, as well business certifications. For more information on greening your supply chain, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

8. CHARITY AND HOSPITALITY, TWO PEAS IN A POD

Last month, Hilton Worldwide announced that through LightStay, its sustainability management platform, all of the company’s 3,750 plus hotel would have an automated process to give donations to charities. Hilton Worldwide also announced its partnership with the Global Soap Project. These two efforts by Hilton Worldwide are only two small examples of the many ways that the tourism industry actively participates in charitable giving. Almost every national brand and industry leader has a corporate social responsibility program in place, be it the Biltmore Company, Marriott, Resorts, or the Walt Disney Company. A new twist on giving is the number of tourism-related organizations that are providing volunteer and giving opportunities to their guests and clients. Organizations like Visit Raleigh work to connect visitors to volunteer opportunities in the community. For more information on volunteer tourism, visit the Travelers’ Philanthropy. For more information about sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

9. GREENER THAN YOU THINK YOU ARE

Many in the tourism industry might be surprised about how many sustainable practices have already been implemented. Many new buildings, for example, already have LED exit signs. Many restaurants have been using locally-sourced produce, sometimes from their own backyard. Perhaps a sustainable practice was implemented just by accident. Paper made from post-consumer recycled content has become so readily available and price competitive, it is possible a property is unintentionally stocking it. But regardless of why an organization has implemented a sustainable practice, there are a number of benefits to keeping track of what sustainable practices are in place. The first reason sustainable practices should be tracked is to effectively communicate with any other possible customer what sustainable practices are in place. While it is becoming clearer that not all green practices will attract customers, there continues to be growing evidence consumers are aware and are influenced by green
practices. Keeping track of sustainable practices will also make becoming recognized by the NC GreenTravel Initiative simpler. For a complete checklist of possible sustainable practices that can be implemented across various tourism sectors, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Business Resources. To learn more about the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

10. MAKE GOING GREEN FUN
Almost any educator will say the key to getting student buy-in is by making the subject fun. The same is true for implementing green practices at attractions and accommodations. If staff feel having a recycling program is just extra work, it is unlikely the program will be successful. Guests and customers will respond in the same way. But if you can make going green fun, the chances of increasing participation will likely go up. Many organizations have established friendly competitions between departments to see who can save the most energy. Other organizations give away prizes for the staff that comes up with the best idea to reduce waste. Or maybe a contest is set up with a competing property to see who can improve their water efficiency the fastest. Customers can also join in the games as well. A few years ago, the City of Charlotte had a "Get Caught Green Handed" initiative that rewarded citizens for using recycling bins. And by going green, not only do staff and customers win, but the energy and waste reductions also lead to lower operating costs, leaving the organization as a winner as well. For more ideas on greening your property, visit www.NCGreenTravel.org. For technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

11. IS YOUR ATTRACTION OR ACCOMMODATION UBER ECO-FRIENDLY?
A recent MSNBC.com article, "Luxury lodgings get uber eco-friendly," focused primarily on the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification program. While LEED does provide guidelines on green building, it would be a mistake to conclude an attraction or accommodation’s commitment to sustainability is dependent on a certification. There are many green hotels that are not certified, and more than enough examples of certified properties that are not green. This does not mean certification programs do not provide a helpful tool, but it does question relying on certification as the sole criteria in determining if a hotel is green or not. In examining authentically green attractions and accommodations, one of the few similarities among them is an honest and top-to-bottom organizational commitment to being green. Some tourism businesses are less committed to being green, and others are uber committed, regardless of being certified. For more information on sustainable tourism and how you can implement your uber commitment, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

12. DOES GOING GREEN WORK FOR YOU?
There is no doubt going green adds value. Brad Tomm, director of sustainable operations at MGM Resorts International, noted this during a recent webinar on reducing food waste that his company is observing more meeting planners asking about sustainable practices. TripAdvisor found in its recent survey on eco-friendly travel choices, 71 percent of travelers plan on making greener travel choices in the future. And the number of tourism businesses implementing green practices is also growing. Last year, the National Restaurant Association survey found 65 percent of restaurants have a recycling program in place, and the American Hotel & Lodging Association Lodging Survey found similar trends in their industry survey. But the question of what makes a green attraction or accommodation remains difficult to answer. The NC GreenTravel Initiative provides a number of resources to help attractions and accommodations become greener. The program also includes a statewide recognition program for properties that have met the NC GreenTravel recognition criteria. So far, over 20 properties have been recognized by the program, with many more joining. For more information about greening your tourism business or about the NC GreenTravel Initiative, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.
13. FINDING THE RIGHT RESOURCES

Survey after survey finds that not only are travelers more interested in greener travel, but also that attractions and accommodations are also striving to be greener. It can be challenging, though, to navigate the limitless greening options available. Even the most experienced managers find themselves faced with questions like where to start, how much will it cost, and how is success determined. Thankfully there are a number of resources to help. Most of the national travel industry trade associations, such as the U.S. Travel Association, National Restaurant Association, American Hotel & Lodging Association, Meeting Professionals International and many others have developed a number of resources on sustainability. Utility providers, such as Duke Energy, Progress Energy, as well as many local electricity co-ops also offer a number of resources to their customers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also has a number of resources on topics ranging from energy, waste reduction and water conservation, as well as general information. The NC GreenTravel program also has a wealth of resources to help. In addition, the Pollution Prevention Resource Exchange is one of the largest databases of resources on going green. For more information about greening your tourism business or about the NC GreenTravel Initiative, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

14. GREEN, THE ONE COLOR THAT STAYS IN FASHION

During this year's Virtuoso Travel Week conference, Virtuoso joined a growing number of travel experts that recognize sustainable tourism as one of the key trends in the travel industry. Studies as varied as the Global Business Travel Association's "2012 Sustainable Travel Policies Benchmarking Study," Expedia's recent study with MindClick SGM, and TripAdvisor's eco-friendly travel survey, all show that travelers, both leisure and business, continue to prefer travel options that are more environmentally responsible. These studies also show that while green is still in fashion, travelers are now also asking more accommodations and attractions about their sustainability efforts. No longer is having a linen reuse program or putting a recycling bin in the lobby sufficient. Travelers are not only asking if an accommodation or attraction has implemented sustainable practices, but they are also asking for details about local food, carbon footprints and indoor air quality. This demand provides tourism business owners with the opportunity to implement sustainable practices, often reducing operating expenses that can serve to attract visitors who are increasingly concerned with these issues. For more information on the NC GreenTravel initiative, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

15. IT TAKES MORE THAN TREES TO MAKE A FOREST

One of the newest trends in sustainable tourism is an increased emphasis on the greening of entire travel destinations, rather than just focusing on the greening of individual properties. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council has released its criteria for destinations. The Convention Industry Council also included destinations in its green meeting and events standards. And there are a number of cities across the state, such as Raleigh and Charlotte that are looking to leverage the sustainability efforts of the city to attract visitors. While there are many challenges when trying to have a group of tourism attractions and accommodations collectively becoming greener, there are also many advantages. For example, the collaborative greening effort in Onslow County, which currently has the most NC GreenTravel recognized hotels in the state, has allowed for hotels to work together with local government to advance recycling for everyone. For more information on the NC GreenTravel program, contact program manager Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

16. SOMETHING GREEN TO CHEER ABOUT

Many sports fans are finding something else to cheer about in addition to their teams' performance on the field: the greening of sports. Teams, sporting venues and sporting events at all levels are working to implement efforts that reduce waste, improve energy efficiency and enhance the experience for athletes and fans alike. Fans can recycle when they are at a soccer tournament at the WRAL Soccer Complex in Raleigh or while tailgating at a Carolina Panther's game in Charlotte. Through the University of Colorado at Boulder's Green Stampede, football games at Folsom Field are now zero waste events. Yet despite much of this progress, there are still many sustainability
practices sports venues and events could implement. Dr. Jonathan Casper at N.C. State University recently surveyed athletic departments of NCAA Division I schools on their sustainability initiatives. His research found that while many departments recognized sustainability as an important direction, they often missed a number of opportunities to enhance the sustainability of university athletics. Learn more about Dr. Casper’s study and the CU-Boulder’s sustainability initiatives during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Nov. 27 webinar on energy efficiency in collegiate sports. Click here to register. For more information, contact Emily Aysuce. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

17. CREATING VALUE THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY
In a recent Cornell University Hospitality Sustainability report, readers are reminded that the hospitality and tourism industry "creates value from its operations." This raises the question of how sustainability creates value in operations for tourism business. Sustainability does creates value because lenders are increasingly willing to extend financing for greener projects, travel providers are integrating it in their supply chain, and travelers are demanding it. Sustainability is able to create value for tourism firms in four areas: reduced operating costs, increased consumer demand, reduced regulatory liability, and improved brand image. However, as noted in the Cornell report, how the value of sustainability is delivered depends on the perspective of the stakeholder. Property owners and managers see value in cost reductions, whereas consumers value enhanced guest experiences. Regardless of a business’s green status, there a green practice to help them meet their goal. To learn more about how to integrate sustainability at a business and increase its value, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

18. ADDING UP YOUR GREEN EFFORTS
A strategy many long-distance runners use is to break up big mile races into many smaller parts. A similar strategy can be used in greening attractions and accommodations. It can be a daunting task to become a green property, but rather than starting by trying to implement every possible sustainable practice, it might be more manageable to focus on one individual business process, such as food service or guest rooms, or a single area of impact, such as energy or waste reduction. For example, a hotel might concentrate on reducing their water consumption or on green purchasing. Another approach might be to develop and implement a new green practice once a quarter. By slowly implementing sustainable practices, a property can dramatically improve its environmental performance. The Northeast Waste Management Officials’ Association offers its Green Lodging Calculator to help determine total reductions or possible reductions for implementing a new practice. There’s also the EPA Energy Star Portfolio Manager to benchmark progress and see how well a business compares to similar entities nationwide. For more information about how one can break up greening into smaller parts, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

19. GREEN TOURISM BECOMING AN EVERYDAY TREND
Over the last two decades, a growing number of green tourism practices have gone from being fringe, to accepted, to commonplace activities. For example, last year’s American Hotel and Lodging Association's Lodging Survey found that many green practices, such as linen/towel reuse and water saving programs, continue to be implemented in the majority of properties. According to the National Restaurant Association's Restaurant Operator Recycling Survey, in many parts of the country recycling is becoming an everyday practice as well. These sustainable practices are gaining traction with managers and owners because they can help reduce costs, have a positive impact on guests and staff, and are cost effective to implement. There are a number of other sustainable practices that also provide these benefits that might soon be commonplace at all attractions and accommodations as well. Examples include delamping or installing motion detectors on vending machines, LED lighting replacing compact fluorescents and recycling at sports and recreation venues, among a number of other possible sustainable practices. With green travel remaining one of the most important travel trends, it is not impossible to think that one day all travel will be green. For more information on what you can do to implement these increasingly everyday green practices, contact
NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

20. TRIPADVISOR GREENLEADER PROGRAM
For many years, TripAdvisor, as part of their eco-friendly travel survey, has found that U.S. travelers prefer to travel green. However, in 2012, 60 percent of the travelers surveyed responded they often do not know if hotels are eco-friendly. To help address this issue, TripAdvisor is launching GreenLeaders, a national green recognition program for the lodging industry. The program is very similar to NC GreenTravel in both intent and design. To register for the GreenLeader program, properties must first have a verified property business representative with TripAdvisor. Once verified, there is a green practices survey, which includes a variety of questions on various environmental measures that can be implemented at overnight lodging establishments. To facilitate completion of the survey, TripAdvisor has developed a detailed guide, which provides an explanation of each of the survey questions. For more information about the program or to learn more about how a property might participate in the program, visit the website or contact Ryan Dillon, responsible travel specialist with TripAdvisor, at (617) 795-7980. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

21. DO GREENER PRACTICES MATTER TO VISITORS?
Most tourism professionals would now agree that sustainability is an important factor to attract visitors and there is now evidence even at the local level that visitors are interested in sustainability measures. To leverage this growing interest from travelers, several hotels, travel providers and meeting venues are increasingly implementing policies and products that integrate sustainability. One example is the lionfish fishing tournament in Morehead City, which will provide environmental, social and economic benefits to the area while attracting visitors to the area. However, it is important to understand that there are multiple costs and benefits of implementing a sustainability initiative. For example, implementing a linen reuse program can help reduce operating costs. Using environmentally preferable cleaning products can have significant impact on the health and efficiency of staff. And while it can be difficult to decide which sustainable practices should be implemented, programs such as NC GreenTravel provide a good road map towards a greener property. For more information on how to market being recognized by a program like NC GreenTravel, download the Center for Responsible Travel's "Practical Steps of Marketing Tourism Certification." For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

22. DO GREEN PRACTICES MATTER TO VISITORS?
Earlier this month, the last of the APEX/ASTM individual sector sustainability standards for meetings was published. The nine sectors included in the set illustrate the many areas of sustainability that must be considered when planning and managing meetings. Another key part of the wide breadth covered by the standards is the many vendors and sub-contractors that most meeting planners must coordinate with to fully integrate sustainability into their events, from food and beverage to A/V to exhibitors. For many small to mid-sized events, it can be difficult to know where to find vendors with sustainability in mind. There is, however, a growing network of green caterers, more information about green accommodations and destinations, such as Greater Raleigh CVB, that are now making it easier for meeting planners to green their meetings. There are a growing number of organizations across the state, such as Visit Charlotte, working to connect green-minded meetings professionals with green venues. There are also a number of non-profit and governmental agencies that can help with environmental assessments, recycling and renewable energy. Learn more about green meetings by viewing a recording of the Center for Sustainable Tourism's recent webinar, Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Practices at Meeting and Convention Venues. For more information, contact NC GreenTravel, program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
23. GREENING VIA ONE GREEN PRACTICE AT A TIME
There is a perception that being green is an all or nothing type of thing. However, being green encompasses a wide spectrum of many different shades, from properties that strive to have zero negative impact on the environment, to properties that are just starting the process by implementing one or two simple practices. And even the greenest of green properties must work to continuously improve as new green technology becomes available and best practices are identified. Given the wide range of going green, implementing green practices one at a time may be a more helpful approach than trying to go all in all at once. This approach has multiple benefits. The first is the cost savings as earlier green practices can be used to help finance later projects. Second, by implementing practices one at a time, it’s possible to learn from previous experience. For example, a specific type of energy efficient lighting may not work well at a particular property. If energy efficient lighting is installed in phases rather than all at once, changes can be made during the next phase of installation, limiting expenses. Plus, implementing practices one at a time allows staff, suppliers and guests an opportunity to adjust to the change. Like anything new, it might take time for stakeholders to adjust to new green practices, so doing them one at a time smooths the transition. For more information on implementing green practices, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

24. SOME HOT TIPS TO STAY COOL
In addition to bringing visitors to the state, summer can bring some uncomfortably warm weather. There are, however, a number of effective strategies any tourism-related business can implement to help keep customers cool and reduce summer cooling costs. Planning activities around the daily variations in temperature is one such strategy. For example, reducing the use of heat-generating equipment, such as dryers and ovens, during the hottest times of day can help keep your whole building cooler. It can also be helpful to look at where activities are being held. Rooms on the north side of a building that are at or below ground level are likely to be cooler than other parts. Also, effectively using fans and windows to let air in during the evening can help keep things cooler. However, it is important to remember to close windows when outside air temperatures rise above comfortable levels and to turn fans off when rooms are unoccupied. Using window shades and blinds to block sunlight from heating buildings can also significantly reduce indoor temperatures. Choosing energy efficient windows or lighting, such as LEDs or CFLs, which convert more energy into light than heat, can also help keep things cool, particularly where bright lights are needed. If energy alternative options are not available, simply being conscious to turn lights off when not needed can help keep areas cooler. For more information about energy efficiency in the tourism industry, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

25. TOOLS OF THE GREEN TRAVEL TRADE
Only a few years ago, resources to assist tourism attractions and accommodations with managing their waste and energy were limited to manuals and best practice documents, such as the TIA Canada Green your Business: Toolkit for Tourism Operators. While these resources can provide important assistance, they are somewhat limited because they can only provide generic results of implementing green practices. Today, however, building upon Web and Excel calculators, there are a number of no- to low-cost resources that provide detailed information to assist individual properties. Resources like the EPA Energy Star Portfolio Manager allow for simple and no-cost energy benchmarking. Other resources like the Green Lodging Calculator allow managers to better understand the impact of implementing green practices. And the Food Service Technology Center provides a number of Web-based life cycle and cost calculators for restaurant green practices. Additional resources like the RETScreen Software Suite allow facility managers to conduct much more in-depth and detailed analysis of their property. And for event organizers looking to implement sophisticated tools, the Global Reporting Initiative, the ISO 20121 standard for sustainable events management, and the APEX/ASTM Sustainable Event Standard Overview provide very detailed resources to benchmark, design and report on green events. For assistance in using these tools or to implement a benchmarking system, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
26. GATHERING LOW-HANGING FRUIT OR IN BUNDLES

There are many options when developing a strategy to implement sustainable practices. One common tactic is what is referred to as "gathering low-hanging fruit." This approach focuses early efforts on implementing sustainable practices with the highest rate of return, lowest initial costs and/or shortest payback period. The thinking behind this approach is that early success will lead to support for implementing more costly or difficult sustainable practices later on. This approach does have its critics and a common problem with this approach is that it can make implementing additional sustainable practices much more difficult once all the easy practices have been implemented. An alternative approach is called "bundling." Using this strategy, sustainable practices with high rates of return are implemented at the same time as those with lower rates of return. The thinking is the average rate of return of both projects together can make the more difficult projects easier to implement. The NC Waste Reduction Partners currently offers a no-cost environmental assessment, which can help determine what strategy/ies might best suit a business. For more information about implementing green practices and to learn about how a property can join the growing number of recognized green tourism related business, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

27. GREEN PRACTICES THAT MAY BE OVERLOOKED

Recent industry surveys indicate that a large majority of tourism-related businesses have already implemented a number of green practices. As reported by Green Lodging News, the American Hotel & Lodging Association 2012 Lodging Survey found that 59 percent of hotels have a recycling program in place, 76 percent have a linen reuse program, and 75 percent have a water saving program. The National Restaurant Association found 74 percent of restaurants have a back-of-the-house recycling program. A recent TripAdvisor TripBarometer found that 77 percent of accommodations have implemented green practices. And the Green Retail and Hospitality SmartMarket Report from McGraw Hill Construction found that 52 percent of new properties will be built as green properties by 2015. There are, however, a number of additional simple and low-cost green practices that even the greenest property can easily overlook. One of the most common overlooked is to add insulation to hot water plumbing. Another green practice that could be implemented more is to "de-lamp" or using energy saving technology on vending machines. For a complete list of possible green practices, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Business Resources or schedule a no-cost environmental assessment with the Waste Reduction Partners. For more information about possible overlooked green practices, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

28. DETERMINING THE CASH VALUE OF GREEN PROJECTS

An important aspect of undertaking any green practice is to determine the financial value of any such investments. While many green practices do save money, not all savings are always greater than the initial investment. There are a number of financial calculations one can use to determine the present value of a green project. One of the most commonly used is simply payback period, which identifies the length of time the savings generated by a project will be equal to the initial investment in a project. While this calculation in fairly easy to determine for many common projects, it fails to take into account the savings generated during the life of the project, which may be much larger than the initial investment - in which case a project may be undervalued. There are also a number of Web-based tools that can help identify the life-cycle costs and benefits of various green practices, such as the Food Service Technology Center's Life-Cycle & Energy Cost Calculators, the EPA's Energy Star Cash Flow Opportunity Calculator and Financial Value Calculator, and the Green Lodging Calculator. Financial assessments of projects are also often included when environmental audits are conducted and should be an integral part of any discussion with a green energy professional. It is also important to integrate any governmental and utility incentives as well as any special financing opportunities when assessing the value of a green project. For more information about how identifying the present value of green projects, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
Chimney Rock State Park, in Chimney Rock, has become North Carolina's 70th tourist destination to earn recognition for its environmentally friendly practices, according to officials with the state's NC GreenTravel Initiative. "We're proud of all the great North Carolina tourist spots that have earned recognition as NC GreenTravel destinations," said John Skvarla, secretary of the N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). "That one of our department's very own state parks became the 70th place to earn this designation is the icing on the cake."

29. JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF GREEN
A concern for any manager interested in investing green practices is determining what level of investment should be allocated. If not enough resources are allocated, then the effort is not likely to succeed. However, if too much is applied, limited resources will be used when they could have been put to better use somewhere else. For example, it is clear that investing in an LED exit sign will save between $30 to $50 in utility bills and maintenance costs each year for the life of the sign (about 10 years), which makes investing in an energy efficient exit sign, initially costing $50 in labor and parts, a good investment. However, while there is growing evidence that implementing green practices can improve employee performance, the benefit to a specific business for implementing green practices may vary widely. There are two approaches managers can use to solve this issue. The first is to focus on green practices that are certain to have a positive net present value. Examples of "no regret" green practices include installing an LED exit sign, replacing incandescent bulbs with compact florescent ones or developing policies and procedures to ensure equipment is only turned on when in use. Another approach is to take steps to collect data which can show how and where savings occur and areas ripe for investment. Many tools to assist in data collection, such as the EPA’s Portfolio Manager and the Waste Reduction Partner’s Greening Assessments, are available at no cost. For more information about determining the value of implementing green practices or how to be recognized by NC GreenTravel as a green attraction or accommodation, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

30. COMPLEX NATURE OF INCREASING SALES BY GOING GREEN
A recent study from the Center for Hospitality Research at Cornell University School of Hotel Administration reported that, in general, guests are neither more nor less likely to book a room at a hotel that has adopted green practices. This finding would seem to contradict the vast number of studies, such as another recent study from TripAdvisor, that have shown travelers prefer greener accommodations. However, a closer examination of how consumers might interpret the adoption of green practices would suggest that adopting specific and strategic green practices can give a property a competitive advantage. For example, Green Key Eco-Rating Program found that Canadian travelers are starting to look more closely as specific green practices. This would indicate that some green practices may have a greater impact on attracting guests and others may have little or none at all. The Keep it Real report from Visit Wales and similar reports have concluded that accommodations and attractions, when marketing their green practices, should focus on how green practices enhance the customer experience and avoid touting how going green saves money, which could be interpreted by guests that green practices are implemented primarily to save money at the expense of the guest. However, another important finding from the Cornell study is that, while green practices might not lead to more bookings, they do not have a negative impact on the guest experiences, freeing owners and managers to take advantage of the cost savings from implementing green practices. For more information on how green practices can help attract guests and visitors and save money, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

31. PREPARING FOR A GREENER SPRING
For many tourism-related businesses, the period following the winter holidays can be one of the slowest times of year, which makes it a great time of year to try some green practices that a business might not have had enough time to implement. With fewer guests, businesses are much more likely to find staff more willing to test or improve existing recycling, energy management or water conservation programs. Slower business might also provide the opportunity to implement those green practices, such as LED bulbs, aerators in sinks and LED exit signs that a
business may have wanted to do but just hadn't had time to install. And with a few weeks before business picks up again, there's time to work out any issues or mistakes that might arise from the new green measures. It is also a great time to complete any applications, such as TripAdvisor's GreenLeaders Program or the NC GreenTravel Program, to be recognized for existing green efforts. For more information about greening your property or becoming recognized as a green attraction or accommodation, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

32. GREEN BEER, GREEN BREWING
While St. Patrick's Day may be the only time of year where you find beer that has been colored green, there are still many opportunities to find "green" beer all year long in North Carolina. Examples include Crank Arm Brewing, which is known for its sustainable transportation, Mother Earth Brewing, which donates spent grain to local farmers and is working on growing locally grown hops, and Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, which is keeping with its sustainability mission in its North Carolina facility. Nationwide examples include a brewers' campaign calling for better protection of clean water. And with clean water being the major ingredient in beer, it should come as no surprise that the beer industry is so actively involved with protecting the natural environment. Even the large breweries, like Anheuser-Busch and MillerCoors, have active sustainability initiatives. For more information about brewing greener, visit the Brewers Association sustainability toolbox or download the U.S. Energy Star energy efficiency improvement and cost saving guide for breweries. While there is currently no NC GreenTravel criteria specifically for breweries, any brewery interested in being recognized by the program can do so by completing the Attractions application. For more information on NC GreenTravel or to be recognized by NC GreenTravel, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

33. MCDONALD'S EFFORTS TO GO GREEN
Last month, McDonald's released its 2012-2013 Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability report, which lays out the company's strategy of integrating sustainability throughout the company. The McDonald's report, based on the five pillars of sourcing, planet, community, people, and food, seeks to identify strategies that both generate value for the company as well have a positive impact on the environment and people. While it may be difficult for many restaurants to implement a plan as ambitious as McDonald's, the report does provide a solid template for other food service and hospitality businesses that would like to develop a sustainability plan. There are four critical things McDonald's has implemented in its report that should be included in any corporate social responsibility plan. First, McDonald's has developed a framework from which to make decision from. Each company is free to use whatever framework works best for them, whether it is the Triple Bottom Line, the Natural Step or a company specific scheme. Next, McDonald's has set measurable and results-based goals for the future. While, as acknowledged by McDonald's in its report, these goals may not be met, they provide some guidance of how well the company is doing in implementing its plan. McDonald's has also done a wonderful job of identifying where the company has been. This is helpful in both establishing benchmarks to measure future success, as well as identify where the company has been successful and where it needs improvement as it moves forward. Lastly, McDonald's has done an excellent job identifying existing resources and partnership that can be used to further sustainability efforts. In North Carolina, restaurants can work with NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

34. SAFETY TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES
Social sustainability is a critical pillar of the triple bottom-line approach to running sustainably minded tourism operations. Therefore maintaining the most important resource to an operation, that being the employees, is crucial to the quality tourism experience it's sought to provide. It is imperative that all employees are provided the appropriate safety training in regards to any hazards they may be exposed to throughout the work day. This includes the use of ladders, fall protection or exposure to hazardous substances. All employees must have access to Material
Data Safety Sheets (MSDS) noting any chemicals they use or might be exposed to, while at work. Evacuation routes and plans for emergency purposes should be posted conspicuously throughout a facility and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure employees know what to do in case of an emergency. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and training on how to use these items must be provided to employees who use them. Fire extinguishers must be available throughout the facility, be inspected on at least an annual basis, and employees must receive training on how to use them. All of the required OSHA record keeping and informational posters must be up-to-date and available for employee access. These are just a few steps that can be taken to limit risk in the workplace and which can contribute to employee morale while decreasing insurance costs. For more information on occupational safety and health standards in North Carolina, visit the N.C. Dept. of Labor’s website. For more information on social sustainability, contact Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

35. SUSTAINABLE CLEANING PRODUCTS HELP CLEAN-UP BOTTOM LINE
The use of sustainable cleaning products at tourism facilities can improve environmental performance, indoor air quality and also contribute to increases in marketing advantages. A key part of sustainable cleaning product utilization is responsible procurement. By choosing products that are concentrated and compact, a facility will use less packaging and reduce waste, as well as space needed for storage. These products can also reduce the environmental impact and cost of product transportation. Concentrated formulas can also allow you to wash at lower temperatures which can reduce energy consumption. Another important aspect of sustainable cleaning product procurement is selecting the optimal cleaning product for each cleaning task. Even the most sustainable cleaning products, if used incorrectly, will not have the required positive impact. Spending wisely on efficient cleaning products that get the job done using the least amount of products, time and energy, can translate to operational cost savings for a tourism business. Analyzing and avoiding re-work can also contribute to more efficient operational practices. First-time cleaning is essential to minimizing waste, particularly in energy intensive operations such as machine dishwashing. Attaining employee buy-in is also important in sustainable cleaning product usage. This can be achieved by effective and continued education of staff on how to use products and to clean sustainably.

Find our more information on green cleaning procurement and uses here, or contact NC GreenTravel Initiative Program Manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

36. UTILIZING THE SUPPLY CHAIN WISELY
A great many of the tourism industry's environmental and social impacts occur within its supply chain. Analyzing these linkages is rational for any tourism provider serious about meeting its environmental and social sustainability goals. The engagement of suppliers should be viewed as an essential part of a tourism provider’s comprehensive sustainability effort. Supply chains can be very complex networks where suppliers are often hard to influence, measurement indices can be challenging to define, monitoring mechanisms can be abused, and certification systems are not always reliable. Recently, companies have developed numerous techniques as a means of creating and maintaining more sustainable supply chains. Responsible procurement is fundamental to building a company’s sustainable credentials, which can translate to gaining a competitive advantage through market differentiation. The starting point for most buyers is simple: communication. Tourism operations tend to develop long-term relationships with existing suppliers. Therefore suppliers need to know their customers' basic objectives in regards to sustainability so they can better meet the needs of the buyer. Another approach has been to break down the supply chain into isolated commodity or product groupings. Examples of this include buying products that are governed by the Rain Forest Alliance, or meeting the requirements of free trade, just to name a few. Another method utilized to assess supply chain sustainability is to employ independent social auditing firms to take on the task of accessing the sustainable efforts of suppliers. For more information on making supply chains more sustainable, click here, or contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more
information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-4296.

37. GOING GREEN IN THE OFFICE
The tourism industry is becoming increasingly more reliant on information technology devices like computers and other office electronics. This has contributed to the need to make these devices more sustained in terms of reducing energy consumption plus paper and printer cartridges. Before they are even switch on for the first time, 80 percent of the life-cycle energy use of such devices is accounted for as the production process for these devices requires substantial amounts of toxic chemicals, fossil fuels and water. There are simple tips on how to reduce the environmental impact and increase the efficiency of these devices for a business. Most devices have energy-saving features, so it is important to implement a policy at a facility to activate these settings to ensure maximum efficiency. By installing intelligent switch-off solutions like seven-day timers, you can save up to 70 percent on energy costs when these devices are not in use. Printers can consume 30-40 percent of their peak power demand when idling between printing and standby modes; so by minimizing this time, you can produce cost savings, reduce heat output and increase operating life. When using printers, print in black and white for internal documents and encourage staff to use print preview functions and set default printing modes to double-sided. Use lower-specification printers, such as inkjets, for internal documents and encourage staff to use these for day-to-day use. For more information on ways to conserve energy consumption associated with heating, click here. For information on sustainable tourism, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with ECU’s Center for Sustainability at ECU at (252) 737-4296.

38. PRACTICING RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING
Purchasing decisions can have significant environmental and social impacts. Responsible procurement is a manner of making purchasing decisions based upon environmental, social and ethical considerations, rather than the traditional paradigm of price, quality, functionality, and availability. Responsible procurement takes into consideration the necessity of a purchase, raw materials, manufacturing processes, shipping logistics, packaging components, product usage, and disposal. Basic steps can be taken to implement a responsible procurement policy at a facility. First, create a policy statement that supports overall sustainability objectives and can be easily understood by employees and suppliers. Inventory the products and services that the business purchases from outside the establishment and select areas that could be buying more sustainably. Identify the people and resources accountable for the implementation of the policy. Invite key suppliers, staff and stakeholders to participate in the planning stages of the policy. Translate responsible procurement expectations into a clear set of guidelines for suppliers that state minimum requirements for compliance. Set measurable goals and integrate them along with sustainability objectives into the purchasing and contracting procedures. For more information on responsible procurement, check out the EPA’s Final Guidance on Environmentally Preferable Purchasing. For information on sustainable tourism, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140, or Daniel Johnson with ECU’s Center for Sustainability at ECU at (252) 737-4296.

39. BICYCLE FRIENDLY BUSINESSES HELP ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT
The economic, social and environmental advantages that an attraction or accommodations can harness from promoting bicycling to its visitors, and even their employees, are abundant. The most substantial benefit is the reduced impact on the environment. Traveling by bicycle is a form of clean and efficient transportation that doesn’t involve burning fossil fuels, emitting pollutants or increasing traffic congestion. Businesses can also benefit from the myriad of positive health impacts that are associated with encouraging employees to bicycle to work. Bicycle commuting reduces stress and anxiety levels, increases physical fitness and can improve mood and productivity amongst employees. Providing bicycle parking for your employees, either on the street or in a dedicated room,
makes a business a more attractive place of employment, especially to young, highly educated workers who value urban lifestyles and shorter commutes. With less staff driving cars to work, fewer parking spaces are required. Businesses that encourage bicycling are perceived as concerned employers who are environmentally friendly, which can directly contribute to the positive reputation of a business. Investing in bicycle infrastructure and promoting cycling can also draw additional revenue to the local economy by attracting various forms of bicycle tourism, which has been identified as one of the fastest-growing travel markets in the nation. For more information on how to become a bicycle-friendly business, click here. For information on sustainable tourism, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140, or Daniel Johnson with ECU’s Center for Sustainability at (252) 737-4296.

Sustainability in Sports

1. GAME DAY GREENING
Sports fans have an increasing number of places beyond the green of the field to find green at sports venues. A growing number of professional leagues, collegiate athletics, road races, and international sporting events, such as the London Olympics did, are actively developing strategies to be less harmful to the environment. The diversity in what sustainable practices are being implemented is as diverse as the sports played on the fields, from renewable energy to water conservation to waste reduction. Some venues, such as the University of Colorado at Boulder’s Folsom Field, have become a zero-waste venue. You can learn more about CU-Boulder’s Green Stampede and sustainability efforts at other collegiate sports venues during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Nov. 27 webinar on energy efficiency in collegiate sports. To register, click here. For more information, contact Emily Aysuce. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

2. GREENING THE GAME
As sports fans gather around their favorite teams, many may notice that it is not just the fields that are green. From the pros to collegiate, all the way down to little league, teams, venues and fans are working to improve the sustainability of sports. For some, the relationship between sports and going green might seem foreign, but there is growing support for the greening of sports. The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association has developed a model that illustrates the relationship between environmental protection, social responsibility, and economic stewardship in collegiate recreation. The Natural Resources Defense Council has recently published a report on the greening of sports. And collegiate athletic departments and professional teams across the country continue to see value in going green. You can learn more about the greening of sports during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Nov. 27 webinar on energy efficiency in collegiate sports. To register, click here. For more information, contact Emily Aysuce. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

3. GREENING THE SUPER BOWL
While most fans were focused on the energy on the field during last weekend’s Super Bowl, careful attention and planning had also gone into looking at the energy off the field as well. So much so, that the question has been raised asking if this year’s event was indeed the greenest Super Bowl ever? The NFL has had a long tradition of integrating sustainability into the facilities where the game is played, with a number of individual teams and stadiums also taking active steps to reduce their energy and water consumption, and reducing overall waste, such as the Carolina Panthers’ tailgate recycling efforts. The Met Life Stadium, with all of the environmental measures implemented, may have made this year’s Super Bowl the greenest ever. Implementing green practices is not limited only to the NFL. Almost all of the professional sports leagues in the U.S. are now aggressively engaging in sustainability, as well as collegiate sports; even NASCAR continues to implement new sustainability initiatives. The Natural Resources Defense Council, the official Greening Advisor for the National Football League, has written a report on the greening of sports as well as a report on collegiate sports. For more information about how your sports venues can
implement green practices, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

Sustainability by Tourists

1. TIPS FOR TRAVELERS
   To protect North Carolina’s natural and scenic beauty, it takes the efforts of both destinations and visitors alike. A number of tourism organizations and businesses have started providing environmental education to help visitors travel greener. Last week, the Division partnered with East Carolina University’s Center for Sustainable Tourism to make available to journalists a list of green traveler tips and travel destinations across the state where each green tip could be practiced. The green travel tips are available at http://media.visitnc.com/news/330/15/d_newsitem_latest_news.html. Local tourism organizations can reuse these tips by matching them with destinations in their area to be shared with visitors. For more green ideas to share with travelers, visit the N.C. Office of Environmental Education: Informed Consumer at http://www.eenorthcarolina.org/consumer.htm. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com

2. GET HELP MAKING GREEN TRAVEL PLANS
   According to a report by PhoCusWright (www.phocuswright.com) only 8 percent of travelers know where to find a green hotel, although the same report stated that 44 percent of travelers consider the environmental practices of destinations important when planning a trip. A number of travel Web sites and guides are seeking to fill that gap, such as AAA’s eco program (www.aaa.biz/Approved/eco.html), and Travelocity.com’s green directory (http://leisure.travelocity.com/Promotions/0,TRAVELOCITY%7C5019%7Cmkt_main,00.html). New Web sites are popping-up to fill the void as well, such as www.istaygreen.org. Even the EPA is getting involved (www.energystar.gov/index.cfm…). And there are a number of programs here in North Carolina, such as GoGreenPlus.org, SustainableSandhills.org, and GreenBusinessPlan.com. For more information on how your tourism business can help fill the gap, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. PAYING MORE TO GO GREEN
   One of the most common questions tourism business owners ask about sustainability is if travelers are willing to pay more for green attractions and accommodations. This is a challenging question to answer because of the many variables that must be considered. There is evidence to suggest there is a small segment of the travel market (studies vary between 4 and 10 percent) that are willing to pay more for a green trip, but it is important to understand the limitations of these studies. For example, there are a number of related benefits being green contributes, such as employee morale and indoor air quality, two factors many travelers would be willing to pay more for regardless of environmental performance. Another limitation of relying solely on consumer willingness to pay in evaluating the benefits of adopting sustainable practices is that many green practices may not influence travelers’ decision to visit your destination but can help reduce your operating costs. For more information on the benefits of adopting sustainable tourism practices, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

4. DO TRAVELERS REALLY CARE IF SITES GO GREEN?
   When companies like Wal-Mart, Coca-Cola and Nike all have sustainability initiatives, going green has definitely gone from niche to mainstream. Many major tourism and hospitality businesses have also integrated sustainability into their operations – including Marriott, Expedia, Darden, and Xanterra Parks & Resorts to name a few. A recent survey from TripAdvisor found that 70 percent of accommodation owners plan on offering green programs in 2011.
However, the question remains: do travelers really care if their hotel or restaurant offers a recycling program? There are a number of surveys that would indicate travelers are conscious of their eco-travel footprint, from TripAdvisor’s 2011 Travel Trends Forecast, PGAV Destinations and the National Restaurant Association. But there still are a number of questions about how implementing green practices influences travel consumer choices. For example, where do travelers want to learn about tourism businesses’ sustainability initiatives? Are some sustainable practices more likely to influence travelers’ choices more than others? And do travelers care if a property admits to not being a perfect green steward? For the answers to these questions and many more, attend a free webinar on May 26 at 10:30 a.m. on sustainable tourism marketing. For more information and to register, click here or contact Garrett Zeigler.

5. GETTING THERE GREENER

Whether it is by bike, train, airplane, or by car, every visitor gets to their destination by some form of transportation. And just as attractions and accommodations are getting greener, so is how travelers get to them. Airlines are testing biofuels to replace petroleum fuels. Electric vehicle charging stations are being built across the country, some of which are even using solar energy. Hotels are also joining in, providing electric vehicle charging stations on site, even when travelers are not really going anywhere. When liquid fuels are used, fuel from french fries is being used. And travelers can increasingly pick transportation services that run a greener fleet. These examples of greener transportation show one can travel and still be green. Register online to learn more during the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s April 24 free webinar about renewable energy for transportation and how an attraction or accommodation can become actively involved in helping guests get there greener. For more information, contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

6. FOOD FOR YOUR CAR

With the local food movement well on its way, new opportunities for travelers to get a taste of local flavors are emerging. Naturally, there is local beer, local crafts, and even local t-shirts. But locally fueled transportation is also starting to make its way into the travel experience. Rickshaws or pedicabs can now be found in many urban travel destinations. For travelers looking to turn local food into local energy, there are bicycle tours. Fuels made from local plants and wood waste products are also being used to power cars. Some tourism businesses are taking local fuel even closer to home by recycling used fryer oil to make locally sourced and produced biodiesel. Other organizations are using the sun’s energy to produce energy to power cars. To learn more about opportunities to integrate local fuel in your tourism business, attend the Center for Sustainable Tourism's April 24 free webinar. To register, visit https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/315587808 or contact Nathan Hingtgen. For more information on renewable energy in tourism, visit Renewable Energy in Tourism.

7. TOURISM RECHARGING CARS AS WELL AS VISITORS

It was only a few years ago that the future of electric vehicles seemed unclear. However, with the first National Plug in Day having passed, it would appear that plug-in electric cars are quickly being adopted, with cumulative U.S. sales of plug in vehicles estimated to be nearly 142,000. Despite the growing interest in plug-in vehicles, an important limitation of their use is the availability of charging stations. This limitation is particularly important to the tourism industry, where plug-in car drivers may find themselves spending the night away from their at-home or work charging station. To address this problem and to attract plug-in drivers, a growing number of hotels are installing electric vehicle charging stations. Some travel destinations are now taking steps to develop electric vehicle itineraries and electric vehicle-friendly scenic byways. Some destinations are now even offering hotel-electric packages. For more information about electric vehicle opportunities in North Carolina, contact Katie Drye with Advanced Energy or the N.C. Solar Center’s Clean Transportation Program. For more information about implementing green practices and how to be recognized by NC GreenTravel as a green attraction or accommodation, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
8. What green practices travelers want

The Center for Sustainability at East Carolina University recently worked with travel destinations across North Carolina to research what green practices visitors utilize when they travel and what green practices they look for in places they go. The research collected surveys from more than 700 visitors and found an overwhelming number engage in green practices and they also feel it is important for destinations to do so as well. For example, the survey found that 85.1 percent of visitors always make an effort to respect their natural surroundings when they travel and 65.2 percent always recycle and dispose of waste properly, with 29 percent usually doing so. The same study found that 85.5 percent of visitors always or usually reuse towels and bed linens. Also, 78.1 percent select restaurants that offer local food options. Looking at what green practices visitors look for, the study found that 72.5 percent feel that conserving natural and open spaces is either essential or a high priority, and 63.9 percent felt making local crafts and other products was either essential or a high priority. Preliminary statistical analysis of the data found that visitors that were more engaged with their travel were more likely to feel that it is a priority for destinations to adopt green practices. For more information about the study, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

9. Millennials, the next generation of responsible travelers

There is a lot of talk about how connected to technology and social media Millennials are as travelers. While this is important, perhaps of equal importance is how issues related to sustainability have now become ingrained in their purchasing decisions. A 2012 report from the Boston Consulting Group debunking Millennial stereotypes noted that Millennials are more likely to integrate their personal beliefs into their purchasing decision and expect the companies they buy from to do so as well. A 2011 PGAV report found that not only do Millennials feel it is more important for destinations to take care of special places (compared to previous generations of travelers), but that Millennials' leisure travel is motivated by finding ways to make a difference in the world. Millennials are also interested in destinations that provide opportunities to volunteer and they use public transportation more than ever before. However, Millennials' approach to green practices seems to be more mixed, with the term "environmentalists" clearly falling out of favor. Some have argued that Millennials are less concerned with the environment than previous generations; but others have argued that the decline in environmentalism indicates something more complicated or perhaps simply a rejection of labels. For more information about integrating sustainable practices to attract visitors, including Millennials, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes.

Secondary Tips:

10. PRINTED MATERIALS PRESENT CHALLENGES

Every tourism organization has its own marketing strategy, but whatever marketing strategy is used, printed materials are an important tool, whether they are convention center layouts given at trade shows or brochures distributed at visitor centers. While printed materials are a relatively cost effective way to get a message across, there is increasing concern over the environmental impacts. One option to reduce paper usage is to rely more on digital distribution of materials, but according to a report by PBS, digital media is not without its environmental impacts as well. It can be difficult to compare the impact of different media formats but the bottom line is every format has an impact. With thoughtful planning, though, impacts can be minimized to meet both the distributor's and the consumer's standards and needs. Just as important as what is printed is what it's printed upon. Including information about how travelers can reduce their environmental impact while visiting a destination is yet another way to improve environmental performance even further. For more information on paper and recycling, visit EPA paper recycling. For more information on green travel tips for consumers that can be include in print materials, visit www.visitorcarecode.org. For more information on sustainability in tourism, contact Alex Naar or by telephone at (252)737-1346.
Sustainable Foods

1. **N.C. SEAFOOD SUSTAINABILITY SUPPORTS TOURISM, ECONOMY**

   According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, 91 percent of the seafood consumed in the United States in 2011 was imported from other countries. Visitors to North Carolina are among those reflecting a greater concern about the origins of the seafood they consume; this is leading to an increase in demand for local sustainably harvested seafood. In 2009, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration visually inspected 2.7 percent of imported food for decomposition and filth. The FDA tested only 0.1 percent of imported seafood for toxic substance contamination and unapproved antibiotics and chemicals. It is in the best interest of the consumer to know the source of seafood because not all countries have the same standards in regards to sustainability and safety. Programs like NC Catch are local initiatives that educate consumers on the importance of “buying local" seafood. Such programs contribute to increased awareness of the quality of local seafood as well as its health benefits, and also help support local economies and the continuation of commercial fishing heritage. This helps sustain a fishing community’s sense of place, and can contribute to the development of cultural heritage tourism attractions and resources. By promoting N.C. Catch programs, tourism providers can help communicate the high quality, great tasting products that are locally sourced, and are managed under regulations that protect the marine environment as well as the health of consumers. Promoting NC Catch programs and the consumption of locally sourced goods reduces the impact on the environment associated with the transportation of resources. For more information on N.C. Catch programs, visit its [website](#), or contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the [Center for Sustainable Tourism](#) at ECU at (252) 737-4296.

Sustainable Tourism Management

1. **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, CRITERIA & REPORTING**

   In late October, it was reported that the Convention Industry Council had completed 8 of 9 sections of the APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Meeting Standards. At the same time, the International Organization for Standardization is working on ISO 20121 for sustainability in event management, one of several types of environmental management systems. The Global Reporting Initiative is also developing a Sector Supplement for Event Organizers. While it may seem that these initiatives are redundant, they are in fact being developed in coordination with each other to provide the meetings and events industry with a robust set of tools to integrate corporate sustainability. The APEX/ASTM standards can be viewed as a list of specific actions that should be implemented. ISO 20121 is a framework to systematically and successfully implement the APEX/ASTM standards. And the GRI Sector Supplement allows for a successful reporting across economic, social, and environmental performance. For more information on the relationship between reporting, management systems, and criteria, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

2. **WHERE TO START?**

   Knowing how to begin incorporating sustainability can be difficult. One place to start is by crafting a formal environmental and social policy or including sustainability as part of your business’ mission or vision statement. With an organizational-wide approach, your environmental and social commitments are positioned to be incorporated in every part of your business. To help organize your sustainable efforts, you can create a green team. Green teams with diverse company representation are the most helpful because they provide insight to the entirety of your business as well as foster employee participation. For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
3. WHAT TO DO FIRST
According to industry surveys and studies, there are a number of tourism organizations that are taking active steps to be green. With so many different sustainable practices, it can be difficult to decide which sustainable practices to implement, but there are some helpful strategies when deciding. The first is to choose practices that have the greatest environmental impact. By conducting an environmental audit and using industry pollution prevention calculations, the amount of pollution prevention per practice can be calculated and compared. Another strategy is to examine the resources needed to implement sustainable practices. This strategy often leads to tourism businesses implementing simpler practices first and then moving on to more complex and resource intensive practices. The last strategy includes implementing sustainable practices that are the most demanded by travelers. There have been a number of surveys that look at the preferences of both green travelers and travelers in general, but it can also be helpful to get feedback directly from customers and guests to see what sustainable practices are important to them. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. And for information on participating in the NC GreenTravel Initiative, click here.

4. STARTING SMALL
The growing interest in sustainability has caused many businesses to start thinking about how they can green their workplace. For many businesses and organizations, the idea of becoming sustainable can seem intimidating, if not impossible. It is important to remember that sustainability is a way of doing business, not a destination. Even the smallest of organizations with limited budgets can start making changes to reduce their negative environmental and social impacts. Start with small, often no-cost, steps such as setting printers and copiers to print on both sides, purchasing copy paper made with recycled content, and reminding staff to turn off their computers and lights at the end of each workday. Although these small changes might seem minimal, they can have a big impact over time; by successfully accomplishing small goals, you will feel more confident and be more knowledgeable when addressing complex sustainability challenges in the future. For a list of simple actions specifically for the lodging industry, visit http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality/main/tips.htm.

5. FIRST, DO THE RESEARCH
Many sustainable practices can result in increased cost savings, but any investment has its risks. It is important to research the short- and long-term effects of any green initiative before beginning the project and to remember what might be a good practice at one business might not be at another. Investigations can be done in a variety of ways: implementing more efficient appliances and fixtures in waves, consulting with pollution prevention specialists, and getting input from all parties involved, including staff whose work will be affected by the change. For a database of companies that provide a range of environmental services, visit http://wrrc.p2pays.org/vendor.asp. For information on efficient appliances, visit http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product. To speak to a pollution prevention specialist, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable practices, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

6. SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT GOING GREEN
Most property managers have already implemented practices such as using compact florescent light bulbs, implemented a recycling program, and have a linen reuse program. But where can you go to get information on becoming a deeper shade of green? One of the best sources is the EPA Energy Star for Hospitality and Entertainment, which has comprehensive information on energy management. Another source of information is Sustainable Travel International, an international leader in providing education and outreach services that help travelers, travel providers and destinations support environmental conservation and protect cultural heritage while promoting cross-cultural understanding and economic development. And the International Ecotourism Society has been working to be the global source of knowledge and advocacy uniting communities, conservation, and sustainable travel for 20 years. For additional links to information on taking that next green step, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s contact list, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
7. MAKING A GAME PLAN

Every day, more businesses are implementing practices to reduce their environmental impact, but some are doing a better job than others. One tactic that many successful attempts have in common is an organized approach to sustainability. By developing a plan, organizations can focus their efforts on practices that will have the most significant impact and that best meet greater organizational goals. The first step to developing a successful environmental program is to examine your organization’s mission statement and decide what environmental goals will best further your organization’s mission. Some organizations also develop corporate responsibility statements as well. Once broad goals of sustainability have been developed, it can be helpful to conduct an environmental audit or assessment to evaluate current practices. After setting broad goals and conducting an assessment, set more specific and tangible goals that can be evaluated and benchmarked. For more information on developing a sustainability plan, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00421.pdf, or contact Alex Naar at (919)715-3782 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

8. AREAS TO ADDRESS

Sustainability is a growing trend in all industries and is now finding its way into mainstream tourism. The increasing popularity of sustainability has led to differing understandings of what sustainability really means, so to help clarify for industry professionals, the Center has developed a working definition that includes those actions that contribute to a balanced and healthy economy by generating tourism-related jobs, revenues and taxes while protecting and enhancing the destination’s socio-cultural, historical, natural and built resources for the enjoyment and well-being of both residents and visitors. The center’s director, Dr. Patrick Long, has identified twelve action areas where tourism professionals can address issues of sustainability: 1) greenhouse gas emissions, 2) solid waste management, 3) freshwater consumption, 4) wastewater management, 5) energy efficiency, 6) ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, 7) land use management, 8) air and noise pollution, 9) respect for local cultures and communities, 10) economic benefits to local communities, 11) responsible purchasing, and 12) education for employees and clients. To learn more about the Center for Sustainable Tourism visit www.sustainabletourism.org or contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

9. FINDING THE RIGHT PROFESSIONAL

The growing number of salespeople offering environmental solutions can make distinguishing between solutions and swindles difficult. Your relationship with an environmental professional will proceed much more effectively if you first assess what your business or organization specifically needs before working with a consultant. For example, is your objective in working with an environmental professional to reduce utility bills or reduce your carbon footprint? Although many environmental problems are related, by having specific goals in mind, you will be equipped to develop realistic plans with an environmental specialist that will further your organization’s goals. Second, it is important to learn a little bit about the areas you hope to work with using an environmental professional. Once you have found an environmental professional you feel comfortable with, it can be helpful to include some sort of accountability in the contract. For example, if you work with an energy expert, include reductions in your electricity usage after changes are made as part of the contract. For a database of environmental professionals and services, visit wrrc.p2pays.org/vendor.asp or www.greenprofessionals.org/site/profd//index.cfm. For more information on finding the right environmental professional for the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (919)715-3782 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

10. WHAT’S THE FUSS ON BEING GREEN?

Industry survey after industry survey shows that an overwhelming majority of tourism businesses are either actively taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint or plan to do so in the near future. Some experts have argued that the tourism industry has been involved in going green for a long time and the trend seems to only be moving upward. Some experts predict that sustainability will continue to grow in importance and gradually become a fundamental part of industry decision-making. But why are tourism businesses investing limited resources to go
green when it’s still not clear how being green affects market positioning? Some have pointed to the fact that by going green, tourism businesses can reduce their operating costs. Others have pointed to the growing number of green-minded travelers. And while much of the effort to be green has been voluntary, there is growing evidence that future government regulation is possible. Many tourism businesses, such as Hilton and Ritz-Carlton, are going green because they believe it’s the right thing to do, even if the short-term benefits of doing so are not entirely clear. For more information on the benefits of going green, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.

11. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

During these uncertain economic times, a number of tourism businesses have had to make the tough call to reduce their philanthropic efforts. But despite this, there still are a number of ways any business can continue its social responsibility efforts. For example, providing local nonprofits with free meeting space when conference facilities are not in use, allowing local artists and craftsmen to display and sell their work onsite, and donating unwanted or obsolete equipment, electronics, furniture, drapes and carpeting to charity. Consider participating in a program like the Clean the World program (http://www.cleantheworld.org). Some tourism businesses have even partnered with local non-profits to provide travelers with “volunteer vacation” opportunities. For a complete list of sustainable practices, visit http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

12. UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Earlier this month, the Center for Responsible Travel published the 2nd edition of The Case for Responsible Travel: Trends and Statistics factsheet. The report provides a robust collection of data from many different sources on questions about consumer demand for responsible travel, the business case for responsible tourism, and why destinations should be involved in the responsible tourism discussion. It includes a wide range of topics within the umbrella of responsible tourism, which it defines as "Tourism that maximizes the benefits to local communities, minimizes negative social environmental impacts, and helps local people conserve fragile cultures and habitats or species" from the Cape Town (South Africa) Declaration on Responsible Tourism. As expected, the report found a general consensus that travelers prefer green attractions and accommodations. It also found sustainability continues to become an integral part of doing business in the tourism industry as well as identifies support for collaborative sustainability efforts at a destination level. This indicates a trend away from focusing only on individual attractions and accommodations, and toward adopting green and socially responsible initiatives destination wide. The report recognizes that this move toward a more holistic approach, while still in early development, has already resulted in greater attentions from the media and travelers as well as tackling some of the most pertinent long-term issues in the tourism industry. The Center for Responsible Travel website also offers a number of additional resources on responsible travel. For more information about how an attraction, accommodation or destination can integrate responsible practices and be recognized for the practices already adopted, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

Water

1. A NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION TO SAVE WATER

With much of North Carolina still under unusually dry conditions (the North Carolina drought status can be seen at http://savewaternc.org/DroughtStatus.asp), water conservation will remain an important task for many tourism businesses in the New Year. A good place to start looking for information on water conservation is the EPA WaterSense program (www.epa.gov/watersense), which has information on water conserving fixtures and appliances as well as local contacts (www.epa.gov/watersense/partners/partners.htm). The N.C. Division of
Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (www.p2pays.org) has manuals for general (www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf), food service (www.p2pays.org/ref/04/03103.pdf), and lodging (www.p2pays.org/ref/43/42998.pdf) facilities. For more information on water conservation, contact Keyes McGee at (919) 733-4398 or via Keyes.McGee@ncmail.net. For a list of water efficient practices in the tourism industry, visit www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism/criteria.cfm. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. WATER EFFICIENCY

With the drought of last summer now only a memory, the importance of saving water can easily get overlooked. But much of North Carolina is still abnormally dry and some areas are still experiencing drought conditions (a map can be seen at savewaternc.org/DroughtStatus.asp). There are numerous, simple low-cost changes any tourism business and organization can implement to be more water efficient, resulting in year-round water savings and reduced utility bills. For information regarding water conservation in commercial bathrooms, visit www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sustainabletourism/upload/Water-Efficiency-Commercial-Bathrooms-Tip-Sheet.pdf; for restaurants, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/04/03103.pdf; and hotels, visit www.p2pays.org/ref/43/42998.pdf. For general information on water conservation, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/ or contact Keyes McGee at Keyes.McGee@ncmail.net. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

3. EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE WATER EFFICIENCY

Previous drought conditions highlight the importance of using water more efficiently. There are a number of simple measures that can help reduce water usage and operating costs. Without even investing in any new equipment, you can reduce your water usage by regularly inspecting and fixing leaks and drips. Often a simple repair, fixing a dripping faucet/showerhead can save up to 1,000 gallons of water per week. Another easy water-saving practice is installing low-flow aerators which use up to 75 percent less water. Low-flow aerators typically cost between $1 - $5 with installation and can have a payback period as short as less than one month. In commercial kitchens, pre-rinse spray valves, which are used to clean leftover food and grease off dinnerware, can consume more water than dishwashers. New efficient valves, which can use up to 45 percent less water, have higher water velocity and more effective spray pattern – which not only save water but improve dish-washing. More water-saving practices and strategies can be found in the Water Efficiency Manual for Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Facilities at http://www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf. For more water saving tips, contact TomRhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

4. EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE AIR AND WATER QUALITY

The tourism industry goes to great lengths to ensure everything is up to guests’ standards. But it is easy to forget what can’t easily be seen, like air and water quality, and a growing number of travelers are looking for allergy free and chemically sensitive accommodations. Air and water quality can greatly be improved by using environmentally preferable cleaning products which are less hazardous and less likely to contribute to a negative experience. For more information on environmentally preferable cleaning products, visit www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/products/cleaning.htm. Another important step in keeping guests and staff safe from potential harmful chemicals is to ensure that all potentially dangerous substances are securely stored and labeled correctly. It only take one small mistake of using the wrong chemically-based product to result in an expensive clean up. And lastly, it is important that staff have up-to-date training for any use of chemicals. Not only will properly training staff to use chemical products improve air and water quality, but it can lead to more efficient product use, which will reduce costs. For more information on improving air and water quality, contact TomRhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.
5. WATER CONSERVATION TIPS
As of May 14, for the first time in over two years, no part of North Carolina was in drought conditions. But as water restrictions are lifted across the state, individuals and businesses are still encouraged to continue using water wisely. To assist businesses with water conservation efforts, the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance has recently released a new “Water Efficiency Manual for Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Facilities.” The manual includes information such as a self-assessment checklist, steps to conducting a successful water efficiency program, and information on how facility managers can best respond to potential future drought conditions. The manual can be found at http://www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf. For more information on water efficiency in the tourism industry, contact Keyes McGee at Keyes.McGee@ncmail.net. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at 252-737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

6. HOW SAVING WATER REDUCES YOUR ENERGY BILL
For many tourism businesses, water and energy are two separate utility bills, but when you conserve water you can also reduce your electric and gas bills because of the energy needed for hot water. One of the most common sources of hot water waste is at dishwashing stations where an inefficient pre-rinse spray valve can waste as much as 180 gallons of water and 1.5 therms of energy for every 3 hours of use. (It takes about the same energy equivalent of 1.5 therms to boil 140 gallons of water.) Another simple way to reduce your business’s hot water usage is to install aerators on your faucets, which typically can easily screw on to existing fixtures and can save up $100 in annual energy and water costs. Repairing leaky plumbing equipment and fixtures and developing polices to conserve water will also help reduce your energy bills. And not only will conserving hot water reduce your energy bills, but it will also reduce the load on your water heater, resulting in less wear and tear which cause costly repairs. For more water saving tips, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Tip-Sheets.cfm or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

7. KEEPING GRASS GREEN AND REDUCING WATER USAGE
With summer temperatures now hitting much of the state, facility managers and engineers have once again turned on landscape sprinklers to help property landscapes look their best. Outdoor watering is one of the tourism industry’s largest single uses of water and if improperly maintained can lead to a significant drain on operating budgets. Having a policy to routinely inspect functioning and settings of sprinkler heads, nozzles, lines and valves is an easy low-to-no-cost method of being more water efficient without sacrificing turf quality. For example, although sprinkler heads may initially be set correctly, they very easily become unadjusted or broken and no longer apply water uniformly or only to desired areas, wasting large amounts of water. It is also important to time watering to occur early in the morning or later in the evening when evaporation loss is lowest, but not too early or late that staff cannot regularly inspect. If you are upgrading or installing a new sprinkler system, you might consider a more efficient system, such as a drip or sensor sprinkler. For more information on saving water in the tourism industry, visit http://savewaternc.org or contact Keyes McGee at the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention & Environmental Assistance at (919) 733-4398 or via keyes.mcgee@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

8. STORMWATER RUNOFF
Many tourism businesses have a love/hate relationship with rain. Rain helps keep landscaping and the natural environment looking lush and healthy but rain at the wrong time can ruin even the most carefully planned outdoor event. An added problem with rain is stormwater runoff, untreated water that is not absorbed by the ground before it flows into a natural body of water. On its way to the nearest body of water, stormwater runoff can pick-up a wide assortment of pollutants including oil from parking lots, pet waste, sediment, and pesticides and fertilizers, thereby polluting local streams, lakes and other bodies of water. There are a number of actions any tourism business can implement to help reduce the amount of pollution caused by stormwater runoff. One of the simplest is to make sure all outdoor waste and grease receptacles are kept clean and leak proof. Reduce polluted stormwater runoff by...
making sure that all water from outdoor cleaning, such as pressure washing and cleaning automobiles, does not flow directly into a stormwater drain. For more information on what you can do to reduce stormwater runoff, visit NC DENR’s Stormwater & Runoff Pollution or contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.

9. SAVING HOT WATER, TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

When implementing green practices, it is always helpful to implement practices that maximize financial savings. One of the best ways to do so is to identify green practices that save multiple resources at the same time. One example is replacing inefficient lighting, which not only wastes energy for lighting, but also causes waste heat that can require more HVAC to regulate. Another area where tourism businesses can save double is by reducing the amount of hot water used. When used inefficiently, there is waste of the water and the energy needed to heat the water. There are, however, a number of practical measures for commercial kitchens or commercial bathrooms that any hotel, restaurant or other facility can implement to save hot water. For more information on how you can double your savings by implementing green practices contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

10. BEING WATER EFFICIENT BEFORE DROUGHT HITS

Thanks to winter rains, much of North Carolina is no longer in drought conditions. This is important for a number of tourism businesses, such as golf courses and athletic complexes, that rely on irrigation to ensure their facilities meet guest and visitor expectations. However, as indicated in the spring edition of the Seasonal Weather & Tourism Dispatch, this spring is projected to be warmer and drier than normal for much of North Carolina. While this may mean better than normal attendance at outdoor attractions this spring, it may lead to increased drought conditions this summer. While there is little facility managers can do to increase precipitation, there are a number of strategies, such as Xeriscaping and using irrigation best practices, that can be implemented to become more efficient with water use. In addition to reducing water and sewer costs, improving water efficiency can help improve facilities’ resilience to drought conditions. To schedule a no-cost environmental audit, which includes an assessment of water use, contact Russ Jordan with Waste Reduction Partners. For more information on water conservation at tourism related businesses and events, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

11. SUMMERTIME POOL WATER CONSERVATION

With the summer travel season now underway and warmer temperatures across the state, many tourism attractions and accommodations are helping guests stay cool with pools and water features, many of which can require significant amounts of water. While no part of North Carolina is currently under drought conditions, current abnormally dry conditions in the eastern part of the state and somewhat likely warmer than normal temperatures predicted statewide this summer, some parts of the state may have dryer conditions later in the season, which may necessitate increased water conservation efforts. However, by following a few simple best practices, such as using a pool cover and regularly checking for leaks in pool equipment or structure, you can greatly reduce the amount of water needed by pools. And many water saving strategies, such as turning off fountains and waterfalls when the pool or water feature is not in use, can also help reduce energy consumption as well, which can increase cost savings even more. Also, maintaining a clean pool reduces the need to backwash the filter, which not only reduces water consumption but can also reduce the amount of pool chemicals that may enter natural bodies of water. To have your pool examined by an environmental professional, you can schedule a no-cost Waste Reduction Partners Greening Assessment by contacting Russ Jordan. For more information about water conservation in the tourism industry, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.
12. IRRIGATION SYSTEM MAINTENANCE
Summer in North Carolina can often bring long periods of time without rain, which can lead to the increased use of irrigation systems to maintain landscape environments around tourism-related facilities. An automated irrigation system can waste significant amounts of water if it's programmed incorrectly, a sprinkler head is pointed in the wrong direction, or the system has a leak. Therefore, routine maintenance of irrigation systems can contribute positively to the longevity of the system as well as ensuring maximum efficiency in the dry summer months. Water Sense, an EPA partnership program initiative, suggests four simple steps for irrigation system maintenance that save both water and money. The first step in irrigation system maintenance suggested by the program is to Inspect the system regularly to ensure that there are no clogged, broken or missing sprinkler heads. The second is to Connect, which means to examine points where the sprinkler heads connect to pipes or hoses. If there are large areas of pooling water and wet areas on the grounds, there may be a leak in the system. The third step is to Direct the irrigation system so that the sprinklers apply water only to the landscape and resources aren't wasted by watering parking lots, sidewalks and other areas that do not require irrigation. The final step that Water Sense suggests is to Select an appropriate irrigation schedule that coincides with the season. For more information on saving water in the tourism industry, visit SaveWaterNC, or contact Tom Rhodes. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

13. SWIMMING POOLS SHOULDN’T DRAIN RESOURCES
Now that the dog days of summer are in full swing in North Carolina, swimming pools are very popular places to beat the heat. Pool maintenance is crucial to ensure that pool facilities are sanitary and inviting for a refreshing dip, but such an amenity can also contribute to the degree of sustainability of a tourism business' operation. Here are a few simple tips on how to make swimming pool facilities more sustainable. First, make sure there are no major leaks in any component of the swimming pool system. Second, conducting preventative maintenance of major equipment like pumps and filters is crucial in maximizing the efficiency of the system and energy costs. It is also important to perform routine inspections on minor equipment such as automatic pool cleaners and flow meters to make sure they are operating at full capacity. Limiting the evaporation of water in the pool by installing a cover can also contribute to a more sustainable swimming pool and reduce operation costs. Proper operational procedures like backwashing filters that involve water consumption should be planned and executed to reduce the quantity of water needed. It is also more cost effective to plan these procedures during nonpeak hours of energy consumption. Good stock chemical management can reduce the amount of hazardous waste generated by consuming resources before the chemical's expiration dates and can contribute to cost savings. Installing LED lighting within the pool area can also reduce energy consumption and cost and providing recycling containers around the pool can reduce waste. For more information on pool management and regulations in North Carolina, visit http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/faf/pti/pools.htm. For more information on sustainable pool maintenance, contact Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

14. WATER EFFICIENCY SAVES MONEY, TOO
Starting a water efficiency plan at a facility can reduce water and energy consumption which will yield cost savings and more effective operational practices. The first step in establishing a water efficiency plan is to measure the current water consumption and set some physical water reduction goals. Installing meters and taking regular readings will aid with understanding current water consumption, and sub-meters will help identify the greatest areas of use. Another important aspect of starting a water efficiency program is knowing the current water costs. This knowledge can translate potential cost savings and define the payback period for capital investments. Basing a water efficiency plan on costs, as well as environmental savings, will help gain the support of stakeholders and will improve a facility’s overall efficiency. There are a few simple ways to continue the momentum and ensure the success of a water efficiency program. Compare total and departmental consumption figures with hotel industry benchmarks to determine the potential for savings. Communicate management’s commitment to water reduction, as well as the objectives and goals of the plan to employees. Train staff to make practical use of water and to
maintain equipment for optimum energy-efficiency. Establish a monitoring and targeting system so that progress can be regularly reported back to staff and other stakeholders. Also, join forces with other hotels, restaurants, attractions, or other similar tourism-related properties in the region and provide mentoring to help them reduce their water consumption. NC Green Project offers a Long-Term Water Efficiency Plan. For more information on how to start a water efficiency plan at a facility, contact Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

15. ENCOURAGING VISITORS TO BE WATER EFFICIENT

Visitors are the main consumers of water at tourist-related facilities, however, tourism operators concerned with sustainability should avoid "telling guests how to behave." Therefore, increasing water efficiency is a significant strategy for increasing cost savings. Separate from decreases in the amount of a facility's water bill are savings experienced through decreases in electricity, sewage and chemical costs. Three key factors that can affect behavioral change regarding water conservation are individual behaviors, social evidence and infrastructure. Introducing the several measures can help promote visitor water conservation. First, develop, commit to and publicize the facility's strategy to conserve water. Successful strategies are often those that have been thoroughly developed, have upper management and guest buy-in, and are widely broadcasted to employees, guests and the general public. Water conservation strategies should include areas of concern, specific action-based goals and detailed plans to achieve success. Provide information on the facility's achievements and also feature progress that has been made over time. Encourage visitors to feel they are active participants in improving any negative impacts of the tourism facility by detailing the part they play in the process. As an alternative of having a generic card requesting guests to reuse towels, personalize the message so that it pertains directly to the guest. Provide guests with social evidence that they are doing the right thing. Investing in plumbing fixtures and appliances that conserve water also communicates to the visitor that your establishment is committed to sustainability. For more information on water conservation in North Carolina, click here, or contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-4296.

Waste Reduction

1. WHAT MAKES A PRODUCT GREEN?

As more tourism related organizations are going green, many businesses are looking for environmentally preferable alternative products to use in operations. Suppliers have answered the call by developing a sometimes overwhelming list of “green” products. Remember the three R’s: ask if the product reduces the amount of waste generated, if the product can be reused or recycled. Reduce could be less packaging, compostable product, or less resources were used to produce and/or transport it. Reuse would mean the product can be reusable as the same or another form, such as shredded paper for packaging. Recycle can be recyclable or made from recycled materials. To find out more about green procurement, visit www.ncprojectgreen.com/procurement/home.asp; to find out more about the benefits of using local products, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/upload/Tip-Sheet_Connecting-with-the-Locals.pdf. For more information on green product options in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. WASTE REDUCTION AT A PROPERTY

The NC GreenTravel recognition program gives almost 30 points for waste reduction measures. This includes points for having a soap reuse program, using bulk or dispensers for guest amenities, but the majority of the points come from having a recycling program in place and recycling various items. Many items are already most likely recycled in the back-of-the-house, such as cardboard and aluminum, but far fewer attractions and accommodations have
recycling in the front-of-the-house. Typically, there are two separate but related reasons why tourism organizations are hesitant to have a front-of-the-house recycling program. The first is because many guests use front-of-the-house recycling bins like a trash bin, which means staff must sort through the recycling or just throw the recycling in with the trash. The second reason is because management fears having such a program will detract from the visitor experience. Every attraction and accommodation should develop its own recycling program to meet the needs of its guests and staff, but there are some general resources that have been developed that can help you get started on developing a program for your business. For more information on the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

3. WASTE REDUCTION AT A PROPERTY PART II

One of the first questions many managers and owners ask when deciding if their property should implement sustainable practices is what is the cost of doing so? There are three different ways in which the cost of going green can be calculated. The first is the initial cost. For many sustainable practices, such as establishing a green team or setting copiers and printers to default to print double-sided, the initial cost is only staff time. New creative strategies, such as solar power purchase agreements, can allow your property to use solar energy at no initial cost. The next way the cost of going green can be measured is the payback period. This is the amount of time it will cost for a green practice to result in the same financial cost savings as the initial cost premium of implementing the practice. For some sustainable practices, such as LED exit signs, the payback period can be as short as one year. Since there are many criticisms of the payback period, many experts prefer the third method of measuring the cost of implementing sustainable practices: return on investment (ROI). Calculating the full ROI of implementing sustainable practices can be difficult though. Factors such as improved staff morale or PR can be difficult to link to one specific sustainable practice. There are a number of resources and calculators that can help determine the cost of going green. To learn more about the NC GreenTravel Initiative or for technical assistance, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

4. REDUCING YOUR WASTE

Recycling has now become the norm for many tourism related businesses, but some tourism organizations are now taking waste reduction even further. The best way of reducing waste is by eliminating it at the source, such as requesting multiple or unused catalogs no longer be sent. Another simple way of reducing waste is by finding new ways to re-use products, such as using non-sensitive shredded paper waste as packaging. Some vendors have take-back programs where empty containers can be returned and reused. Another re-use of materials is to convert worn-out linens such as table cloths and bed sheets converted into aprons or cleaning rags. Food service and restaurants can reduce waste by providing a discount to customers that bring their own re-usable mugs and cups, and providing condiments in dispensing units rather than single serving packets. It is also important to remember to close the recycling loop by purchasing products made from recycled content. For more information on waste reduction in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov or Alex Naar at 252-737-1346via anaar@nccommerce.com.

5. BEING LESS WASTEFUL CAN STILL BE CLASSY

According to a recent article in USA Today, hotels are increasingly replacing single use mini-toiletry bottles with larger refillable bottles. Hotel amenity kits are quickly becoming the latest battleground for hotels looking to assert their green credentials. A follow-up poll to the USA Today story found that 83 percent of respondents would not use refillable containers for fear of what is in them. But a study by researchers at Cornell University found that guests preferred refillable dispensers over single use bottles. While it is unclear why there are contrary findings, it is clear that hotel managers have many options to reduce waste from toiletries. Organizations like Global Soap Project and Clean the World can recycle used soap and bottled amenities for distribution to developing counties. Some places might consider experimenting with refillable bottles to see how guests react. For more information on
greening hotel bathrooms or on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

6. PAPER WASTE

According to the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance, in 2009 North Carolina threw away enough paper to fill 1,558 football fields three feet deep. Wasting so much paper is not only bad for the environment but also adds costs to tax payers and private businesses. By using the three Rs of waste reduction – Reduce the amount used, Reuse when possible and Recycle – tourism organizations can do a great deal to help reduce the amount of paper sent to the landfill. As with any waste reduction effort, the first step to reducing paper waste is setting practical and realistic goals. The success rate of achieving those goals is greatly enhanced if employees are engaged in the process and have a vested interest in improving waste reduction efforts. You can also help reduce paper waste by using paper made from recycled materials. For other ways to reduce your paper waste and for many other sustainable tourism practices, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/Business-Resources-Checklists.cfm. To request a free copy of Miles Media’s “Green Publishing Solutions for DMOs,” visit www.milesmedia.com/insight. To contact your local waste reduction specialists, visit www.p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html or contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

7. WASTE REDUCED SPRING CLEANING

With spring now here, many tourism businesses are getting their property ready for peak season by doing a little bit of spring cleaning. However, improperly disposing of waste products that may contain harmful chemicals, “universal wastes” such as pesticides, batteries and florescent light bulbs, can pollute the environment and may negatively impact human health. And a growing number of waste products are now banned from landfills. But there are a number of resources to help properly dispose of waste. The N.C. Division of Environmental Outreach and Assistance has a database of local North Carolina waste reduction programs and contacts as well as a recycling markets directory. The U.S. EPA and the Center for Sustainable Tourism offer a number of resources to help reduce waste levels. Some items, such as used bars of soap and even used cooking oil, can be donated and re-used somewhere else. For more information on waste reduction in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

8. GETTING RID OF FOOD WASTE IN NC

North Carolina disposes of 800,000 tons of food annually, which constitutes 12 percent of all the waste sent to landfills. When food waste is sent to the dump, it generates methane, a greenhouse gas that is 21 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. And only 6 percent of food waste is diverted from landfills, despite opportunities to either donate excess food or compost food scraps. For more information on donating surplus food, visit http://www.epa.gov/osw/partnerships/wastewise/pubs/needy2.pdf. For more information on composting in N.C., visit www.p2pays.org/composting or contact Brian Rosa at (919) 715-6524 or via brian.rosa@ncdenr.gov. Also, the N.C. Food Diversion Task Force has put together a short survey to gauge the interest in reducing food waste across the state. The survey will help determine where to focus its efforts and attention. To complete the survey, visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=5qgmLmrTa8Bg0dJYCu8Xng_3d_3d. For more information on implementing sustainable practices, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

9. ELECTRONIC WASTE

Electronics have now become an essential tool for doing business. Computers help connect with travelers before they visit, while there visiting, and to follow up with them once they leave. Electronics even help reduce energy consumption with energy monitoring systems and programmable thermostats. Discovery News reports improperly disposed of electronic waste can pose both environmental and social problems. According to the Electronics Take Back Coalition, the U.S. scraps about 400 million units of consumer electronics a year, many of which contain toxic chemicals. Fortunately, there are a number of resources to help dispose of electronics properly. The U.S. EPA has a
list of resources or contact a local waste reduction contact. And some North Carolina tourism attractions and accommodations have even developed programs to help their guests and local residents reduce e-waste, such as the N.C. Zoo and the Proximity Hotel. For more information on waste reduction in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

10. DIVERTING WASTE TO REDUCE COSTS
A recent New York Times article stated that the average hotel guest throws away about two pounds of trash per day (www.nytimes.com/2009/10/06/business/energy-environment/06recycle.html?_r=2&ref=travel), much of which can be recycled. With waste hauling prices going up and new N.C. legislation banning recyclables from landfills (www.p2pays.org/BannedMaterials), business owners and managers have a financial incentive to reduce how much trash they throw away. To learn more about reducing your trash bills, contact your local waste reduction specialist (http://p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html). The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance can also assist with a wide range of recycling issues, from festivals (www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling) to ABC Permit Holders (www.p2pays.org/BannedMaterials/ABCcontainer). To find out more about these and other resources, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

11. HELP FROM WASTE REDUCTION PARTNERS
Waste Reduction Partners, a team of retired, volunteer and staff engineers, scientists and architects in North Carolina who share their expertise with clients to reduce utility costs and improve environmental performance, is offering a limited number of no-cost Green Assessments to hospitality businesses. The Hospitality Greening Assessment is an on-site, technical review of a business’s utility use and environmental practices. These Hospitality Greening Assessments are unique in combining energy and water-use audits, solid waste recycling guidance, and other sustainability recommendations into one technical assessment. Businesses can use these assessments to meet the requirements of the NC GreenTravel Initiative or other green business certification programs. Participants will receive a report with a cost/benefit assessment of recommendations to improve management strategies for energy, water, solid waste and recycling efforts. For more information contact Russ Jordan with Waste Reduction Partners. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact Tom Rhodes at the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

12. DO PLASTIC BOTTLES HAVE A PLACE AT EVENTS ANYMORE?
Enemy #1 for many green event planners is disposable plastic water bottles. Researchers at the Pacific Institute estimate that water from plastic water bottles uses more than 2000 times as much energy as tap water. A report from the Environmental Working Group points to the lack of transparency in the bottle water industry, leaving a number of health questions unanswered. So, in an effort to find other practices that help keep event and meeting attendees refreshed and hydrated, many meeting planners have turned to other alternatives, such as water stations, re-usable water bottles, and washable glasses. Some venues, such as The Hub in Philadelphia, have gone as far as no longer offering bottled water at their site. For more information on how to reduce the use of plastic water bottles, download the report “Free Your Event from Bottled Water.” For more information on how to green an event or meeting, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Alex Naar at (252)737-1346.
13. COMPLETING THE LOCAL FOOD CIRCLE

Few in the tourism industry would argue using locally sourced foods has not transitioned from niche to mainstream. Now a number of restaurants, festivals, hotels, and breweries are taking the next step in local food by returning their food waste back to the land through composting. With food waste and landscaping waste making up 27 percent of the solid waste stream, there is growing reason to make use of that waste. Mother Earth Brewing sends their spent grain to local farmers as a feed stock for animals. The Blue Ridge BBQ & Music Festival has been composting since 2006, reducing their waste levels by 80 percent. The NC Zoo started composting in 1996. Even airports are now composting. And there are groups of businesses that team up to form Zero Waste Zones. Composting not only reduces the amount of waste sent to the landfill, but it can also reduce waste hauling fees as well. For general information on composting, contact Brian Rosa with the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at 919-733-1398. For assistance in developing a composting program at your business, contact your local waste reduction program. For more information, visit contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at (919) 707-8140, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

14. WASTE REDUCTION PARTNERS OFFERS NO-COST GREENING ASSESSMENTS

It can be complicated to identify which energy saving measures will yield the best return on investment. To provide assistance, Waste Reduction Partners is offering a limited number of no-cost Green Assessments to North Carolina tourism-related businesses. The Hospitality Greening Assessment is an on-site, technical review of a business's utility use and environmental practices, combining energy and water-use audits, solid waste recycling guidance, and other sustainability recommendations into one technical assessment. WRP is a team of retired engineers, scientists and staff in North Carolina who share their expertise with clients to reduce utility costs and improve environmental performance. For more information, contact Russ Jordan with Waste Reduction Partners at (828) 251-7477. For more information on NC GreenTravel, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

15. A NEW ERA OF WASTE REDUCTION

Only a few years ago, having a few recycling bins tucked into a corner of a lobby was all that was needed for a hotel to claim it had recycling program. But with more than 50 percent of hotels and 65 percent of restaurants with active recycling programs in place, recycling in the tourism industry is finding new and exciting ways to further reduce waste. One example is toiletry recycling, which collects soaps and other bathroom amenities left from guests and sterilizes them so that they can be donated where soap is needed. Another recycling program that is becoming increasingly popular is mattress recycling, which can greatly reduce the volume of waste sent to landfills. Restaurants are looking at ways to reduce their solid waste by composting, and some are even looking to reduce waste entirely. Festivals and events are also joining in by trying to eliminate cup waste by Planet Bluegrass and developing tailgating recycling programs at Carolina Panther games. Learn more about waste reduction by visiting Recycle More NC or by contacting your local waste reduction contact. For more information about how your property can join the growing number of recognized green tourism related business, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

16. CHARCOAL VS. PROPANE GRILLING

As tourism-related properties and events prepare to help visitors celebrate the Fourth of July weekend with outdoor activities such as cook-outs, it is important to take in to consideration the environmental impacts of fuels used for outdoor cooking. There has often been a debate among grilling enthusiasts over whether charcoal or propane provides better flavor in the barbequing process, but there is also the question as to which fuel is more sustainable for the environment? Charcoal briquettes are produced from wood waste and byproducts of paper manufacturing such as sawdust which are renewable resources. However, most common brands of charcoal briquettes use harmful chemical additives to aid in the ignition and burning process. "Chunk" or "lump" charcoal doesn't have these
chemical additives, and burning can be carbon neutral if sourced from a local and sustainable forestry resource. So it's better to use natural lump charcoal and a chimney starter rather than the chemical-loaded briquettes and lighter fluid. Propane is a more efficient fuel and has a smaller carbon footprint, but is derived from non-renewable fossil fuels. A study conducted by the U.S. Dept. of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory reports that grilling with propane for an hour creates 5.6 pounds of carbon dioxide, while using charcoal to grill releases 11 pounds of carbon dioxide into the environment every hour. This is evidence that the use of propane is significantly better for the environment than charcoal. For more information on sustainable charcoal initiatives around the world, click here, or contact Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson at (252) 737-4296.

Weather and Climate

1. **PREDICTING THE FUTURE OF TOURISM WITH WEATHER FORECASTS**
   Anyone who has worked in the tourism industry is acutely aware of the impact weather can have on visitation. A day of rain can flood indoor attractions with visitors. Warmer or cooler than normal temperatures can extend or shorten a season. Given the importance of weather, many tourism businesses have taken active measures to either take advantage or limit damage caused by weather, some of which are addressed in a video taken during the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Climate, Weather, and Tourism Workshop. There are many other steps a tourism business can take to help it become weather savvy and many resources to help gather information about weather and climate. For many tourism businesses, general information about precipitation and temperature are sufficient but for a number of other businesses, more detailed information about conditions such as wet weather or temperature variables may be necessary to better understand how weather affect day-to-day success. In an effort to better share with tourism businesses seasonal weather forecasts, the Center for Sustainable Tourism is developing a pilot newsletter that will include seasonal weather forecasts and possible implications for the N.C. tourism industry. Those interested in receiving the pilot newsletter should contact the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. For more information on the relationship between climate, weather, and tourism, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Climate, Weather, and Tourism Initiative webpage.

2. **RESOURCES HELP PROPERTIES PREPARE FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**
   In the wake of Hurricane Sandy this fall and a wet summer in Europe, a number of tourism-related businesses are increasingly taking into consideration the impacts climate and weather can have on their business. Resources like the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center, the World Meteorological Organization and the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Climate, Weather, and Tourism Initiative offer a number of tools to help tourism business owners and managers better take into consideration the impacts future weather may have on day-to-day business decisions, knowing that even though tourism businesses might not be able to change the weather, but they can prepare for it. In an effort to further assist the North Carolina tourism industry, the Center for Sustainable Tourism is developing a pilot newsletter that will include seasonal weather forecasts and possible implications for the N.C. tourism industry. Those interested in receiving the pilot newsletter should contact the Center for Sustainable Tourism’s Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346. For more information on the relationship between climate, weather, and tourism, visit the Center for Sustainable Tourism's Climate, Weather, and Tourism Initiative.

3. **GREEN DE-ICING**
   As North Carolina continues to deal with a cooler and snowier winter than normal, particularly in areas of the state with less experience with winter weather, there is an ongoing need for tourism-related businesses to keep guests and customers safe by clearing walkways of ice and snow. A common strategy to melting ice is to use salt, which in addition to being inexpensive, is relatively safe. However, salt is not without any impacts on human or environmental health, particularly when it is over used or used too closely to sensitive plants or waterways. The best
alternative to using ice is to remove snow before it accumulates, which will then require less salt to melt. In many situations, simply using natural materials, such as sand or kitty litter, to improve traction until ice melts is sufficient. However, if salt is preferred, it is important to read the label and ensure proper application. It is also important to remember that not all de-icing solutions have the same impacts or work in the same conditions. It can also be helpful to apply de-icing solution before winter precipitation starts, as this will reduce the chance of the ice bonding to pavement and make manual snow and ice removal easier. There are a number of commercially available, environmentally friendly chemical de-icing solutions, however, it is always important to review claims made by a manufacturer. For more information about green practices for the winter weather, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes, or contact Alex Naar with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at ECU at (252) 737-1346.

4. WEATHER’S IMPORTANT IN MARKETING, TRAVEL DECISIONS

Visitors are choosing outdoor and nature-based activities now more than ever and with the fall season here, N.C. tourism businesses can position themselves to reap the economic benefits with effective “weather marketing.” Fall visitors’ decision timelines and length of vacations are shortening and weather becomes an increasingly important factor in choosing where to travel as well as the overall satisfaction level with the vacation experience. Maintaining a sustainable tourism business in the face of weather variability must begin with an understanding of the weather preferences of visitors and then matching these preferences with reliable weather information for efficient and effective marketing. Perceptions that visitors have about the destination’s weather conditions can be as strong a factor in making travel decisions as the actual conditions that are present. The public reporting of weather conditions and events can often determine the ultimate level of visitation and resulting tourist expenditures. Weather marketing can come in many forms. Some businesses choose to offer weather guarantees, others give comparisons to differentiate from the competition, while still others choose location branding based upon a type of "great weather." A tourism marketer should be sure to effectively use their social media outlets to keep their market informed on its region’s positive weather assets. ECU’s Center for Sustainability offers its Climate, Weather and Tourism Initiative for more information on weather and tourism. For information on sustainable tourism, contact NC GreenTravel program manager Tom Rhodes at (919) 707-8140. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Daniel Johnson with the Center for Sustainability at ECU at (252) 737-4296.

Wildlife

1. KEEPING THEM AND YOUR GUESTS SAFE

One of the highlights for many North Carolina tourists is the opportunity to see the state’s abundant wildlife. But, as the recent bear incident in Winston Salem illustrates, human and wildlife interactions do not always end well (http://www.news-record.com/content/2009/07/14/article/winston_salem_police_shoot_kill_bear). There are many actions you can take to keep both your guests and wildlife safe. The first step is educating yourself, staff and guests about wildlife in your area and how to interact with wildlife appropriately. Never feed or approach wild animals and if you or your guests have pets, make sure to keep them a safe distance from wildlife and on a leash when necessary. It is also very important to keep trash and food secure so as to not encourage negative wildlife behavior. For more information on interacting with wildlife visit www.ncwildlife.org/fs_index_06_coexist.htm. For more information on sustainability in the tourism industry, contact Tom Rhodes at tom.rhodes@ncdenr.gov, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346 or via anaar@nccommerce.com.

2. SUMMER WILDLIFE

Warmer temperatures not only draw out travelers but wildlife as well. While it is an exciting experience to observe wildlife in the natural surroundings, it is also important, for everyone’s safety, to always be respectful and keep a safe distance. Improper interactions with wild animals, even those that would appear to pose no physical threat,
can cause a number of problems for both animals and humans. Wildlife can transmit diseases such as rabies and roundworm, become a nuisance if they lose their fear of humans, or become suddenly aggressive without any apparent provocation. And wild animals that become dependent on humans for food can have a difficult time feeding themselves once visitors leave for the season. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has a number of resources on interacting with wildlife as well as up-to-date information on wildlife in North Carolina. If visitors are determined to interact with wildlife, there are a number of N.C. Environmental Education Centers across the state that offer visitors the opportunity to get close and personal to wildlife in a safe environment. For more information on sustainable tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.

3. **112TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

With the passing of Thanksgiving, it’s time again for the Christmas Bird Count, when thousands of volunteers – families and students, birders and scientists -- brave the cold of winter to contribute the longest-running wildlife census. Participating in the bird count is simple and great way to help make your business more birder-friendly and tap into the 19.8 million U.S. birding traveler market. Counts can be conducted either at your own feeders if your property is located in an existing count circle or by joining a group. For more information about birding in North Carolina, contact Audubon North Carolina or the Carolina Bird Club. You can also find birding sites in your area along the North Carolina Birding Trail. For more information about sustainability in tourism, contact Tom Rhodes at the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, or contact Alex Naar at (252) 737-1346.