

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Northeast Tourism Showcases Tour Sites**

### ***Partnering with group tours to attract visitors to Northeastern North Carolina***

**Edenton, NC** –North Carolina's Northeast Commission recently sponsored what is known in the travel industry as a familiarization tour. Travel professionals and visitor center directors who help travelers plan trips were whisked through Northeastern North Carolina on a bus tour that was designed to familiarize them with the tourism destinations in the region.

This Albemarle Area FAM, the first in a series of three targeted for AAA Offices and NC Welcome Centers began at the Currituck County Visitor Bureau where they were welcomed and taken on a whirlwind tour of sites and attractions that would be of interest to the travelers they meet on a daily basis. Diane Sawyer, Executive Director, said, "Being able to have Currituck County as the gateway to the tour was a nice touch, especially with the many visitors coming from the Virginia area into Currituck."

After leaving a local vineyard and winery, the group traveled to Elizabeth City where they were hosted by Russ Haddad of the Elizabeth City Visitors Bureau at the Museum of the Albemarle. A reception was held at the Albemarle Area Arts Council where the group was given a chance to view the outstanding exhibit and do a little shopping. "The best way to market our tourism resources is to show them. These travel planners have contact with thousands of tourists throughout the year, so if we can let them see our tourism sites first-hand, then we are more likely to be recommended to tourists as a great site to visit," states Haddad, who also serves as the Vice Chair of NET, or Northeast Tourism, a group of tourism professionals who meet with the Northeast Commission each month to help coordinate marketing and tourism initiatives for the 16-county region.

The group began Day Two in Hertford where they were greeted by Mayor Sid Eley. They then toured the Newbold-White House, home of Samuel Adams, with Sarah Weeks, NC Heritage Development Officer. The group continued by bus to Edenton, the South's Prettiest Small Town where the visitor center provided a trolley tour through the historic district. "This familiarization tour helps us build a closer relationship with AAA Travel Counselors and NC Welcome Center personnel so that from their own experience they can be sure to give the many visitors they see daily a better overview of what they can see and do while in northeastern North Carolina," states Nancy Nicholls, Chair of NET and Tourism Director for Chowan County.

After lunch in Edenton, the group moved on to Bath and Washington for an introduction to the Estuarium and the newly restored Turnage Theatre. Lynn Lewis, Director of the Washington-Beaufort Convention Visitor Bureau, hosted the regional representatives at the Washington Civic Center for dinner and a marketplace of exhibits from the sixteen regional counties that further promoted the rich history and natural resources throughout the area. The final destination of the Albemarle Area FAM Tour was the newly opened Dismal Swamp State Park Education Center where Penny Leary-Smith, Director of the Dismal Swamp Welcome Center provided an overview of the center, wildlife and educational resources for students and adults.

“North Carolina’s Northeast Region is unique and we want to welcome guests and tour groups and increase the number of travelers who decide to spend their leisure time in our region,” said Vann Rogerson, President of North Carolina’s Northeast Commission. AAA is a not-for-profit organization of motor clubs serving more than 50 million members in the United States and Canada. “Vacationers from all over the country add to the economic impact of North Carolina’s Northeast when they decide to bring their family for a week or just a weekend,” Rogerson added.

**About North Carolina’s Northeast Commission:**

North Carolina’s Northeast Commission is dedicated to increasing the standard of living for citizens in its sixteen-county region through tourism, industrial, and business development. The 16 counties that comprise the regional Commission are: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington. For more information about the North Carolina’s Northeast Commission, contact us at [www.ncnortheast.com](http://www.ncnortheast.com) and [www.visitncne.com](http://www.visitncne.com).

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