



MEDIA RELEASE

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**North Carolina's
Northeast Commission**
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Tourism Marketing Gets a Regional Boost
*North Carolina's Northeast Commission and the NC Rural Center
sponsor familiarization tours for the travel industry*

Edenton, NC – The Northeast Tourism Group (NET) is sponsoring a tour of local attractions with invitations going out to tour bus operators, AAA offices in Southeast Virginia, and visitor center operators in North Carolina and Virginia. The tour is made possible by a grant from the NC Rural Center and showcases regional tourism assets and introduces the travel hosts to some of the smaller towns within the region as they seek educational and historical tours to promote to visitors.

The tour begins in Roanoke Rapids with a tour of the Roanoke Canal Museum, and then continues through Jackson, Ahoskie, and Murfreesboro with a tour of the Jeffcoat Museum. After a tour of Merchant's Millpond in Gates County, the group will return to Roanoke Rapids for an overnight stay. This follows the Hub and Spoke tourism model of staying in the larger towns in an area while enjoying day trips to the smaller, less traveled communities in the region. Regional tourism through Hub and Spoke is supported by NET and the North Carolina's Northeast Commission.

Another town hub of the tour is Williamston where the group will stay after touring Hope Plantation in Windsor, having lunch on the waterfront in Edenton, and touring The Big Mill in Williamston. The group will spend the next day in Plymouth, Columbia, Mackey's Ferry, and Somerset Place. On the final day, the group will travel north to the Fort Branch Civil War Site, Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park, and Historic Halifax.

"This might be considered a whirlwind tour," stated Russ Haddad, Director of the Elizabeth City Tourism Development Authority and Chair of NET, "But it is the best way for tour bus operators to learn about the less well-traveled places in the region. Hub and Spoke works because it gives people a place to stay with hotels and accommodations combined with terrific day trips into the countryside or to visit smaller towns."

North Carolina's Northeast Region relies on tourism to support the local economy, and with the rise in gas prices, more tourists will take shorter day trips or use mass transportation systems, like buses. Bus trips are affordable ways of vacationing, and North Carolina's Northeast is taking advantage of this by providing schedules for motorcoach travelers. "Improving the economy of North Carolina's Northeast Region takes a multi-faceted approach," stated Vann Rogerson, President/CEO of North Carolina's Northeast Commission. "As we work together to diversify our economy and increase the capacity for new jobs, we must include tourism as an important part of economic development."

For additional information about tourism in North Carolina's Northeast Region, visit www.ncnortheast.com.

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.

About Northeast Tourism (NET):

Northeast Tourism is a subcommittee of and operates with support from North Carolina's Northeast Commission. NET is made up of tourism representatives from the 16 counties of the northeast region of North Carolina. The group meets monthly to develop tourism activities, determine regional advertising niches, and to better promote regional tourism.



Tour operators on the April 2008 familiarization (FAM) tour enjoyed dinner at the Civic Center in Washington, one of the regional Hub towns of Hub and Spoke tourism.

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