

## Six NC counties launch African-American Experience trail

A regional tourism initiative designed to connect people with Black heritage and historical sites kicked off June 19<sup>th</sup> – or Juneteenth.

The African American Experience of Northeast North Carolina highlights the contributions of African Americans while encouraging a better understanding of the region’s cultural heritage.

The digital program is a collaborative effort by tourism officials in Pasquotank, Camden, Currituck, Perquimans, Chowan and Dare counties.

Visit Elizabeth City Executive Director Corrina Ruffieux said that each of the six counties has significant sites important to the African-American community and to the history of the six counties.

Getting people to visit those sites will drive tourism and have an economic impact on the region, Ruffieux said.

“It is essentially a digital African American heritage and history trail,” she said. “Our mission is to inspire exploration and appreciation for the African American experience of Northeast North Carolina and ultimately drive cultural tourism and economic impact.”

Some of the African American Experience historical sites include the Pasquotank River, the Historic Jarvisburg Colored School in Currituck, the Colored Union Soldiers Monument in Perquimans, the Pea Island Cookhouse in Dare, the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site in Chowan and Dismal Swamp State Park in Camden.

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Photo: dailyadvance.com

**The Historic Jarvisburg Colored School, shown in a 2014 file photo, is one of six sites included in the new African American Experience.**

### Juneteenth is day when last slaves learned of freedom

Juneteenth celebrates when the last enslaved African Americans learned they were free. The Civil War ended in April 1865, but word

didn’t reach the last enslaved Black people until June 19, when Union soldiers brought the news to Galveston, Texas.

### Historic driving tour based on months of research

Months of research, interviews and meetings culminated in Pender County (NC) Tourism’s launch of its African American Heritage Trail on the day before Juneteenth.

“This project could not have been accomplished without the help of 23 local historians and families who want to preserve the history and legacy of African Americans in Pender County,” said Pender County Tourism Director Tammy Proctor.

The African American Heritage Trail is a driving tour that features a

number of locations that are important to African-American history and culture.

“We selected sites in this inaugural launch where visitors can park and see a location,” said Olivia Dawson, Pender County tourism assistant. “We hope visitors will take selfies and photographs as they travel the African American Heritage Trail and send them to us to share on Facebook.”

Researchers gained insight from **Continued on page 2**



Photo: tourism.az.gov

## Hospitality workers don't want old jobs back

More than half of U.S. hospitality workers wouldn't go back to their old jobs and over a third aren't even considering reentering the industry, according to a survey that underscores hiring challenges for restaurants, bars and hotels.

No pay increase or incentive would make these workers return to their previous workplace, according to a poll of about 13,000 job seekers during the second quarter from Joblist, an employment-search engine. These former hospitality employees cited wanting higher pay, a less physically demanding workplace and better benefits, the survey finds.

The results show the extent of the unpopularity of the industry as the economy reopens in fits and starts. The elevated number of unfilled job openings in the country -- many of them in the service sector -- point to an inability to meet surging demand from consumers, threatening to slow the overall recovery.

Other data point to the sector's

struggles: the Institute for Supply Management's June services index slowed from a record in May, largely due to a contraction in the employment measure.

A separate monthly survey from the Labor Department found that job openings climbed to a record in May, indicating employers were struggling to fill spots. The number of people who voluntarily left their jobs declined but remained among the highest on record at 3.6 million.

The accommodation and food-service industry was among the sectors with the highest number of open positions, along with health care and education, the data show.

Across the U.S., the leisure and hospitality industry is still down 2.2 million jobs from February, a big chunk of the roughly 6.7 million missing jobs across occupations. That's despite businesses largely reopening and employers saying they're desperate for workers.

— *fortune.com*

## Pender County

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people, stories and events that impacted the development of Pender County from the time of the Revolutionary War to the Civil Rights Movement and beyond.

Highlights include Canetuck Community Center, a restored Rosenwald school, the community of Edgecombe's Manhollow Missionary Baptist Church and Sloop Point School, Poplar Grove Plantation, which is part of the Gullah Geechee National Corridor, the Pender County Courthouse, and Moores Creek National Battlefield's Old Stagecoach Road.

"The African American Heritage Trail in Pender County is a project that will never be finished," said Proctor. "We will continue to expand and add to the trail as more fascinating histories are uncovered."

— *wect.com*

## Experience trail

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Tourism officials from the six counties formed an advisory committee of regional Black community members and historians that have significant knowledge of the African American experience to help design the digital platform, which includes a website, Facebook Page and Instagram account.

She said the committee has been meeting every other week for four months.

Ruffieux said the launch is just the beginning of the effort and that tourism officials will work to improve it moving forward.

— *dailyadvance.com*