



ELIZABETH CITY AREA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Discover EC” Advertising and Marketing Co-Op Program Marks Successful First Year

(Elizabeth City, N.C., June 16, 2009) – The first year of the “Discover EC” Advertising and Marketing Co-Op Program generated exceptional exposure for the region, reaching approximately 6 million people through a comprehensive marketing and advertising campaign, according to the Elizabeth City Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (ECACVB).

“The Elizabeth City area hospitality industry understands that to effectively publicize the region, we must work as a team,” said ECACVB Director Charlotte Underwood. “By combining our resources, we were able to extend our marketing reach to a much larger audience with targeted, timely messages.”

Developed to increase advertising exposure for the Elizabeth City area and the individual participants, the 2008-2009 “Discover EC” Co-Op Program was launched last summer with 30 members representing area attractions, retail shops, restaurants, businesses and hoteliers. The ECACVB matched \$750 for each member’s \$500 investment.

Targeting potential visitors within a two-hour drive or less from Elizabeth City, the paid media campaign focused on the Hampton Roads, Va., region, North Carolina areas west of Interstate 95, as well as travelers driving to and from the Outer Banks. Advertisements featured co-op members in a mix of media that included:

- Print advertisements
- Rack brochures, distributed to selected N.C. welcome centers
- Radio and televisions spots
- Videos of individual co-op businesses featured on the ECACVB blog (www.harborofhospitality.blogspot.com) and on YouTube (www.youtube.com/ecacvb)

Co-op members were also invited to offer discounts and participate in a series of “Getaway Packages” coordinated by the ECACVB. To further complement the marketing exposure, a regional public relations campaign was implemented that resulted in articles about the “Harbor of Hospitality” in such noted magazines as *Southern Living*, *Our State* and *NC Signature*.

The Elizabeth City area’s rich mix of history, natural resources and hometown charm were appealing messages for visitors seeking close-in getaways, said Underwood.

Television advertisements invited viewers to discover Elizabeth City, “a beautiful seaport ... so close by.” Radio commercials touted the region as a perfect weekend getaway, “nestled in history, steeped in charm.” Print ads and rack cards promoted the Elizabeth City area’s events, travel incentives and timely happenings.

The ECACVB is organizing now for the program’s second year, to begin July 1. Underwood says 23 members have signed on to the program to date. This year, the ECACVB will match \$500 for each co-op member’s \$500 investment.

“We are pleased with the response,” said Underwood. “It’s a great way to leverage your advertising dollars.”

For information, call the ECACVB at (252) 335-5330. To download last year’s campaign advertisements and information, go to www.DiscoverElizabethCity.com

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“Discover EC” Co-Op Members, 2009-2010

Albemarle Craftsman’s Fair

Arts of the Albemarle (represents four modules)

Carolina Cup Regatta

The Chocolate House

City Wine Sellar, Bakery, Deli, & Wine Bar

Culpepper Inn

Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center

Downtown Waterfront Market

Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce

Elizabeth City Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Elizabeth City Downtown Business & Professional Assn.

Elizabeth City Historic Neighborhood Assoc./Elizabeth City Ghost Walk

Montero’s Restaurant

Museum of the Albemarle

NC Potato Festival

Nine Bars Espresso

North River Campground

The Pines at Elizabeth City

Port Discover Hands-On Science Center

Weeksville Vineyards & Cellars