

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

Release Date: May 12, 2010

**Contact:**

Anita Johnson

Phone: (252) 482-4333

**North Carolina's  
Northeast Commission**

119 West Water Street

Edenton, North Carolina 27932

## **Tourism Coalition Seeks Proposals for Heritage Development Contract**

NC's Northeast Commission, NC's Eastern Region, and NC's Southeast are working with local tourism officials to seek National Heritage Area designation status for an area comprising 40 counties in eastern NC. The coalition invites tourism, marketing, or economic development consultants to submit proposals for work consisting of research, facilitation, and documentation to meet requirements to secure National Heritage Area designation status and to assist in further development of the valuable heritage tourism treasures that exist in eastern North Carolina.

The qualified person or organization will interact with local tourism professionals to obtain site information, consult on improvement opportunities, establish a marketing theme for the proposed heritage area, and submit federal application forms to the National Park Service. Copies of the Request for Proposals are available from all three Economic Development Partnerships: North Carolina's Northeast Commission, (888) 872-8562, [www.ncnortheast.com](http://www.ncnortheast.com); North Carolina's Eastern Region, (800) 474-8499, [www.nceast.org](http://www.nceast.org); and North Carolina's Southeast, (252) 830-6580, [www.ncse.org](http://www.ncse.org). Deadline is May 24, 2010.

A National Heritage Area designation will pave the way for federal funds to develop, package and promote historical, natural and cultural sites and unleash the full potential of the area's tourism economy. The goal is to spur new jobs, businesses and infrastructure from which all Eastern North Carolina residents can benefit. In assembling Congressional support for this designation, regional leaders hope first to engage a qualified consultant to survey and catalogue relevant heritage tourism assets across Eastern North Carolina. This project is made possible by a grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation.

A vast and vivid history helps drive economic opportunity across Eastern North Carolina, as visitors from around the state and across the world seek stimulating, meaningful and memorable sites and activities during their travels. Cultural and heritage tourism accounts for up to 40% of the state's large tourism industry, according to a study from the John C. Walker College of Business at Appalachian State University. Tourism topped \$15 billion in 2009 in North Carolina, based on NC Department of Commerce figures.

The stories of four centuries of American history are told in eastern North Carolina and the National Heritage Designation will continue to enable the area to develop its tourism infrastructure.

As the project progresses, more information will be available on the regional websites. [www.ncnortheast.com](http://www.ncnortheast.com); [www.nceast.org](http://www.nceast.org); and [www.ncse.org](http://www.ncse.org).

**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).

**About North Carolina’s Eastern Region:**

North Carolina’s Eastern Region is a 13-county partnership established by the General Assembly to promote economic development in Nash, Edgecombe, Wilson, Lenoir, Pitt, Wayne, Greene, Duplin, Jones, Onslow, Pamlico, Craven and Carteret Counties. The region encompasses almost 7,000 square miles and approximately one million residents. For more information, please visit [www.nceast.org](http://www.nceast.org).

**About North Carolina’s Southeast:**

North Carolina’s Southeast is the regional economic development marketing organization for southeastern North Carolina, covering the counties of Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland, Hoke, New Hanover, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, and Scotland. For more information, contact us at [www.ncse.org](http://www.ncse.org).

**About the Golden LEAF Foundation:**

The Golden LEAF Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1999 to help transform North Carolina’s economy. The foundation receives one-half of North Carolina’s funds from the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with cigarette manufacturers and places special emphasis on assisting tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and/or rural communities across the state. The Golden LEAF Foundation works in partnership with governmental entities, educational institutions, economic development organizations and nonprofits to achieve its mission. The foundation has awarded 926 grants totaling more than \$446 million since its inception. For more information, or to learn more about applying for a grant, visit [www.goldenleaf.org](http://www.goldenleaf.org).

###