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## Place Branding and Economic Development

Mayor Lisa Sulka, Town of Bluffton  
Catherine Dority, Explore Charleston  
Seth Kines, Visit Lake City SC  
Eric Vinson, City of Travelers Rest

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### ABOUT EXPLORE CHARLESTON

- Public - private partnership funded by membership dollars and local/state accommodations tax dollars. Also, participate in the Destination Fee matching grant program.
- 54 full time staff members in Marketing, Media, Sales, Membership, Visitor Services and Administration.
- Operate 4 area visitors centers in Charleston, Mt. Pleasant, North Charleston and Kiawah Island.
- Everyone works to "book a room"!



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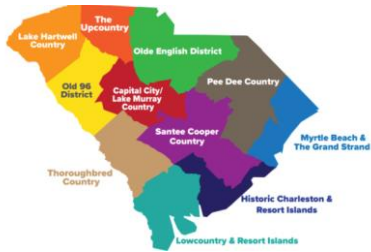
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# SC Association of Tourism Regions SCATR




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### Our Pillars

- History
- Culinary
- Family
- Outdoor
- Arts & Culture
- Shopping

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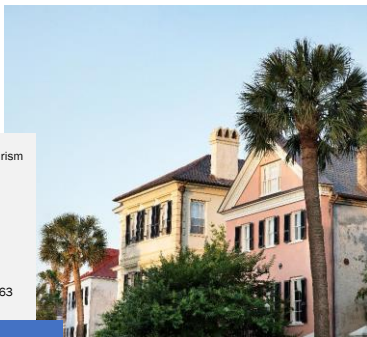
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## 2018 Visitor Statistics

- o 40,000 residents employed by the tourism industry
- o \$8.1 billion total economic impact
  - Up from \$7.4 B in 2017
- o Average length of stay: 4.0 nights
  - Same as 2017
- o Average trip expenditure per adult: \$863
  - Up from \$826 in 2017




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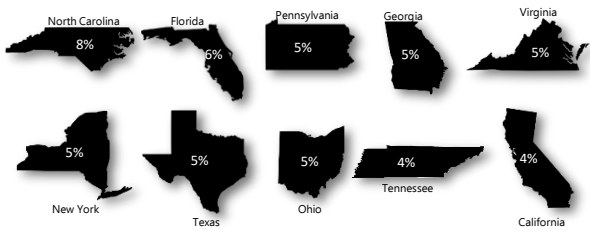
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\*10% international

### Visitors' areas of origin



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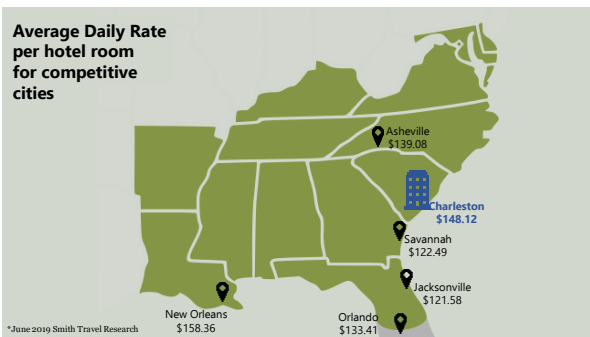
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<b>FOOD&amp;WINE</b>	<b>wnc</b> MAGAZINE	bon appétit
	ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST	GARDEN & GUN

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<b>DEPARTURES</b>	<b>Southern Living</b>	
<b>AFAR</b>	<b>Condé Nast Traveler</b>	<b>TRAVEL+ LEISURE</b>

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**TRAVEL+ LEISURE**

**OUR AUDIENCE (MHI)**

<b>PRINT</b>	
6.7MM	Print Audience
\$101, 639	Median HH
42/58	Men/Women
52	Median Age
<b>DIGITAL + SOCIAL</b>	
7.7MM	Digital Uniques
250MM	Pageviews
\$107,579	Median HH
41/59	Men/Women
26%	Millennials
12MM+	Social Media Followers

Source: MRI Fall 2017; comScore Q3 2018

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Print Creative




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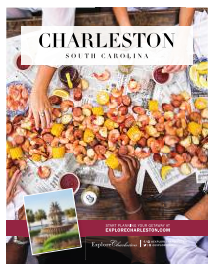
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Print Creative




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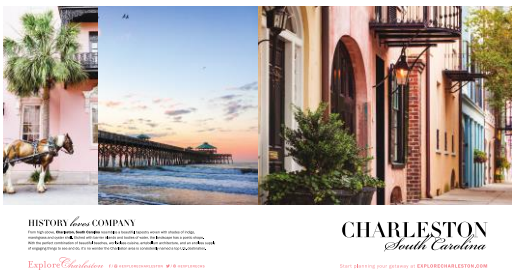
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Print Creative




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# Digital Media

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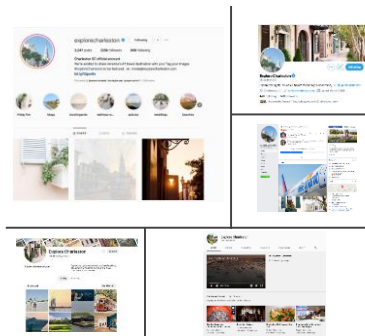
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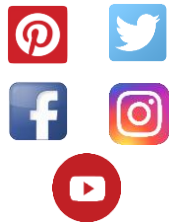
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## Social Media Presence



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## Social Media tracking

**Instagram:**  
We gained **957 new followers this week** and have reached **229.6K followers**. Through Instagram, we drove **201 organic sessions to ExploreCharleston.com** (we drove most traffic directly to our partners' websites). View the post that drove the most traffic to our website here. Through our new **Friday Five Instagram Story series**, we drove **333 clicks out to our partners' websites in one day** and **424 clicks out to our partners' Instagram accounts**.

**Facebook:**  
We gained **400 new followers this week**. Through Facebook, we drove **1,423 organic sessions to ExploreCharleston.com**. View the post that drove the most traffic to our site attached.

**Twitter:**  
We gained **25 new followers this week**. View our top tweet and top media tweet in the month of January attached.

**Pinterest:**  
We remain at **6.1K followers** and continue to pin from ExploreCharleston.com and media leads.

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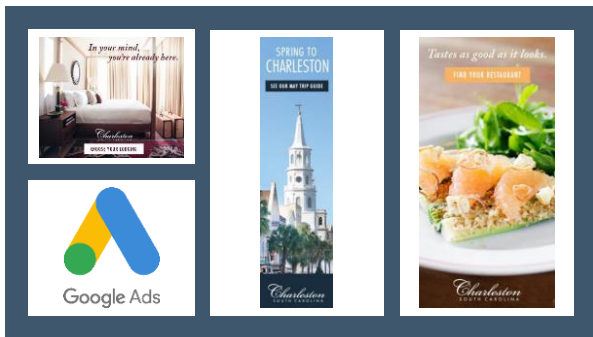
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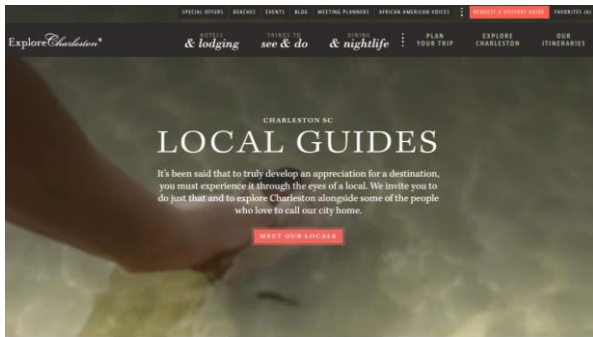
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### PROGRAM PROMOTION

An engaging Carousel Promotional Content Spread



**RESULTS** 1.6M Audience

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2019

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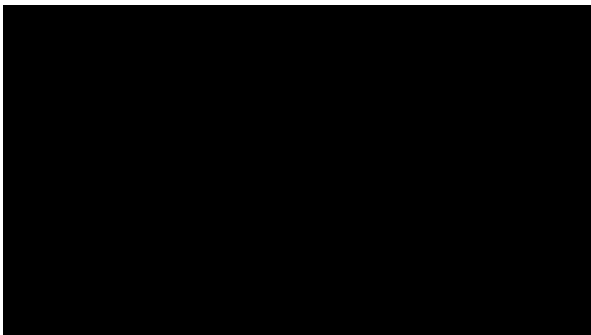
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**TRAVEL+  
LEISURE**  
2019 • The Best Places  
to Travel in May




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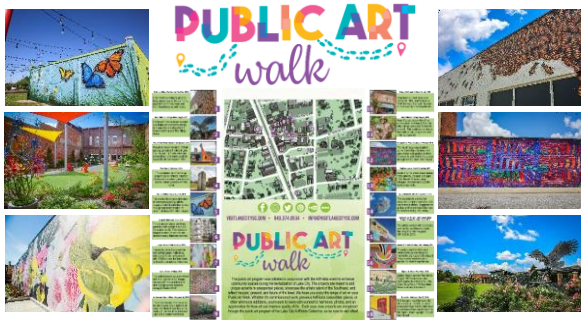
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REVITALIZATION/ FACADE PROGRAM



BEFORE



AFTER

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REVITALIZATION/ FACADE PROGRAM



BEFORE



AFTER

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REVITALIZATION/ FACADE PROGRAM



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REVITALIZATION/ FACADE PROGRAM



BEFORE



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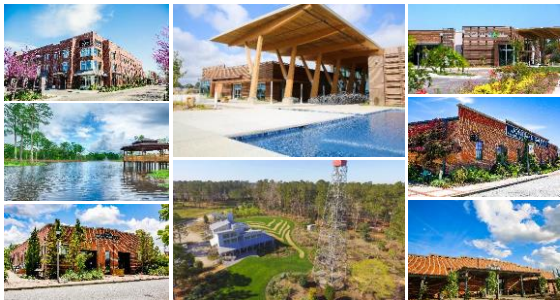
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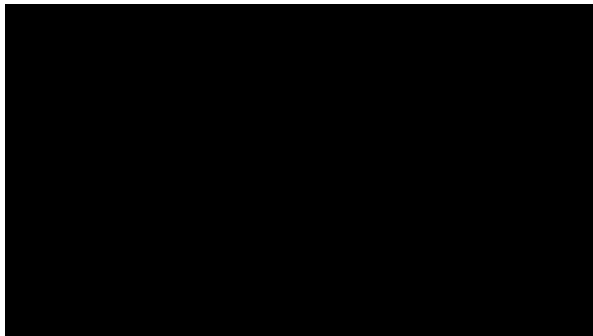
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It Starts With



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WELCOME TO TRAVELERS REST

Tourism Marketing Program  
City of Travelers Rest

It Starts With tr



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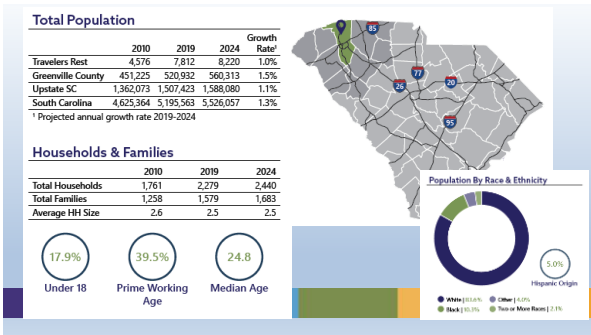
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## City History - A Resting Place

- 1800's - stopover for livestock drovers & travelers from low country
- Renfrew Mill/Bleachery 1928 -1988
- The Greenville and Northern Railway was abandoned in the 1980s

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## The Turning Point

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## Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail

- Opened in 2009
- 22-mile greenway
- Parallels Main Street
- Connects to Greenville/ Furman University
- 2105 Study showed \$20 million impact




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## City Branding

- 2007 - consultant hired to create branding and logo.
- "It Starts with TR"
- "Get In Your Element"
- We owned "TR"




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## Ad Campaign




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## Trailblazer Park



### Music in the Park Concert Series 2020

Rock and roll at Trailblazer Park! Enjoy free concerts every Saturday evening with a variety of local and touring bands. Recognized as one of the best outdoor music venues in South Carolina, Trailblazer Park is the place to be on Saturdays in the park! This summer, with Classic Rock, Rockabilly, Rockabilly, Country, Rhythm and Blues and more we've got it! Something for everyone. Bring a blanket or chair and relax in the park.

FOOD TRUCKS AT 6PM | MUSIC AT 7PM



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## Celebrating Successes

- 2018 Expanded Marketing/Events Program
- Hired some marketing experts
- Downtown Master Plan
- Sought community input



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## Online Survey

2,300 Responses!

- What are our greatest assets?
- What are our biggest challenges?
- How would you describe our personality?
- What would you change about the city?



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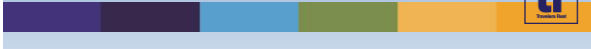
## Results

### Strengths/Opportunities

- Swamp Rabbit Trail
- proximity to natural attractions
- Easy drive from NC, SC, GA, TN
- Growing Downtown scene
- Attracts outdoor enthusiasts
- Active, vibrant

### Challenges

- Website and social media presence
- Perception that the city was too small for weekend trip or relocation
- Absence of Downtown events
- Lack of connection to businesses




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## TravelersRestSC.com

Created a Destination Website within the City Website




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### Rich Content for Visitors

- Things to do Downtown
- Outdoor Adventures
- Nearby Attractions




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## Social Media

**Facebook**  
@DiscoverTravelersRestSC  
@trailblazerpark



**Instagram**  
@DiscoverTravelersRestSC



Hashtags: #itstartswithtr, #discovertravelersrestsc, #travelersrestsc



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## Print & Digital Advertising

Lifestyle Publications      Local Visitors Guides



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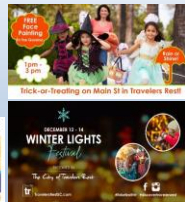
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## Downtown Events

Planned events throughout the year



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## Downtown Merchants Meetings

Quarterly meetings with merchants and restaurant owners



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## Questions

It Starts With



Visit us at: [www.travelersrestsc.com](http://www.travelersrestsc.com)

Facebook: @travelersrestsc

Instagram: @travelersrestsc



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## Place Branding and Economic Development

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Catherine Dority, Explore Charleston  
Seth Kines, Visit Lake City SC  
Eric Vinson, City of Travelers Rest

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